

Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

# Strategic Plan

2021 - 2023







## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister responsible I present a new 2021-2023 strategic plan for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, resulting from the department's creation (from the former Immigration, Skills and Labour) in April 2021. This is done in accordance with my responsibilities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. The department is a category one public body and this plan was prepared in accordance with the applicable guidelines as well as the Provincial Government's strategic directions.

April 15, 2021 marked the beginning of a new mandate for the Provincial Government and a refreshed vision for this department. The goal of welcoming 5,100 newcomers by 2026 has ushered in a new suite of immigration policies and practices. Combine that with forward-thinking workforce development and a mission to create a more inclusive society, and you will see we are well-positioned to meet our goals. The department will continue to work with stakeholders including apprentices, employers, employees, unions, and prospective immigrants and newcomers in order to strengthen the province's workforce and support a productive, knowledge-based economy over the next two years.

I welcome the opportunity to work with departmental staff, and other partners as we pursue implementation of this strategic plan. My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and achievement of its goals and objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a long horizontal line that curves back under the 'G'.

Hon. Gerry Byrne  
Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

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### Introduction

In April 2021 the Lieutenant-Governor in Council created the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills (IPGS) (formerly known as the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour). Associated structural changes in the department have resulted in the need to revisit the three-year strategic plan (2020-23) and create the following new two-year plan (2021-23) for the remainder of the planning cycle.

In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the strategic plan for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills identifies three key priority areas, also described as strategic issues, which will be addressed over the next two years to help meet the social and economic needs of the province. This plan addresses three key issues in the areas of attraction and retention of newcomers, workforce development, and innovation and flexibility in the apprenticeship system. To address these strategic issues, two-year goals, along with corresponding annual objectives have been developed. These goals aim to:

- Attract and retain more newcomers to support sustainable communities, population growth and economic prosperity;
- Support labour market development to respond to employer demands; and
- Provide a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Using specified indicators, an Annual Report will be tabled in the House of Assembly each year. This performance report will provide a summary of the progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in this plan, and will outline performance indicators for the year ahead.

### Overview of the Department

The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills (IPGS) works to ensure the province has a diverse, highly educated and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands.

This includes creating a climate that is conducive to economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity. This is achieved through a range of services and supports including:

- increasing the recruitment and retention of newcomers<sup>1</sup>;
- promoting diversity and multiculturalism and taking steps to prevent racism in all its forms;
- helping employers access and retain skilled workers;
- providing programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification; and
- offering career development and planning services, employment and training supports, and information about the labour market.

### Mandate

The mandate for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills is to:

- work collaboratively with employers and communities to increase immigration and support population growth; and
- help individuals to obtain the skilled trades, training, employment and financial supports needed to achieve the greatest benefit from current and future economic opportunities in the province.

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<sup>1</sup> Newcomers refers to economic immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers to Canada intending to or in the process of permanently settling in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as international students, international graduates, migrant workers, and asylum seekers.

### Lines of Business

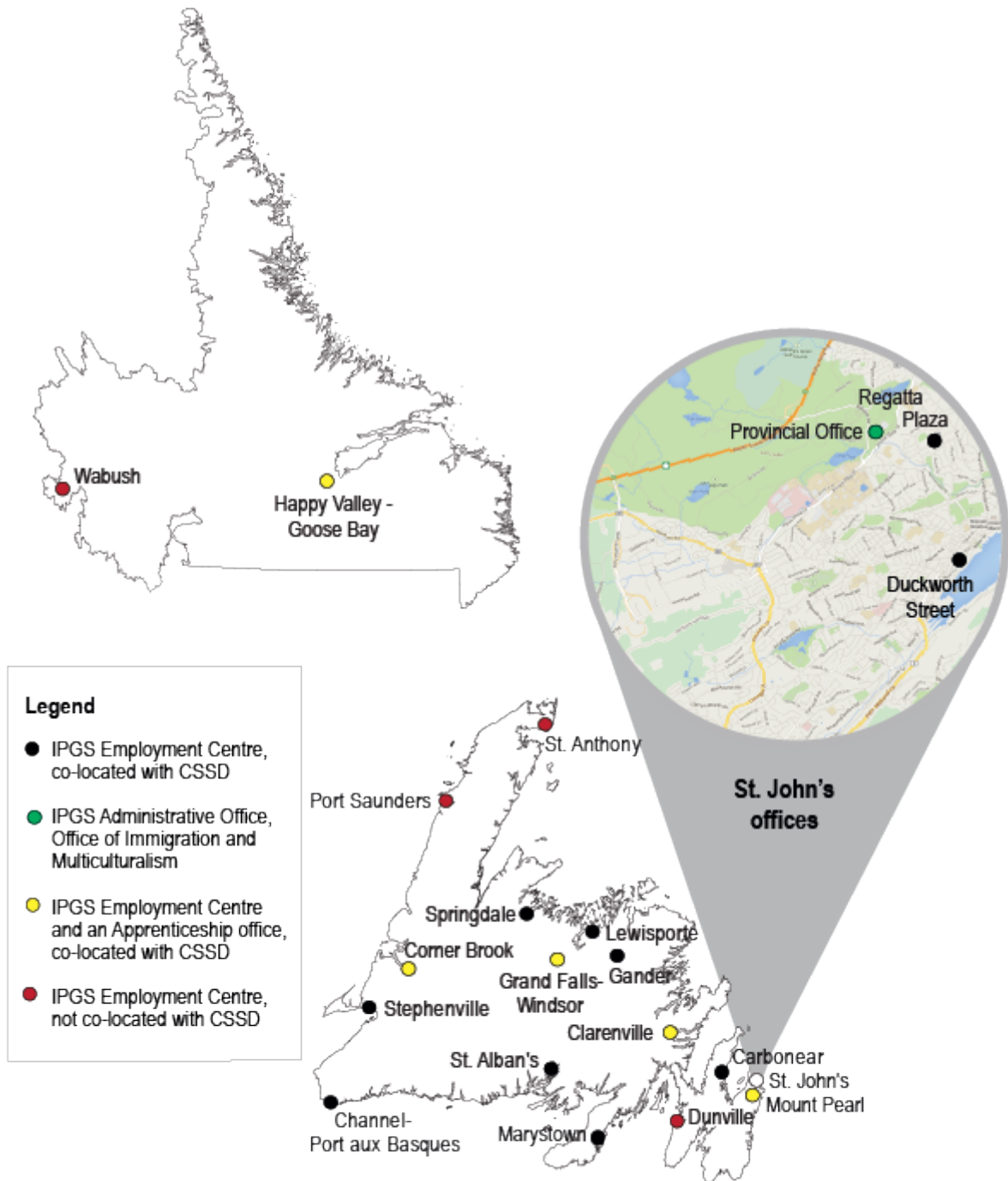
The department provides a range of programs and services to help grow the population and build a stronger economic foundation. Programs and services are grouped in the following areas:

- **Immigration** – nomination and endorsement of eligible immigrants for permanent residency, engaging with employers and community stakeholders, delivering multiculturalism awareness and anti-racism activities, and providing recruitment, settlement, integration and retention supports.
- **Employment Supports and Career Services** – career counseling, wage subsidies, job searches, pre-employment readiness, as well as training and skills development.
- **Population Growth and Workforce Development** – promoting the province as a workforce destination, supporting employers with recruitment, retention and human resource planning, providing workforce policy support, as well as supplying individuals with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities.
- **Apprenticeship and Trades Certification** – responsible for apprenticeship training and certification in the province, supporting individuals pursuing a career in skilled trades, and working with institutions delivering skilled trades training.

Additional information on the department's vision and values can be viewed on the departmental website at the following location: [About the Department](#).

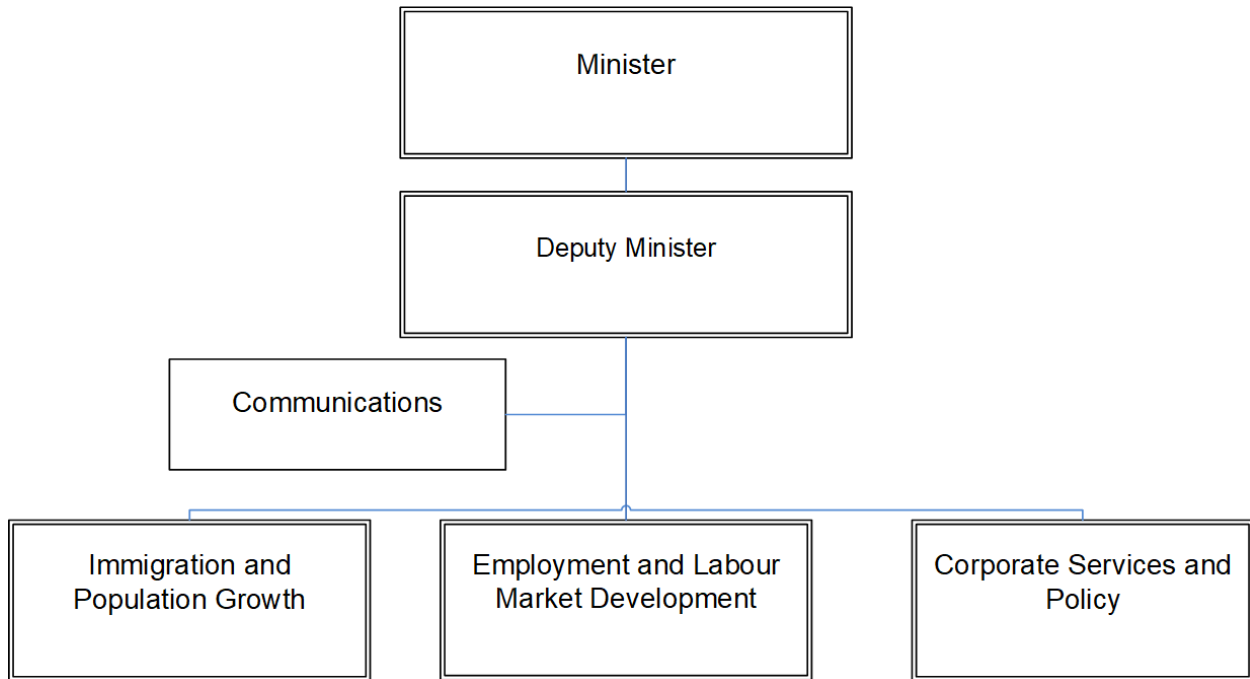
As of December 31, 2021, the department's staff complement consists of 297 employees, of which 76 per cent are female and 24 per cent are male. Ninety-one per cent are permanent, seven per cent are temporary and two per cent are contractual. Forty-six per cent of employees are located in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area. The remaining 54 per cent are located in other offices throughout the province.

The following map illustrates the 18 communities where the offices of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills are located, including offices shared with the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD):





The organizational structure of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills includes three branches:



### **Immigration and Population Growth**

This branch ensures that immigration and workforce-related policies, programs, services and initiatives are strategically aligned to develop and deploy a highly trained and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands in the province. The branch administers immigration programs and assists with newcomer settlement supports; helps employers with international recruitment, retention and human resource planning; provides workforce policy expertise; supports the Provincial Government's diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-racism efforts; as well as supplying individuals and employers with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities.

### **Employment and Labour Market Development**

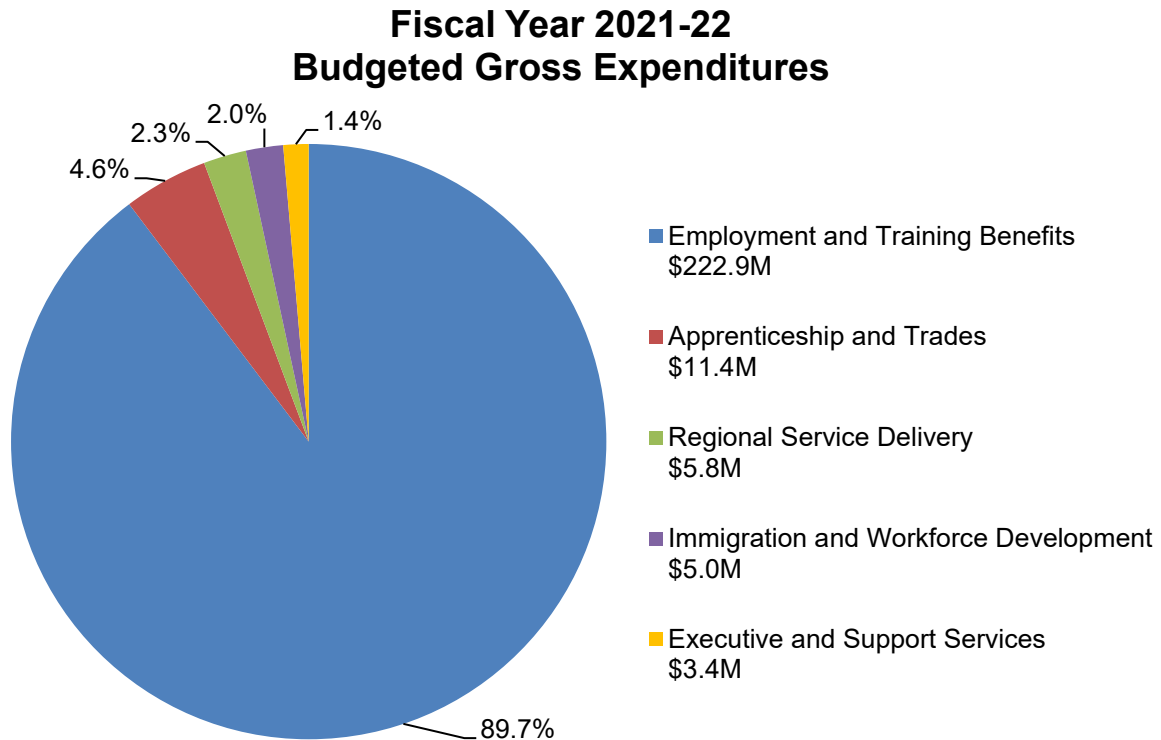
This branch administers and delivers client-focused, labour market-related programs designed to assist people in securing training and finding sustainable employment, and in helping employers meet labour supply challenges. The branch is also responsible for programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification. In addition, the branch works with a large and varied client base, including individuals who may need employment and training supports. Clients receive services by telephone or in-person at one of the 19 Employment Centres across the province. The branch also has responsibility for policy development as it relates to employment and training programs and services.

### **Corporate Services and Policy**

This branch is responsible for the department's financial, information and human resource management. The branch coordinates all corporate policy requirements including legislative reviews; planning and accountability functions; and quality assurance and evaluation functions. As well, the branch provides advice on privacy matters and leads access to information requests.

## Expenditures

For 2021-22 the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills has budgeted gross expenditures of \$248.5 million. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



The largest gross expenditure budgeted in the department for the 2021-22 fiscal year is \$222.9 million, which focuses on providing employment and training benefits under the Labour Market Development Agreement, the Workforce Development Agreement, as well as other employment and training programs. Apprenticeship and Trades represents approximately \$11.4 million of gross budget, Regional Service Delivery accounts for \$5.8 million, Immigration and Workforce Development is \$5.0 million and Executive and Support Services accounts for the remaining \$3.4 million.

### Strategic Issues, Goals, Objectives and Indicators

Strategic issues represent the most significant internal or external changes that a department must realize to achieve its mandate. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in a two-year time frame (2021-22 to 2022-23), while the objectives provide an annual focus. Performance indicators are provided for the two-year goals and the first year's objectives (2021-22). All of these elements assist the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress. After considering the mandate, financial resources and key priorities of the Minister, the following three issues have been identified as strategic for the department over the next two years:

1. The need to attract and retain more newcomers to support sustainable communities, population growth and economic prosperity;
2. The need for a strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities; and
3. The need for a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

#### Strategic Issue 1:

##### **The need to attract and retain more newcomers to support sustainable communities, population growth and economic prosperity.**

Immigration continues to represent an important opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's economic, social and cultural growth. It is and will continue to be an important mechanism in supporting employers experiencing labour supply shortages.

Over 80 per cent of Canada's population growth comes from immigration<sup>2</sup>, mostly through economic pathways, which facilitates entry for international professionals addressing workforce needs and economic priorities. In Newfoundland and Labrador, immigration is the main driver of population stability and growth. Immigrants also have a younger age profile (33 years of age) than the total province (47.8 years of age)<sup>3</sup> which helps to increase the number of families with children and further sustain the future population. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is increasing efforts to attract and retain newcomers, which aligns closely with its strategic directions of a better economy and a bright future. In April 2021, the Provincial Government established a new goal of increasing immigration to 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026.

Welcoming immigrants is just the beginning of a journey that is only complete when new residents realize a sense of belonging to the community and decide to seek their future in the province. Newcomers who settle in Newfoundland and Labrador are more likely to remain in the province in the long-term if they are joined by family members. Five-year retention rate data released from Statistics Canada concluded that Newfoundland and Labrador's family class retention rate was approximately 75 per cent, meaning three in four individuals joining their family members in the province remained here five years later, compared to the 50 per cent overall immigration retention rate<sup>4</sup>. Long-term retention is dependent on an immigrant's lived experience with their neighbours and wider community. Availability of social and recreational activities, opportunities for spousal employment and social engagement, and accessibility of culturally appropriate

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<sup>2</sup> [Population projections for Canada \(2018 to 2068\), Provinces and Territories \(2018 to 2043\) \(PDF, 1.16 MB\)](#). Statistics Canada, September 17, 2019.

<sup>3</sup> Immigrant age profile based on administrative data from the Atlantic Immigration Program and Provincial Nominee Program. Provincial age profile obtained from: [Population estimates on July 1<sup>st</sup>, by age and sex](#). Statistic Canada, September 29, 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Statistics Canada, Immigrant Mobility, 2012 to 2017.

food and ingredients all influence retention. The way family members such as children or grandparents are welcomed to the community, as well as the community's openness to learn from newcomers and vice versa, also contribute to successful retention.

The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next two years to support the attraction and retention of newcomers to our province.

### Issue 1

Attracting and retaining newcomers to the province.

**Goal 1:** By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have worked to advance the attraction and retention of newcomers to the province.

**Two-Year Performance Indicators:**

1. Increased the number of newcomers coming to the province.
2. Improved immigration outcomes and services for newcomers.
3. Enhanced supports for employers to employ newcomers.

**Objective 1 (2021-22)**

By March 31, 2022 the department will have undertaken initiatives to attract and retain newcomers.

**Annual Performance Indicators:**

1. Continued efforts to achieve the immigration target.
2. Provided immigration supports to employers to satisfy labour requirements.
3. Promoted a greater understanding of diversity and multiculturalism and took steps to eliminate racism in all its forms.

**Objective 2 (2022-23)**

By March 31, 2023 the department will have furthered initiatives to attract and retain newcomers.

### **Strategic Issue 2:**

#### **The need for a strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.**

A productive, knowledge-based economy requires a workforce that is trained and ready for current jobs as well as adaptive to future labour market opportunities. The Provincial Government supports the development of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to ensure businesses and industry have access to the skilled workers they need to remain competitive and create jobs in a changing economy.

With over 81,000 job openings forecasted from 2021-30, the Provincial Government acknowledges that taking advantage of these opportunities will require individuals who have a strong foundation of education, skills and experience. This requires collaboration among partners (government, industry, labour and education) to provide sustainable employment opportunities that are matched with a skilled workforce. The pursuit of economic diversification and associated private sector growth will also identify new job opportunities. Increasing the skilled labour supply also requires that the Provincial Government support organizations that work with underrepresented groups, including women, persons with disabilities, newcomers, youth, Indigenous peoples and older workers. This will enable these groups to fully participate in the provincial economy and in so doing, create local and regional economic benefits.

Efforts to attract individuals to live and work in Newfoundland and Labrador, both within Canada and internationally, will remain a priority in order to support employers struggling to find labour, as well as improve the economic competitiveness of the province. Promotion and delivery of services and initiatives aimed at strengthening the workforce will continue to be inclusive and target all residents, including newcomers.

Efforts to strengthen the workforce to respond to labour market demand and economic diversification support the Provincial Government's strategic directions of achieving a better economy and a bright future.

The following goal and objectives identify desired results the department plans to achieve over the next two years to strengthen the workforce in response to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

### Issue 2

A strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

**Goal 2:** By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have worked to strengthen the provincial workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

#### Two-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Helped equip the provincial labour force to respond to labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.
2. Supported private industry sector growth in key priority sectors.
3. Provided opportunities for individuals from underrepresented groups to transition into the workforce.

#### Objective 1 (2021-22)

By March 31, 2022 the department will have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the provincial workforce.

#### Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Advanced initiatives to support labour market responsiveness.
2. Promoted the province as a choice destination for life and work.
3. Supported industry and community-led workforce development initiatives.
4. Worked to connect individuals to the workforce, including those from underrepresented groups.

#### Objective 2 (2022-23)

By March 31, 2023 the department will have furthered initiatives to strengthen the provincial workforce.



### **Strategic Issue 3:**

#### **The need for a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.**

Apprenticeship is a proven workforce training strategy to develop new talent in highly skilled occupations, combining paid on-the-job learning with related technical instruction in the classroom. As technology advances, tradespeople are required to adapt or risk having their skills become obsolete. At the same time, the province must keep pace to ensure that the apprenticeship system is easy to join, navigate and complete.

The demand for highly skilled tradespeople in Newfoundland and Labrador mirrors the cyclical nature of economic activity in the province. That is why innovative and flexible training methods of service and program delivery are continually being developed, to ensure a high quality education that meets industry needs during both times of economic expansion and contraction. An agile skilled trades training system equipped to adapt to changing economic conditions and shifting labour market demand supports the Provincial Government's strategic directions of a bright future and a better economy.

Further, the province must support the mobility of workers through Atlantic and National harmonization initiatives ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador skilled trades workers can take advantage of opportunities across Canada and abroad, when attaching to the labour market.

The following goals and objectives identify desired results the department plans to achieve over the next two years to provide a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

### Issue 3

A more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

**Goal 3:** By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have worked to advance the innovation and flexibility of the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

**Two-Year Performance Indicators:**

1. Worked to further Atlantic and National apprenticeship harmonization initiatives.
2. Enhanced online program and service delivery in the provincial apprenticeship system.

**Objective 1 (2021-22)**

By March 31, 2022 the department will have undertaken initiatives to advance innovation and flexibility in the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

**Annual Performance Indicators:**

1. Implemented further Atlantic and National apprenticeship harmonization initiatives in high demand occupations.
2. Partnered with training providers to assess the ongoing and emerging need for online skilled trades training and service delivery.

**Objective 2 (2022-23)**

By March 31, 2023 the department will have furthered initiatives to advance innovation and flexibility in the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

### **Annex: Public Entities**

The Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board is a public entity that reports through the Minister and prepares a separate performance-based plan.

