

Annual Performance Report 2007-08

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer
&
Commissioner for Legislative Standards



Message from the Chief Electoral Officer / Commissioner for Legislative Standards

I am pleased to present the Annual Performance Report of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008.

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer strives to be an organization that inspires confidence in all those involved in the electoral process through impartiality, excellence, and professionalism. The Office is primarily responsible for exercising general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of elections; ensuring that all election officials enforce fairness, impartiality, and compliance with the Act; preparing various reports to be tabled in the House of Assembly and to be made available to the general public; administering the election finance provisions of the legislation as they pertain to registered parties and candidates; and encouraging voter participation through various forms of communication and promotion.

The Office produced an Activity Plan for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008 and this is a report of our progress and achievements.

This report will provide an overview of the key results and financial information for the 2007-08 fiscal year. It was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am responsible for the results reported in this document.

Sincerely,



Paul Reynolds
Chief Electoral Officer
Commissioner for Legislative Standards

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Section A

Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

Introduction

The *Transparency and Accountability Act* requires that each of the Offices under the House of Assembly be categorized as per their planning and reporting expectations. The categorizations state the results that are expected from that Office, outline the organizational structure, and outline the level of public interest that the Office garners. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer is considered a Category 2 Government Entity within the context of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*.

Originally, the Office was categorized as a Category 3 entity (activity based Office) and thus produced an Activity Plan for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008. It outlined the plans for that year. However, categorizations changed and it was decided that all statutory offices under the House of Assembly would be classified as a Category 2 entity. This document will report on the original activities outlined in the Activity Plan, and the progress that was made toward achieving them.

Overview

The Chief Electoral Officer for Newfoundland and Labrador is Mr. Paul Reynolds. Mr. Reynolds was appointed Chief Electoral Officer in May 2007.

Elections Newfoundland and Labrador is responsible for the conducting of elections and for ensuring fairness, impartiality and compliance with all aspects of the *Elections Act, 1991*. In addition to responsibilities associated with provincial elections our Office works co-operatively with federal, provincial, and municipal governments in the sharing of information to maintain an accurate, comprehensive, and up-to-date permanent list of electors for other electoral events. These initiatives are supplemented by promotional activities aimed at encouraging voter registration and education programs in our schools to encourage youth participation in the voting process. With a relatively small number of permanent staff the Office makes a tremendous amount of progress. In addition, the Office is appreciative of the work that is put in by large numbers of field staff and temporary employees.

For the year ending March 31, 2008, the annual budget for the Office was broken down. The base budget for the year was \$1,033,200 and there was a special warrant granted that amounted to \$563,600. Furthermore, there was a General Election and an Enumeration this year, so the Office was granted "one time" funding of \$5,903,600, which includes \$1,895,800 for the Enumeration, \$125,000 for the Boundary Redistribution and \$3,882,800 for the General Election. In total, the budget for the Office was \$7,500,400.

The Chief Electoral Office is located at 39 Hallett Crescent, St. John's, in the O'Leary Industrial Park. The telephone number is 729-0712 and the fax number is 729-0679. The Elections Newfoundland and Labrador website is www.elections.gov.nl.ca and provides information about the Chief Electoral Office itself, as well as information for electors and the voting process.

Lines of Business

The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer provides the following lines of business in carrying out its mandate.

Facilitate Elector's Right to Vote

Everyone in Newfoundland and Labrador who is over the age of 18 and is a resident of the province has a right to vote. The Chief Electoral Office facilitates this right by communicating to electors everything that they would need to know in order to vote in a convenient and effective manner. The Office works to ensure that field staff, such as Returning Officers, Election Clerks, and Special Ballot Officers, are well-trained. By ensuring that all staff has a strong working knowledge of processes and procedures, the Office can ensure that the electorate will have the best possible election experience.

Election Preparation

Election preparation is a continuous process and consists of a myriad of areas from ordering supplies for headquarters and field personnel to manual preparation, province wide ballot box distribution and special ballot voting both at headquarters and at the district returning offices. Election preparation requires staff to have acquired professional skills in order to provide a reliable and consistent service to those we serve. Election preparation also involves providing electors with the information and mechanisms they require to participate in the electoral process.

Voter Registry including Boundary Issues

The Voter Registry Division was created and mandated partly because of legislative changes to the *Elections Act, 1991*, but also partly because of the need for voter data and geographic services to be in constant readiness for elections, by-elections, plebiscites and/or boundary redistribution. The sharing of information with federal, provincial and municipal governments and the continuous updating of both voter and geographic data are very important functions of the Registry.

The Voter Registry Division provides a range of services including continuous voter registration services to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians (both during and in between electoral events). The Registry maintains voter and address data; implements voting area boundary adjustments; manages address resolution and collection; oversees information requests and responses; ensures safeguarding of data while providing the electorate with an accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date permanent list of electors.

Election Finance

Election Finance provides education, guidance and assistance to candidates and political parties about election finance with respect to meeting guidelines and disclosure according to the *Elections Act, 1991*.

Communications

It is important for the Office of the Chief Electoral Office to communicate clear, strong messages to its primary clients and the general public. Various types of communications are used frequently to address issues, particularly important dates and reminders. Public notices, advertising, press releases, media kits, and public service announcements are just a few of the methods that are used to inform the public of 'need to know' information. For example, the Special Ballot process was advertised in

local papers, radio and television. Additionally, a news release was sent out to alert electors about Special Ballot general information and deadlines.

The OCEO also has a website that contains a wealth of information on the electoral process. The Office strives to keep the website up-to-date and current with issues that pertain to elections.

Vision and Mission

In the 2007-08 Activity Plan, the mission and vision were outlined as was deemed appropriate for the Office. They are as follows:

Vision	Mission
<p>An organization that, through impartiality, excellence, and professionalism, inspires confidence in all those involved in the electoral process.</p>	<p>By 2011, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have implemented systems required to support 2011 election.</p> <p>Measure: Implemented systems</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventory Management System initiated • Online Voter Registry implemented • Reimplementation of Voter Information cards

Since that time, however, both the vision and the mission have been updated and it seems appropriate to provide the updated versions in this report. They are as follows:

Vision	Mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be an effective and efficient organization with a professional and dedicated staff committed to (a) meeting our mandate, and (b) the integrity of the electoral process. • To be an organization that challenges and encourages staff to be creative in finding ways to improve service to those we serve. • To be an organization that, through impartiality, excellence, and professionalism, inspires confidence in all those involved in the electoral process 	<p>By 2011, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have implemented programs and services required to support the 2011 Provincial General Election.</p> <p>Measure: Implemented programs and services.</p> <p>Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Voter Information Cards • Initiated development of a Youth Awareness campaign • Increased effort put toward encouraging people to register to vote • Improvement to Election Official training

Highlights/Accomplishments

The 2007-08 fiscal year began with a new Chief Electoral Officer. Mr. Paul Reynolds started his appointment in May of 2007. Mr. Reynolds did not have long to get accustomed to his new role before new projects and electoral events were underway.

In May 2007, a province-wide Enumeration took place. Over the course of three weeks, enumerators went door-to-door collecting elector information. This was an excellent process that led to a very important updating of the provincial voter list. A redistribution of the provincial electoral boundaries took place shortly after the enumeration.

The 2007 Provincial General Election took place on October 9, 2007. In the district of Grand Falls-Windsor-Buchans, the nominated candidate for the Liberal Party passed away suddenly and the election was postponed. In the district of the Isles of Notre Dame, there was a difference of under 10 votes on election night and a judicial recount was scheduled.

Results of Goals

Goal 1:

- 1) **By March 31, 2008** the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have continued to improve our accuracy of the electoral list through a combination of initiatives done provincially and/or cooperatively with the federal government.

Measure: Continued improvement of accuracy

Indicator:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Elector enumeration completed	<p>Elections Newfoundland and Labrador completed a Province-wide Enumeration in May 2007. Enumerators went door to door and collected voter information to either update on the Permanent List of Electors or to add to the list.</p> <p>Additionally, the Office recently filled four full-time, permanent Voter Registry Coordinator positions. These positions have undoubtedly helped to attain the goal of maintaining an up-to-date and accurate voter's list as updates and changes are being made at a much faster rate. This is particularly useful in the preparation for electoral events. The office has to be in a constant state of readiness for such events, and thus has been able to improve the accuracy of the electoral list.</p>

- 2) **By March 31, 2008** the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have ensured staff has the required new technology and other professional skills in order that we may provide a reliable and consistent service to those we serve.

Measure: Ensured new technology and other professional skills

Indicator:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SQL Server training for some employees • One professional leadership training course 	<p>Several training courses were taken by employees during the 2007-08 year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two employees participated in SQL training. • One employee took a Professional Leadership training course at Memorial University. • Four employees attended a training session with Elections Canada in February which focused on such issues as Special Ballots, technologies, and Election Operations. • Two employees attended a country-wide Election Official training session in Winnipeg. <p>All of these training sessions provided valuable knowledge to the Office's employees, which will be critical in the attainment of goals. These courses focused on technological and professional skills and will ensure that the Office provides a reliable and consistent service to those we serve.</p>

- 3) **By March 31, 2008** the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have provided electors with the information and mechanisms they require to participate in the electoral process.

Measure: Provided required information and mechanisms

Indicator:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two general householder pamphlets produced regarding the enumeration and the election 	<p>These two householder pamphlets were distributed to inform the electorate of the enumeration and the election.</p> <p>Other mechanisms provided included newspaper and radio ads, ads on Metrobuses, brochures, flyers, and the Elections Newfoundland and Labrador website.</p>

- 4) **By March 31, 2008** the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer, in consultation with elected officials, will have supported legislative changes that will result in improvements to service delivery.

Measure: Supported legislative changes

Indicator:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with House Leaders to identify special ballot locations and number and size of polling divisions. 	<p>Bill 21, an Act to amend the <i>Elections Act, 1991</i>, was given Royal Assent in June 2007. Major amendments included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreements with Municipalities and School Boards • Nomination Fees • Definition of Campaign Period / Filing Financial Statements • Supplying Lists of Electors to Candidates and Political Parties • Special Ballots <p>A Boundary Redistribution (which is in legislation) took effect upon dissolution of the House on September 17, 2007 and changes were made to 44 electoral districts, according to population shifts and geographical factors.</p> <p>Additionally, meetings have resumed with the Political Party Advisory Committee. Representatives from the Liberal Party, New Democratic Party, and the Progressive Conservative Party have met with representatives from the Office to discuss current legislation and have committed to exploring the possibility of putting forth recommendations for change to the <i>Elections Act, 1991</i>.</p>

- 5) **By March 31, 2008** the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have initiated meetings with all returning officers between major electoral events.

Measure: Initiated meetings

Indicator:	Performance:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings held with one-quarter of the Returning Officers 	<p>Beginning in February of 2008, the Office initiated Election Debriefing Meeting with Returning Officers across the province. The purpose of these meetings was to get election officials' opinions on how the election went, what could be improved, and what went particularly well. Keeping in touch with these officials between electoral events helped the Office to</p>

	<p>identify issues to work toward for the 2011 Provincial General Election. Specifically, the Office has garnered the advice of election officials on implementing new services in the future.</p> <p>To date, a total of six Election Debriefing Meetings have taken place in Clarendville, Marystown, Gander, Corner Brook, Grand Falls-Windsor and Carbonear, covering 24 electoral districts. There are four meetings remaining which are tentatively scheduled to take place this Fall.</p>
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Opportunities and Challenges

The fact that the next Provincial General Election will take place just three years from now presents an opportunity to the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer. This will allow the Office enough time to continue working toward goals and new projects in time for the election.

As always, the challenge that this Office faces is that by-elections can arise at any time. The Office must be in a state of constant readiness and this can lead to problems in implementing forward-thinking plans.

Section B

Commissioner for Legislative Standards

Overview

Mr. Paul Reynolds is the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards is assigned responsibility for investigating and conducting inquiries, if necessary, to determine whether a Member has failed to fulfill any obligation under the code of conduct and to report to the House with recommendations as to appropriate sanctions similar to the ones that are available for breached conflict of interest duties in Part II of the *House of Assembly Act*.

The Commissioner is located at 39 Hallett Crescent, St. John's, NL, A1B 4C4. The telephone number is 729-0712 and the fax number is 729-0679.

The Commissioner is an officer of the House of Assembly and reports annually upon the affairs of the office to the Speaker of the Assembly, who then presents the report to the House of Assembly.

Mr. Reynolds is responsible for the enforcement of the conflict of interest provisions of the *House of Assembly (Amendment) Act*.

As well as the responsibilities under the House of Assembly Act, the Commissioner is also responsible for hearing appeals of public office holders under the *Conflict of Interest Act, 1995*.

It is the mandate of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards to ensure that the conflict of interest legislation is followed by all members.

Lines of Business

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards provides the following lines of business in carrying out his mandate.

Inquiries

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards will conduct inquiries into Member's conduct and will make recommendations based on his findings.

Disclosure Statements

After each Provincial General Election and on April 1 of each year thereafter, the Commissioner is required to acquire Disclosure Statements from the Members of the House of Assembly. Once they are approved, they are made available to the public for review.

Annual Reporting

The Commissioner is responsible for preparing an Annual Report on the progress that is made.

Activity Statement

It was stated in the 2007-08 Activity Plan that activities for the Commissioner for Legislative Standards cannot be predicted as they are usually of a reactive nature. There were no issues in the 2007-08 year, and therefore there is no “progress” to report.

Appendix A

Financial Statements

Please note that although these statements are labeled “Office of the Chief Electoral Officer” they do include the financial information for the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the Report on the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended March 2008 (unaudited).

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED REVENUE FUND

LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Estimates</u>	
		<u>Amended</u>	<u>Original</u>
	\$	\$	\$
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER			
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER			
CURRENT			
3.1.01. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER			
01. Salaries	3,449,420	4,043,600	3,553,100
02. Employee Benefits	453	3,200	3,200
03. Transportation and Communications	587,362	742,500	752,700
04. Supplies	105,748	116,500	80,500
05. Professional Services	88,654	99,800	99,800
06. Purchased Services	1,172,897	1,453,900	1,490,700
07. Property, Furnishings and Equipment	133,576	167,900	83,800
10. Grants and Subsidies	443,590	873,000	873,000
	<u>5,981,700</u>	<u>7,500,400</u>	<u>6,936,800</u>
02. Revenue - Provincial	(2,015)	-	-
Total: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer	<u>5,979,685</u>	<u>7,500,400</u>	<u>6,936,800</u>
TOTAL: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER	<u>5,979,685</u>	<u>7,500,400</u>	<u>6,936,800</u>
TOTAL: OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER	<u>5,979,685</u>	<u>7,500,400</u>	<u>6,936,800</u>

Audited financial information will be included in the Annual Report of the House of Assembly Management Commission to be tabled by the Speaker during the next sitting of the House. The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer does not have a requirement for a separate, individual audited financial statement.