



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

Newfoundland and Labrador

Human Rights Commission
Activity Plan 2020-2023



Message from our Chair

In keeping with the requirements of a Category 3 Entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the Human Rights Commission's 2020-2023 three-year Activity Plan.

The activity plan takes into consideration the strategic directions of the Provincial Government as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. These strategic directions have been taken into account.

My signature below indicates that the Human Rights Commission accepts accountability for the preparation of this plan and the achievement of the objectives.

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

Judy White, Chair



Overview

The Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission (“Commission”) is an independent government agency responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in the province. We do this by:

- Administering the **Human Rights Act, 2010**;
- Investigating and resolving human rights complaints;
- Giving legal information to individuals, groups and organizations who are concerned with human rights;
- Preventing discrimination through education and training; and
- Working with community partners.

The **Human Rights Act, 2010** is a provincial law that protects people in Newfoundland and Labrador from discrimination and harassment. The Act recognizes the inherent dignity and worth of all people; that we all have equal rights and opportunities and that we should live free from discrimination and harassment.

Legislative Mandate

Section 23 of the **Human Rights Act, 2010** states that the Commission shall:

- promote the principle that every person is equal in dignity and rights without regard to a prohibited ground of discrimination;
- promote an understanding of, acceptance of and compliance with this Act;
- distribute information and develop and conduct educational programs and research designed to eliminate discriminatory practices related to a prohibited ground of discrimination;
- advise and assist government departments, and agencies of the government, and co-ordinate their activities where these activities concern human rights;
- advise the government on suggestions, recommendations and requests made by private organizations, groups and individuals where these suggestions, recommendations and requests concern human rights;
- co-operate with and help a person, an organization or a group concerned with human rights, whether within or outside the province;
- report as required by the minister on the business and activities of the commission;
- and



- consider, investigate or administer a matter or activity relating to human rights referred to the commission by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council or the minister.

The Human Rights Commission does not present separate Lines of Business as they are reflected in the Mandate.

Values

The goal of the human rights complaints process is to manage complaints in a way that:

- is accessible, timely, inexpensive, informal and flexible;
- is procedurally fair;
- applies human rights law and principles;
- is proportional to the circumstances of each complaint;
- is supportive of the parties involved in the complaints process; and
- realizes that there are other ways to resolve complaints.

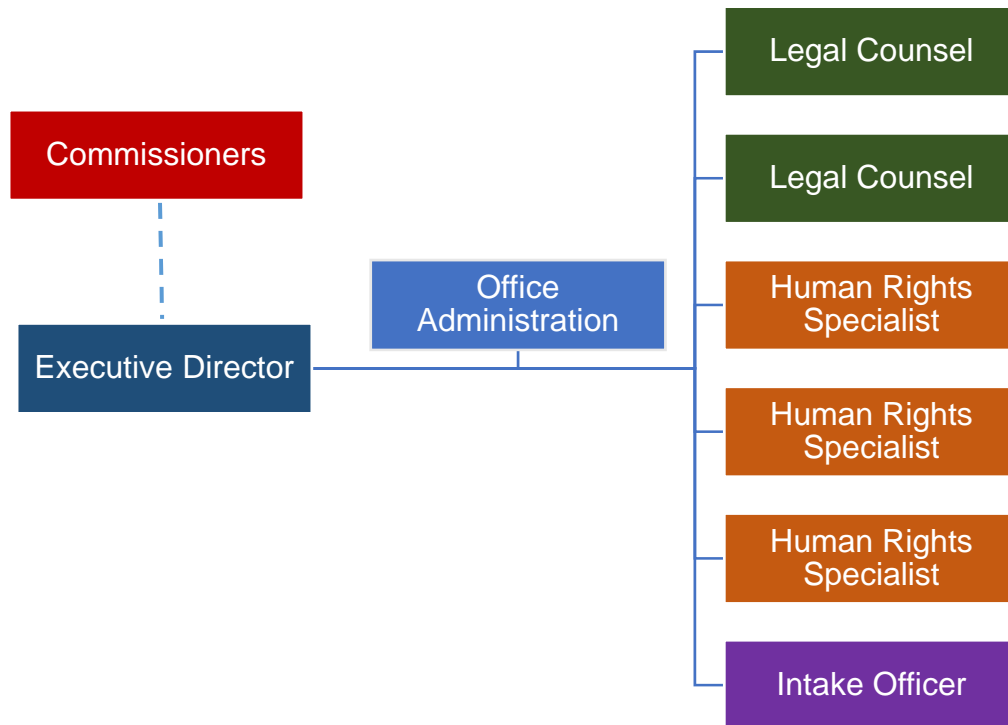
Who we are

Human Rights Commissioners, who have experience with human rights issues and who have an interest in and sensitivity to human rights, are appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council for a five year term. One member is designated as Chair. Commissioners meet regularly to make decisions on the disposition of complaints, special programs and discuss the strategic direction of the Human Rights Commission.

As of April 1, 2020, the Commission members were:

- Judy White, Chair
- Kim Mackay, Vice-Chair
- Ray McIsaac
- Smita Joshi
- Lauren Carter
- Karen Chaisson
- Madelyn Kelly
- Victor Lundrigan
- Gobhina Nagarajah

The Human Rights Commission is located at 50 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's. The office is currently staffed by an executive director, three human rights specialists, two lawyers, one intake officer, and one administrative officer.



Who We Serve

As mandated in the Human Rights Act, 2010, the Human Rights Commission serves the interests of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Human Rights Commission also assists individuals, groups and organizations who are concerned with human rights, and provides advice to government concerning human rights.

Learn more about the Commission at www.thinkhumanrights.ca.

Strategic Issues (2020-2023)

The Commission's main focus is enhancing activities related to its core mandate: public education and awareness designed to prevent discrimination and harassment; and resolving human rights complaints.

Issue 1: Public Education and Awareness

In the last planning cycle, the Commission focused on strengthening its social media presence, expanding its community outreach activities and increasing access to human rights public education and awareness opportunities. The Strategic Issue of public education and awareness takes into consideration the strategic directions of the Provincial Government, as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. We continue to focus on the same objectives and plan on increasing our outreach every year.

Objective 1.1: By March 31, 2021, the Commission will continue to increase public education and awareness activities.

Indicators:

- Identified website content areas requiring updates and improvements.
- Review of public communications material to align with accessibility guidelines, including the use of plain language.
- Explored areas where the use of technology can be increased.
- Begun work to increase public education and awareness activities through public presentation, media interviews, and community outreach and partnerships.

Objective 1.2: By March 31, 2022, the Commission will continue to focus on public education and awareness activities.

Objective 1.3: By March 31, 2023, the Commission will have demonstrated enhancements to increased public education and awareness activities.

Issue 2: Resolving Human Rights Complaints

Over the last planning cycle, the Commission began implementing a new case management system. This work will continue in 2020-23. The aim of the new system is to produce better and more reliable statistics and let us identify human rights trends. This initiative takes into consideration the strategic directions of the Provincial Government as communicated by the Minister of Justice and Public Safety. As well, the case management system will identify areas of improvement within the case management process. The Commission also introduced new Rules of Procedure for human rights hearings. This data will assist the Commission in focusing its efforts on improving human rights in the Province using evidence-based information.

Objective 2.1: By March 31, 2021, the Commission will have begun implementing complaint resolution enhancements.

Indicators:

- Reviewed and begun work towards identifying updates to the Case Management/Information Management system
- Identified data collection opportunities, including greater information on intakes, pre-complaint process, and overall complaint procedure

Objective 2.2: By March 31, 2022, the Commission will have continued to implement the complaint resolution enhancements.

Objective 2.3: By March 31, 2023, the Human Rights Commission will have completed complaint resolution enhancements.