

House of Assembly  
Newfoundland & Labrador



Colonial Building  
1850-1959

Confederation Building  
1960-present



# *2020-21*

# *Annual Performance Report*

House of Assembly Service





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I am pleased to present the 2020-21 Annual Performance Report of the House of Assembly Service (HOAS). This report outlines the accomplishments of the HOAS toward the objectives for the reporting period as identified in the 2020-23 Activity Plan.

The HOAS was established by statute in the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its committees, the Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

This report was prepared under my direction in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act for a Category 3 entity. As the Speaker, I am accountable for the actual results reported in this document.

**Hon. Derek Bennett, MHA**  
Speaker of the House of Assembly



## **OVERVIEW**

The House of Assembly Service (HOAS) was established by statute in the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its committees, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

As of March 31, 2021, the House of Assembly Service had 43 employees. This includes permanent, sessional and temporary employees in Office of the Speaker, Office of the Clerk, Corporate and Members' Services Division and Information Management Division.

The Speaker is the impartial Presiding Officer of the House, the guardian of its rights and privileges, and is Chair of the House of Assembly Management Commission. The Office of the Speaker provides support to the Speaker in carrying out these duties and responsibilities.

The Office of the Clerk supports the activities of the Clerk of the House of Assembly in all parliamentary and administrative matters. It provides support services to all Committees of the House of Assembly, and provides full policy and administrative support to the House of Assembly Management Commission.

The Corporate and Members' Services Division provides services in Accounts Payable, Financial Planning and Reporting, General Operations and Purchasing, and Human Resources and Payroll Administration. The Information Management Division includes the services of the Legislative Library, Broadcast Services, Hansard and Records Management.



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## ***HIGHLIGHTS & PARTNERSHIPS***

The 2020-21 reporting period presented challenges as it related to dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and adapting processes and procedures such that operations could continue safely and efficiently. At the onset of the pandemic when a public health emergency was declared in Newfoundland and Labrador, the priority for recovery of service delivery and operational functions, as well as deployment of available resources to facilitate remote-work arrangements, was for those deemed critical. These critical functions were recovered and operational in a short time frame with no gaps in service delivery.

As IT infrastructure and resources became available, additional services and operations were recovered based on priority. The House of Assembly Service was at full operational capacity by the middle of April 2020, facilitated in large part by the ingenuity, creativity, flexibility, dedication and cooperation of employees in all offices and divisions of the House of Assembly Service. Work arrangements were altered and varied throughout the reporting period as needed, and as dictated by the circumstances of the public health emergency. The House of Assembly Service continued to operate at 100 percent capacity throughout the reporting period, with a combination of on-site and remote-work arrangements.

During the reporting period, the House met in person at various times in May, June, September to November and December. Significant work and planning was undertaken by the House of Assembly Service to support in-person sittings due to the modifications and adaptations required to normal operating processes and procedures as a result of the public health emergency. This included implementing a modified configuration in the Chamber, adaptations to parliamentary procedures and conventions to accommodate public health guidance, adaptations to protocols and procedures to accommodate in-person media scrums while the House is in Session and implementing enhanced cleaning and sanitization protocols in the Chamber and parliamentary precinct.

The COVID-19 pandemic expedited the progression toward building virtual capacity, not only as it relates to proceedings of the House of Assembly, but also for proceedings of Standing and Select Committees of the House and the Management Commission. While the Select Committee on Virtual Proceedings explored considerations from a procedural perspective (further detail on the work of that Committee is highlighted under Issue # 3 in this report), significant work was undertaken by the House of Assembly Service to ensure that the necessary resources, equipment and training were in place to support virtual capacity. There was also significant work undertaken by our broadcast services team to ensure that any virtual proceedings could be integrated into the broadcast system for proceedings where there is a requirement to broadcast. While House of Assembly sittings were able to continue in person without the need to invoke virtual



participation by Members, Standing and Select Committees and the Management Commission have met and continue to meet virtually when necessary.

The 2020-21 reporting period also saw the first time in the history of our Legislature that an infant in the care of their parent was brought onto the floor of the House of Assembly while it was in session. The Standing Orders Committee brought forward amendments to the Standing Orders to facilitate the required procedural adaptations to provide for this, which were adopted by the House in September 2020 (further detail on the Committee's work is highlighted under Issue # 3 in this report). At the time, a sitting Member (the Member for Mount Scio) was expecting her first child imminently. Corresponding with these changes, the House of Assembly Service initiated work to transition male and female washrooms adjacent to the House of Assembly Chamber to gender-neutral, and arranged for the installation of baby changing stations in each of the gender-neutral washrooms. A few weeks following the amendments to the Standing Orders, the Member brought her 12-day-old baby boy to the Legislature for the first time. He regularly attended with her throughout the Fall 2020 sitting.



## ***REPORT ON PERFORMANCE***

Maintaining the principles of accountability and openness will always be a priority for the House of Assembly Service. A review of its lines of business with a forward-looking approach has identified the following priority areas over the 2020-23 planning cycle.

### **ISSUE 1: SUPPORT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION**

The House of Assembly Management Commission establishes, implements and controls financial and administrative policies applicable to the House of Assembly, the House of Assembly Service and the Statutory Offices. The Commission oversees the finances of the House of Assembly including its budget, revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities. It ensures the proper administration of allowances for Members, as well as reimbursement and payment of their expenditures.

The support of the House of Assembly Service is critical to the Commission in carrying out its mandate as established in the House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act. The HOAS provides full secretariat support to the Commission, including researching issues; preparing briefing notes and other support materials for the Commission’s consideration; preparing and tracking Minutes of all meetings; and ensuring that all necessary work to properly action decisions of the Commission is fulfilled.

#### **Objectives:**

**By March 31, 2021,** the House of Assembly Service will have supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
Conducted research and prepared all briefing materials necessary for meetings of the Commission.	The House of Assembly Management Commission held a total of nine meetings throughout the reporting period. Research was conducted, and briefing materials and other supporting documents were prepared as required for each meeting.  All briefing materials (except for <i>in camera meetings</i> ) can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/">www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/</a>





<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
Prepared and distributed Minutes of all Commission meetings.	The Minutes for all meetings of the Commission were prepared, approved, distributed, tabled in the House of Assembly and posted to the House of Assembly website as required under the <u>House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act</u> .  All Minutes for the reporting period can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/">www.assembly.nl.ca/ManComm/Meetings/</a>
Tracked all Minutes of the Commission and completed the work necessary to properly action them.	A total of 32 decisions were issued by the Management Commission during the reporting period. All decisions of the Commission have been appropriately actioned and completed where possible.
Updated and maintained manuals and templates that support the work of the Commission, as necessary.	No updates and maintenance were required to existing manuals and templates during the reporting period.

### Discussion of Results

The House of Assembly Service fulfilled its mandate to support the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission throughout the reporting period by ensuring that briefing materials and supporting documents were prepared and distributed for all meetings, Minutes were approved, distributed and tabled, and that decisions of the Commission were appropriately actioned where possible.

Briefing materials for all regular meetings of the Management Commission are posted to the House of Assembly website, as well as all approved Minutes, directives and rule amendments.



**ISSUE 2: SUPPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

A main line of business for the House of Assembly Service is providing support to the 40 Members of the House of Assembly. The HOAS is responsible for ensuring that all Members have the tools and resources they require to effectively carry out their role as elected officials. While supports and services are provided to Members on an ongoing basis, the volume of work required increases following general elections and by-elections. A provincial general election was scheduled during the reporting cycle and the results issued just prior to the end of the reporting period. This required additional planning and work by the HOAS to ensure the necessary tools and resources were in place to support the transition between general assemblies.

**By March 31, 2021**, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.

**Indicators:**

<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
Revised and updated Member guides, manuals and orientation materials as required.	<p>In preparation for the transition between the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies, significant work was undertaken to ensure materials were prepared and updated, including the <u>Members' Guide to Resources and Allowances</u> and the <u>Members' Parliamentary Guide</u>. In addition to updating existing guides and manuals, a new guide was developed with respect to working on Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly.</p> <p>Updates were also carried out to existing training modules and in addition, three new training modules were developed on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Budget &amp; Related Proceedings</li><li>– Legislative Process</li><li>– Working on Standing &amp; Select Committees</li></ul>
Provided training and orientation to newly elected Members and their staff, as required.	During the reporting period, significant work was undertaken to update and prepare training and orientation materials, and to develop the delivery



<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
	strategy following the election of the 50 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly. Due to the delays in the 2021 General Election, including release of the election results, the implementation and execution of the training strategy commenced, but was not completed prior to the end of the reporting period. Work in this area will continue in the reporting period ahead.
Provided ongoing services to Members, as required, to support them in carrying out their roles.	Non-partisan services were provided to all Members and their staff as required. This included support in submitting and processing expense claims; purchasing goods and services; parliamentary advice; tendering, acquiring and setting up constituency offices; and research and reference support. During the reporting period, significant work was also carried out to support and assist outgoing Members of the 49 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### Discussion of Results

The core mandate of the House of Assembly Service is to provide non-partisan support, services and advice to all 40 Members to assist them in carrying out their role as elected officials. A wide variety of services are provided to Members on a daily basis, ranging from expense-claims processing, purchasing of goods and services, library reference and research, acquiring and setting up constituency offices, providing advice and guidance on the management of records and providing parliamentary and procedural advice.

The transition from one general assembly to another (leading up to and following a general election) requires significant preparation, planning and execution of the House of Assembly Service. This work is required to ensure outgoing Members are provided with necessary support and assistance on their departure, and to ensure readiness for the new general assembly (swearing-in of Members; orientation/training for Members and constituency assistants, and development of related materials; office set-up and provision of other transition resources).



The 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly was dissolved on January 15, 2021 with a provincial general election scheduled to take place on February 13. Due to circumstances respecting the COVID-19 pandemic in the province that required the suspension of in-person voting, release of the election results was delayed until March 27, 2021. While some of the work related to the transition between general assemblies had commenced prior to the release of the election results, there was a significant portion of that work that could not be executed until the election results were known and became official. The circumstances with the COVID-19 pandemic also required significant modifications from past transition practices and protocols, which resulted in increased work and planning. Further details respecting work carried out for the transition between the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies will be included in the 2021-22 annual performance report.



**ISSUE 3: SUPPORT TO STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY**

A main line of business for the House of Assembly Service includes support to the Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly. The Office of the Clerk provides supports to assist committees in their work, such as procedural advice and expertise, research, report writing and media relations.

The committee clerk is the procedural and administrative advisor to both the Chair and the committee, carrying out these duties and responsibilities in consultation with the Chair and at the direction of the committee. The committee clerk is consulted for advice on the operation, procedural rules or mandate of the committee and also conducts non-partisan research and drafts reports and other documents (or delegates the work to other House of Assembly Service employees, as needed).

**Objectives:**

**By March 31, 2021**, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide support, as required, to Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly.

**Indicators:**

<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
Organized logistics for Committee meetings, including the preparation of meeting agendas, minutes and clerking Committee meetings.	During the reporting period, in addition to work and planning carried out to support the Standing Committees of the House and their operations (including the process of Standing Committees reviewing the annual Estimates in October 2020), there was also significant work and planning carried out to support two Select Committees which were struck by resolution of the House.  The Standing Orders Committee submitted a report to the House with recommendations regarding changes to the Standing Orders on September 14, 2020, which was adopted by the House on September 16. The Committee held a total of four meetings throughout the reporting period.  The Select Committee on Virtual
Provided procedural and operational advice, as required.	
Conducted non-partisan research and reference support, as required.	
Drafted committee reports and other documents, as required.	



<i>Planned Results</i>	<i>Actual Results</i>
	<p>Proceedings was struck on May 5, 2020 and submitted its final report to the House on July 1, 2020. It held a total of seven meetings throughout the course of that time.</p> <p>The Select Committee on Democratic Reform was struck on March 5, 2020 and held its first meeting on July 30, 2020. The committee held a total of nine meetings between July 2020 and January 2021, when the work of the Committee ceased due to dissolution of the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.</p>
Developed and updated related orientation manuals and training materials, as required.	A new resource was developed and published during the reporting period to support the work and operations of Standing and Select Committees ( <u><a href="#">Guide to Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly</a></u> ). Further to the content of the guide, a training module was also developed, which was delivered as part of the training and orientation strategy for Members of the 50 <sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

### **Discussion of Results**

During the reporting period, significant work and planning was carried out to support the work of Standing and Select Committees of the House and their operations. This work included planning and logistics for all committee meetings, provisions of procedural advice and expertise, research and analysis of issues before the committee, drafting of committee minutes and reports and media relations.

A significant portion of work required to support Standing Committees took place during the period from September 30 to October 20, 2020 when the Standing Committees for Government Services, Social Services and Resource reviewed the 2020 Estimates referred to them as part of the annual budget process in the House of Assembly. A total of 11 meetings were held during that period, which required significant planning and work, further exacerbated by circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic requiring modifications to normal operating procedures and processes.



The Select Committee Governing Virtual Proceedings was struck on May 5, 2020 and was tasked with determining the manner in which the House may conduct virtual proceedings during the COVID-19 pandemic such that Members could continue to fulfill their parliamentary duties as legislators and provide for accountability should travel restrictions, health vulnerability or physical distancing requirements prevent in-person sittings. The Committee submitted its final report to the House on July 1, 2020 and held a total of seven meetings throughout that time. The work of this Committee also marked the first time that any proceeding of the House of Assembly was conducted virtually.

The Select Committee on Democratic Reform was struck on March 5, 2020 and was tasked with a mandate to review and make recommendations on voting systems and methods, voting age, funding of political parties, the role of third party groups in election campaigns, timing and date of elections and other items at the Committee's discretion. The Committee had its first meeting on July 30 and held a total of nine meetings between July and January, 2021, when the work of the Committee ceased due to dissolution of the 49<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.



## ***OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES***

Due to the timing of the 2021 provincial general election, much of the work to transition to the 50<sup>th</sup> General Assembly took place in the 2021-22 reporting period. A substantial amount of work and planning is required to transition between general assemblies, including orientation and training for Members and their staff, office set-up for Members and caucuses and the provision of other resources. In addition to supporting this work during the transition, the House of Assembly Service also supports Elections NL in the financial and administrative processing required to execute a general election (setting up and paying election workers across the province, issuing payments to vendors, etc.). The circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic presented additional challenges for the transition between the 49<sup>th</sup> and 50<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies to ensure this work was carried out as safely and efficiently as possible under tight timelines. The Legislature reconvening shortly after the general election also presented challenges for transitioning Members to a new general assembly, while also supporting a sitting of the House and the annual budget process.

As the House of Assembly Service moves forward into the next reporting period, it will be focusing on and planning for the transition to post-COVID-19 operations. Given the depth of adaptations that were required to continue operations safely during the pandemic, a significant amount of planning will be required as the Legislature transitions to a more normal state of operations. This includes planning for re-opening of the Public Galleries when the Legislature is in Session and resumption of public tours of the House of Assembly, including the development of necessary processes and protocols to support such activities safely.





## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Audited financial information will be included in the Annual Report of the House of Assembly Management Commission

REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND			
LEGISLATURE			
Statement of Expenditure and Related Revenue			
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021			
	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
<b>1.1.01. ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT</b>			
01. Salaries	1,875,396	2,006,400	1,928,600
Operating Accounts:			
Employee Benefits	2,691	4,000	4,500
Transportation and Communications	34,071	71,400	63,900
Supplies	34,722	40,000	40,000
Professional Services	59,488	61,600	61,100
Purchased Services	14,844	115,400	115,400
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	72,558	92,500	92,500
02. Operating Accounts	218,374	384,900	377,400
	<u>2,093,770</u>	<u>2,391,300</u>	<u>2,306,000</u>
02. Revenue - Provincial	(1,236)	(28,000)	(28,000)
<b>Total: Administrative Support</b>	<u>2,092,534</u>	<u>2,363,300</u>	<u>2,278,000</u>
<b>1.1.02. LEGISLATIVE LIBRARY AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT</b>			
01. Salaries	686,924	692,700	692,700
Operating Accounts:			
Employee Benefits	-	900	900
Transportation and Communications	-	10,200	10,200
Supplies	46,433	47,000	47,000
Purchased Services	3,266	8,500	8,500
02. Operating Accounts	49,699	66,600	66,600
<b>Total: Legislative Library and Records Management</b>	<u>736,623</u>	<u>759,300</u>	<u>759,300</u>



REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Estimates		
	Actual	Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
<b>1.1.03. HANSARD AND THE BROADCAST CENTRE</b>			
01. Salaries	671,163	677,600	677,600
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	600	600
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	1,156	4,300	7,300
<i>Supplies</i>	49,031	54,900	54,900
<i>Purchased Services</i>	92,493	94,600	209,600
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	12,918	13,000	10,000
02. Operating Accounts	155,598	167,400	282,400
<b>Total: Hansard and the Broadcast Centre</b>	<b>826,761</b>	<b>845,000</b>	<b>960,000</b>
<b>1.1.04. MEMBERS' RESOURCES</b>			
01. Salaries	6,436,237	6,483,100	6,756,200
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	-	5,200	5,200
<i>Supplies</i>	2,268	4,200	-
<i>Professional Services</i>	17,850	18,500	-
<i>Purchased Services</i>	5,175	10,000	10,000
02. Operating Accounts	25,293	37,900	15,200
09. Allowances and Assistance	970,739	1,693,600	2,363,700
10. Grants and Subsidies	2,494	3,000	3,000
	7,434,763	8,217,600	9,138,100
02. Revenue - Provincial	(59,191)	-	-
<b>Total: Members' Resources</b>	<b>7,375,572</b>	<b>8,217,600</b>	<b>9,138,100</b>



REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
<b>1.1.05. HOUSE OPERATIONS</b>			
01. Salaries	153,554	200,700	200,700
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	5,900	5,900
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	164	1,800	125,700
<i>Supplies</i>	3,035	14,500	14,500
<i>Professional Services</i>	22,228	22,300	3,900
<i>Purchased Services</i>	29,369	41,500	41,500
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	8,582	8,700	1,700
02. Operating Accounts	63,378	94,700	193,200
10. Grants and Subsidies	1,247	1,500	11,500
<b>Total: House Operations</b>	<b>218,179</b>	<b>296,900</b>	<b>405,400</b>
<b>1.1.06. GOVERNMENT MEMBERS CAUCUS</b>			
01. Salaries	333,208	334,100	326,800
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	900	900
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	9,630	18,900	18,900
<i>Supplies</i>	6,280	7,600	7,600
<i>Purchased Services</i>	1,243	6,600	6,600
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	1,232	1,800	1,800
02. Operating Accounts	18,385	35,800	35,800
10. Grants and Subsidies	23,696	28,500	28,500
<b>Total: Government Members Caucus</b>	<b>375,289</b>	<b>398,400</b>	<b>391,100</b>



REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

LEGISLATURE (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<b>HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
<b>1.1.07. OFFICIAL OPPOSITION CAUCUS</b>			
01. Salaries	1,145,985	1,154,700	1,154,700
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	3,000	3,000
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	39,326	78,900	79,100
<i>Supplies</i>	13,824	24,600	24,600
<i>Purchased Services</i>	13,887	21,700	21,700
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	5,670	6,000	5,800
02. Operating Accounts	72,707	134,200	134,200
10. Grants and Subsidies	18,707	22,500	22,500
<b>Total: Official Opposition Caucus</b>	<b>1,237,399</b>	<b>1,311,400</b>	<b>1,311,400</b>
<b>1.1.08. THIRD PARTY CAUCUS</b>			
01. Salaries	605,752	607,700	429,600
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	-	1,100	1,100
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	9,537	21,600	23,000
<i>Supplies</i>	6,673	8,700	8,700
<i>Purchased Services</i>	5,730	10,100	8,700
<i>Property, Furnishings and Equipment</i>	568	2,100	2,100
02. Operating Accounts	22,508	43,600	43,600
10. Grants and Subsidies	9,977	12,000	12,000
<b>Total: Third Party Caucus</b>	<b>638,237</b>	<b>663,300</b>	<b>485,200</b>
<b>TOTAL: HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>	<b>13,500,594</b>	<b>14,855,200</b>	<b>15,728,500</b>
<b>TOTAL: HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY</b>	<b>13,500,594</b>	<b>14,855,200</b>	<b>15,728,500</b>