

2021-22 **ANNUAL REPORT**



Office of the Executive Council



MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

As Premier and Minister for the Office of the Executive Council, I am pleased to present the annual report for the Office of the Executive Council for the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. This report highlights the Office's successes for the second year in meeting priorities outlined in the 2020-23 Activity Plan.

In 2021-22, impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic were still being felt throughout the province and the public service continued to adapt and respond to the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. Within this environment, the Office of the Executive Council has continued to deliver on its role of supporting government and the provision of leadership, coordination, and advice that is essential to government operations.

The Office of the Executive Council has continued to lead the public service and make progress in achieving objectives set out in the 2020-23 Activity Plan. It is an honour to work with the Province's public service every day. Newfoundland and Labrador is stronger because of their tireless efforts.

This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and as the Minister for the Office of the Executive Council, I am accountable for the results reported.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Furey". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

DR. ANDREW FUREY

Premier

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

As the Premier's department, the Office of the Executive Council has a central role in supporting the general operations of the Provincial Government, including the functioning of Cabinet and the public service. The Office of the Executive Council provides leadership, coordination, advice, and support to the Premier, Cabinet and Provincial Government departments and agencies.

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

- The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office;
- The Communications and Public Engagement Branch;
- The Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment; and
- The Financial Administration Division.

For the 2021-22 reporting period, the Office of the Executive Council also included:

- The Treasury Board Secretariat;
- The Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat;
- The Labrador Affairs Secretariat;
- The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation;
- The Office of the Chief Information Officer; and
- The Office of Women and Gender Equality.

However, under the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, these entities have prepared separate multi-year plans and reports on their annual progress. Separate reports

are also prepared for the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award Review Panel, the Premier’s Youth Council, and the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador Advisory Council.

Staff and Budget

The Office of the Executive Council had a staff complement of 55 employees as of March 31, 2022 and was budgeted \$7,261,700 million for the year. Details are as follows:

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat and the Provincial Protocol Office	22	\$2,192,200
Lieutenant-Governor’s Establishment	10	\$792,700
Communications and Public Engagement Branch	16	\$3,530,100
Financial Administration Division	7	\$746,700
Total	55	\$7,261,700

Further information about the Office of the Executive Council, including details on its mandate and lines of business, can be found at:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/publications/>

Highlights and Partnerships

Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat

The Office of the Clerk of the Executive Council, including Cabinet Secretariat, provides support to the Premier, Cabinet, and committees of Cabinet. In fiscal year 2021-22, these offices analyzed, processed, and provided 434 cabinet submissions and other documents for consideration by Cabinet and recorded Minutes of Council documenting the decisions taken by Cabinet or by the Premier. Further to the direction provided in some of those Minutes of Council, these offices drafted 390 Orders in Council for approval by the Lieutenant-Governor.

The offices provided operational and administrative support to a combined total of 63 meetings of the Economic Policy and Social Policy Committees of Cabinet, including the provision of impartial advice and analysis related to the subject matter of those committee meetings. In addition to providing support to these meetings, the offices provided similar support to meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure, the Cabinet Committee on Planning and Priorities, the Cabinet Committee on Cyber Security, and the Cabinet Committee on Routine Matters and Appointments.

In addition, these offices analyzed, processed, and provided to the Premier's Office 244 briefing notes prepared by various Provincial Government departments and agencies on significant matters of government operations or public policy or in relation to topical issues of public interest.

Communications and Public Engagement Branch

Public Engagement

Public Engagement serves to involve the public in the development and improvement of public policy. The Office of the Executive Council understands that responsive actions and better outcomes are achieved when the views of communities, organizations, Indigenous groups, key interest groups and the broader general public are taken into account during the decision-making process.

In 2021-22, the mandate of the Public Engagement and Planning Division evolved as the COVID-19 global health emergency entered its third year. As in the previous year, the Division continued with the implementation of a number of virtual methods of public engagement and consultation in order to adhere to public health restrictions. Across projects, the type of support included: the provision of expert advice on an appropriate engagement and consultation approach in order to achieve intended objectives; comprehensive design and delivery; support and facilitation of sessions; development of online project landing pages and questionnaires; and the development of project completion transmittal reports.

The Division continued to provide support to the Department of Health and Community Services until October 2021 in response to public inquiries related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the main support provided as part of the provincial COVID-19 Response Centre included responding to inquiries, media monitoring, and tracking and reporting of inquiries and responses. The Division responded to 11, 481 responses through the provincial COVID-19 Response Centre.

In 2021-22 the Public Engagement and Planning Division supported 31 distinct engagement and consultation projects of varying size and scope with a total of 6,899 participants, including 794 participants who took part in either virtual or in-person consultation sessions.

The projects with the highest participant rates (in descending order) for 2021-22 were the: COVID-19 Response Centre; Moose Management Plan 2022-2026; Naming of Red Indian Lake; Review of **Teacher Training Act and Regulations**; and, Legislative Review of the **Elections Act, 1991**.

The Public Engagement and Planning Division's online platform, engageNL.ca, received 6,105 responses to surveys and questionnaires in 2021-22, on topics such as the Local Service Districts and Unincorporated Areas, Budget 2022, Renewable Energy Plan, and the **Coat of Arms Act** amendments. As of March 31, 2022, the engageNL online platform had 29,768 registered users, which is an increase of 14,100 users since March 31, 2021.

Communications

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch oversees the Provincial Government's communications and marketing activities and provides strategic counsel on communication-related issues to the Premier's Office, Cabinet, departments and agencies. The branch's roles include: developing communications policies and procedures; advising on communications planning; managing news release distribution services; media monitoring; providing video and photography support to the Premier's Office and Cabinet; overseeing web content standards; providing multimedia support; delivering customized media training for ministers and senior public service employees; and, overseeing government's social media presence.

Multi-Media and Training

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch recognizes the ever-changing environment of communications, and continues to enhance the use of video and photography to modernize how government connects, engages and communicates with residents.

It provides in-house video production by way of recording and editing ministerial messages; production, coordination and facilitation of the set-up of video livestreaming major announcements; and, photography services for significant announcements.

From April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, government-created content and livestreams garnered 24.5 million minutes of video viewed on Facebook. Of those views, 256, 500 were videos viewed in their entirety – representing a 170 per cent increase from the previous year.

The branch also offers professional development sessions that are specifically designed for video production (e.g., camera, editing, lighting, and audio) to deliver enhanced training to departmental communications staff. Customized media-training sessions are also coordinated and delivered to ministers and departmental senior executive. Approximately 30 training sessions were held in the reporting period.

Marketing and Brand Management

The Marketing and Brand Management Division is the Provincial Government's core creative services group and also partners with agencies, boards, and commissions offering brand guidance and marketing consultation services.

As a centralized marketing group, the Division ensures Government's visual identity is managed effectively and consistently across all departments, to help best position the province for a variety of audiences. Partnering with departments and agencies on key initiatives, the Division creates and helps drive marketing and advertising campaigns, ensuring messages reach as many citizens as possible. It also manages Government's Live/Work/Invest website (www.findnewfoundlandlabrador.com), helping to present a strong and differentiated brand for Newfoundland and Labrador in international markets. Year-over-year, there has been a 70 per cent increase in visits to this website.

The Division continued to grow government's social media footprint on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram in an effort to more effectively reach and engage residents, businesses, municipalities and community organizations, locally and globally.

Consistent and reliable updates have contributed to the considerable growth in reach, engagement and followers. In the last year, Facebook followers increased by almost 20,000 to 137,687. During this period, there were hundreds of Facebook posts, videos, and livestreams and thousands of engagements with the public through comments, reactions, and shares.

Twitter followership also grew significantly to nearly 60,000 users. In the first quarter of 2022, government tweets reached 3.4 million impressions – a 75 per cent increase from the fourth quarter of 2021. Government continues to see growth of Instagram, and presently has almost 10,000 followers. The official Government YouTube channel has nearly 11,000 subscribers and houses over 800 videos – including hundreds of livestreamed events and news conferences – with over 3.2 million views.

The Division continues to work closely with departmental communications staff on training and support for social media.

Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment

Ceremonies and Events

The various levels of activities undertaken by the Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable Judy May Foote, through 2021-22 are divided into three categories, along with speeches delivered at many events. Constitutional duties consist of opening the legislature and delivering the Speech from the Throne, meetings with the Premier and Executive Council officials, and signing Orders in Council and statutory and non-statutory instruments. In-house events consist of investitures, performances, presentations, meetings, ceremonies and receptions held at Government House and are presided over by the Lieutenant-Governor. External events include those that are

presided over by the Lieutenant-Governor, which may or may not be organized and arranged by the Office of the Lieutenant-Governor, and are held at an outside venue, including events such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards presentation, the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers, or extraordinary investitures into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.

During the reporting period, the Lieutenant-Governor represented The Crown by granting Royal Assent to 35 Bills, delivering the Speech from the Throne, and signing 390 Orders in Council, as well as presiding over swearing-in ceremonies of Members of the House of Assembly and Cabinet.

The Lieutenant-Governor is the Honorary Patron of 56 volunteer and philanthropic organizations and has attended and supported numerous community and religious organizations throughout this past year, which has included: celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee year at community events; commemorating the 20th anniversary of the events of 9/11; attending a peace vigil for Ukraine; promoting the culture of the province through the Lieutenant-Governor's Performance Series and attending various artistic performances throughout the province; and, celebrating 150 years of public service of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary through various commemorative events on the island and in Labrador. Additionally the Lieutenant-Governor supports military and police veterans throughout the year by attending and laying wreaths at remembrance ceremonies across the province. During the reporting period, the Lieutenant-Governor attended 23 award ceremonies and presented 304 awards, including investitures into the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and conferring of the Sovereign's Medal for Volunteers.

The Lieutenant-Governor has additionally hosted six courtesy visits of Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Consuls General.

Provincial Protocol Office

In November 2021, the Provincial Protocol Office was integrated into Cabinet Secretariat.

In 2021-22, this Office coordinated a number of diplomatic, consular visits and virtual meetings, including:

His Excellency Karlis Eihenbaums, Ambassador of the Republic of Latvia;

His Excellency Akylbek Kamaldinov, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan;

His Excellency Javlon Vakhobov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan (Virtual);

His Excellency Oleg V. Stepanov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation;

Her Excellency Sabine Sparwasser, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany
(Postponed);

His Excellency David L. Cohen, Ambassador of the United States of America (Virtual);

His Excellency Pham Cao Phong, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Postponed);

Ms. Katherine S. Brucker, Deputy Chief of Mission and Ms. Lyra Carr, Consul General of the
United States of America;

Ms. Lyra Carr, Consul General of the United States of America;

Mr. Paul Hirschson, Consul General of the State of Israel (Postponed);

Mr. Jun Satito, Consul General of Japan (Postponed);

Ms. Mai Makizono, Vice-Consul of Japan; and,

His Excellency Alfredo Martinez Serrano, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Spain.

Further activities and responsibilities of the Provincial Protocol Office during the period included: the coordination of the call for nominations for the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as the administration of same; the administration of applications for the Newfoundland Volunteer War Service Medals; the administration of nominations for the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award; the administration for the Public Service Award of Excellence; support for administration for the Premier's Youth Council Annual Meeting;

administration of applications for lighting of the Confederation Building; administration of applications for use of the courtesy flag pole at the Confederation Building; administration of Half-Masting notifications for all Provincial Government buildings; assistance to the Spanish Embassy with details related to the repatriation of the sailors who lost their lives on February 15, 2022 in the sinking of the Spanish fishing vessel Villa de Pitaxo; and, commencement of planning, in conjunction with the Federal Government, for the royal visit of The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall to take place in May of 2022.

Report on Performance

Issue One – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet

One of the primary roles of the Office of the Executive Council is to support the decision-making processes of the executive branch of the Provincial Government by providing non-partisan advice and support to Cabinet and committees of Cabinet. Cabinet is the highest decision-making body in the province and meets regularly to consider policy, program, regulatory, and financial issues as prepared by departments and agencies and advanced by ministers of the Crown. The Office of the Executive Council plays a critical role in supporting the Cabinet process, ensuring the effective operation of Cabinet and its committees, liaising with departments and agencies to ensure that necessary actions are taken further to the direction of Cabinet provided in Minutes of Council, and facilitating the coordination of initiatives that involve all or multiple departments and agencies. The indicators identified for each objective will be reported in succession year over year as listed below.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the operations of Cabinet and committees of Cabinet.

Issue 1 – Providing Support to Cabinet and Committees of Cabinet	
Indicators	Actual
Number of Cabinet meetings held.	40
Number of Cabinet committee meetings held.	63
Number of Orders in Council issued.	390

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the operations of Cabinet and committees of Cabinet.

Issue Two – Providing Support to the Premier

The Office of the Executive Council is the branch of the Provincial Government that provides direct, impartial support to the Premier’s role in setting overall government policy, coordinating initiatives brought forward by ministers, and developing responses to government-level issues. The Office of the Executive Council provides briefings to the Premier on matters that will be considered by Cabinet, provides briefing notes to the Premier’s Office submitted by departments and agencies on the emergence or status of major issues or those that are of significant public interest, and meets regularly with the Premier and senior staff to ensure that appropriate responses are developed for government-wide issues and those that are a priority for the Premier. The indicators identified for each objective will be reported in succession year-over-year as listed below.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Premier as head of the executive branch of government.

Issue 2 – Providing Support to the Premier	
Indicators	Actual
Number of briefing notes provided to the Premier’s Office.	244

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Premier as head of the executive branch of government.

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

The Clerk of the Executive Council is the most senior government official in the public service and is responsible to the Premier for the overall effectiveness of the public service. In this role, the Clerk of the Executive Council oversees recruitment and training for senior executives; communicates regularly with deputy ministers through group meetings to share information and discuss matters that affect the public service and residents of the province; ensures that business continuity planning for government as a whole is in place to provide for the continued delivery of government programs and services during times of disruption; oversees the annual Public Service Award of Excellence to recognize leadership and excellence in the public service; and, works with the Provincial Protocol Office and the Lieutenant-Governor’s Establishment respecting various ceremonial events, including the bestowal of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award, the Public Service Award of Excellence, and the Newfoundland Volunteer War Service Medal. The indicators identified for each objective will be reported in succession year over year as listed below.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Clerk of the Executive Council as head of the public service.

Issue 3 – Providing Support to the Clerk of the Executive Council as Head of the Public Service	
Indicators	Actual
Number of executive development training sessions offered and number of executive participating in those sessions.	Twelve sessions were held with a total of 378 participants.

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Number of deputy minister group meetings held.	27
Number of inductees to the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador.	A selection meeting by the Advisory Council of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador was deferred until June 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nine recipients were identified for investiture in September 2021.
Number of Public Service Awards of Excellence bestowed.	The Public Service Award of Excellence for 2020 was bestowed on four individuals and the Department of Health and Community Services received a Special Recognition Award. The ceremony took place in October 2021.
Number of Newfoundland and Labrador residents awarded with a Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award.	The Newfoundland and Labrador Bravery Award was postponed during 2021-22 due to the public health restrictions imposed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. No selection committee meeting or investiture was held in the reporting period.
Number of recipients of the Volunteer War Service Medal.	Five family members received the Newfoundland Volunteer War Service Medal on behalf of deceased veterans.

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives that support the Clerk of the Executive Council as head of the public service.

Issue Four – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions

The Communications and Public Engagement Branch is responsible for managing the communications and public engagement functions of the Provincial Government. The branch coordinates communications and consultation activities of all government communications staff and of all departments; provides long-term planning to achieve government’s communications goals; provides media monitoring; provides advice to departments to navigate issues as they arise; and, advances practices of sound public engagement. The indicators identified for each objective will be reported in succession year over year as listed below.

Objective 2: By March 31, 2022, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives to ensure effective communication from the Provincial Government and effective public engagement with residents of the province.

Issue 4 – Provision of Government-Wide Communications Functions	
Indicators	Actual
Number of Communications Plans reviewed.	235
Number of news releases distributed.	1,442
Number of news conferences held.	174
Number of public engagements held.	31

Objective 3: By March 31, 2023, the Office of the Executive Council will have undertaken initiatives to ensure effective communication from the Provincial Government and effective public engagement with residents of the province.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Office of the Executive Council is a non-partisan source of advice and guidance to the Premier and Cabinet. The Clerk of the Executive Council, as head of the public service, supports departments and agencies in responding to the increasingly diverse – and changing – needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

The global pandemic led to an unprecedented time in the province, and the operations of the Provincial Government continued to evolve and adapt as the pandemic continued for the second year. As of March 14, 2022 the public health emergency order ceased. Since that time, pandemic restrictions have gradually lifted, and public services are beginning to return to a normal operating environment. At the end of this reporting period in 2022, economic gains were seen in the province, and businesses and the labour market began to rebound. Despite this improvement, the 2022-23 reporting period will be influenced by the war in Ukraine, continued disruptions in the global supply chain, and rising inflation that have created financial pressures and cost of living concerns.

The Office of Executive Council will ensure support and guidance is there for the public service and the province as strong coordination and planning are essential in the face of adversity and the fiscal challenges facing Newfoundland and Labrador. A coordinated centre is vital to the delivery of high-quality programs and services as the evolution of service delivery continues to grow and expand.

Financial Information

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 31 March 2022 (unaudited).

Division	Actual	Revised	Original
Cabinet Secretariat	\$12,041,492	\$12,118,900	\$2,192,200
Lieutenant-Governor's Establishment	\$846,077	\$872,100	\$792,700
Communications and Public Engagement Branch	\$2,491,140	\$3,153,700	\$3,530,100
Financial Administration	\$606,939	\$746,700	\$746,700
Total	\$15,985,648	\$16,891,400	\$7,261,700

