

2023-2026

STRATEGIC PLAN

Immigration, Population Growth and Skills



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the Minister responsible for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, I am pleased to present the department's 2023-2026 strategic plan. As a category one public body, the three-year departmental strategic plan was prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, Provincial Government strategic directions and other applicable guidelines.

A demographic transformation, which began in 2021, has caused the provincial population to grow at the fastest rate in 50 years and has led to record-setting immigration performance. The department will continue to harness the momentum of this seminal period in our history by ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador remains a national leader on immigration, settlement and retention. Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will keep innovating by advancing country-leading practices and policies to reach the ultimate goal of welcoming 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026. This strategic plan provides an important framework for the department to follow as it endeavors to reach this goal while creating a stronger, more inclusive workforce that supports a productive, knowledge-based economy for everyone living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The department will continue working with partners, including apprentices, newcomers, employers, employees, community groups, and unions in order to achieve the plan's outcomes over the next three years. I welcome the opportunity to work with departmental staff, and many other contributors, as we pursue the implementation of this strategic plan. My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and achievement of the specific goals and objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Gerry Byrne', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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

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Introduction

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, which will be addressed over the next three years to help meet the social and economic needs of the province (see Annex A: Strategic Directions for more details on the department's strategic directions). Three-year goals with corresponding annual objectives have been developed to address three key strategic issues. These goals aim to:

- Attract newcomers to the province to support inclusive communities, population growth, and job market demands in the province;
- Enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities; and
- Strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system.

Using specified indicators, an Annual Report will be tabled in the House of Assembly for each year covered by this plan. 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.

Department Overview

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

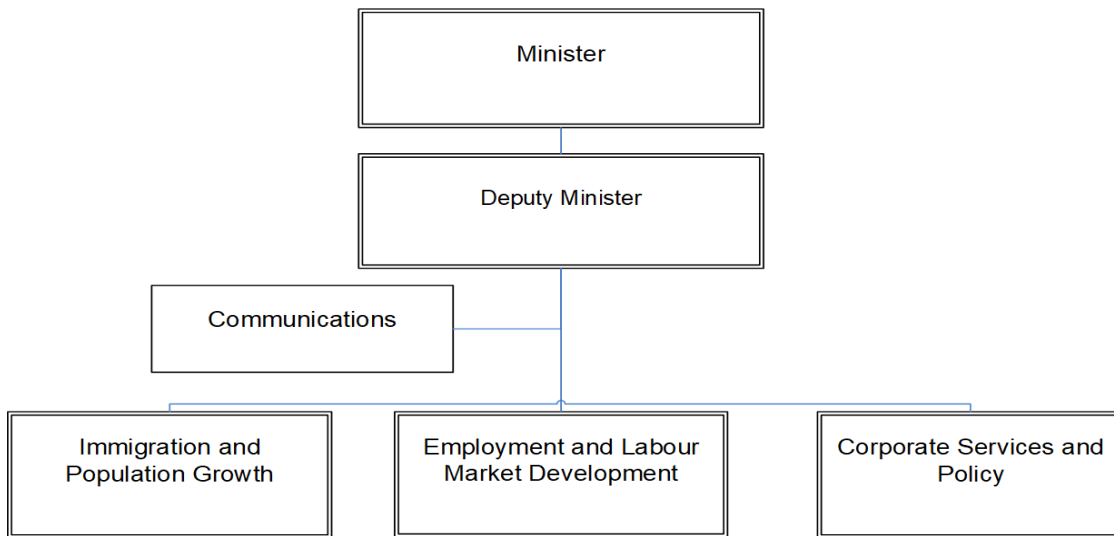
This includes creating a climate that is conducive to economic growth, competitiveness, and prosperity. This is achieved through a range of services and supports including:

- increasing the recruitment and retention of newcomers¹;
- promoting diversity and multiculturalism;
- 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 as well as employment and training supports, and information about the labour market.

The Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board also reports directly to the department (See Annex B: Public Entities for details).

Organizational Structure

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



¹ 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.

1. 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; supports newcomer settlement supports; helps employers with international recruitment, retention, and human resource planning; provides workforce policy support; initiates workforce adjustment responses to support re-employment of workers affected by large layoffs; supports the Provincial Government's diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism efforts; and supplies individuals and employers with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities.

2. 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. The branch works with a large and varied client base, including individuals who may need employment and training supports. Clients receive services virtually or in-person at one of the 19 IPGS regional offices across the province. The branch also has responsibility for policy development as it relates to employment and training programs and services.

3. 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. The branch also provides advice on privacy matters and leads access to information requests.

Geographic Overview

The department has 20 offices located in 18 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador with services delivered through regional offices. The department's headquarters are located in the Confederation Building in St. John's. The 19 other locations are service delivery offices with Employment Centres and are in the following areas:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Carbonear | 11. Mount Pearl* |
| 2. Channel-Port aux Basques | 12. Port Saunders |
| 3. Clarenville* | 13. Springdale |
| 4. Corner Brook* | 14. St. Alban's |
| 5. Dunville | 15. St. Anthony |
| 6. Gander | 16. St. John's - Duckworth Street |
| 7. Grand Falls-Windsor* | 17. St. John's - Elizabeth Avenue |
| 8. Happy Valley-Goose Bay* | 18. Stephenville |
| 9. Lewisporte | 19. Wabush |
| 10. Marystown | |

Staff and Expenditures

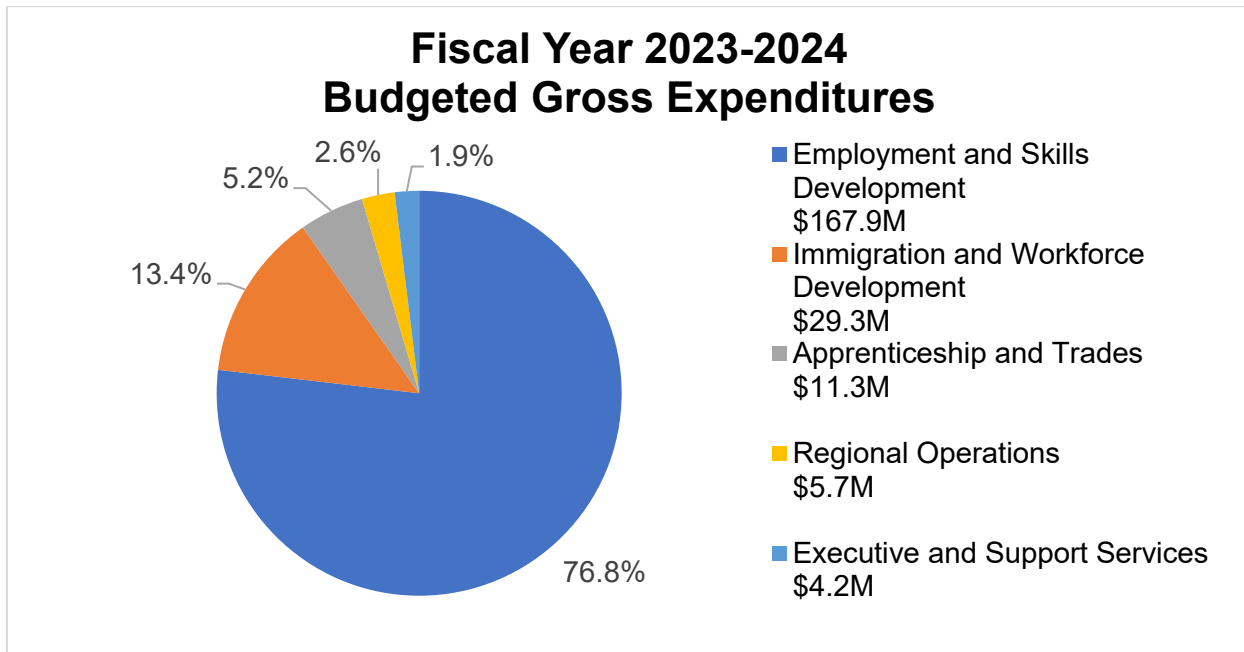
As of March 31, 2023, the department's staff complement consists of 311 employees. Of the current staff, 82 per cent are permanent, 15 per cent are temporary and 3 per cent are contractual. Almost half (48 per cent) of employees are located in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area. The remaining 52 per cent are located in other offices throughout the province. A table on the following page shows the staff complement and budget by division.

* Site includes Apprenticeship.

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Division	# of Employees	Budget
Apprenticeship and Trades	33	\$11,311,900
Employment and Skills Development	15	\$167,861,200
Executive and Support Services	22	4,236,200
Immigration and Workforce Development	54	\$29,304,200
Regional Operations	187	\$5,721,000
Total	311	\$218,434,500

Based on the Estimates released for the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills has budgeted gross expenditures of \$218.4 million. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



The largest gross expenditure budgeted in the department for the 2023-2024 fiscal year is \$167.9 million, which focuses on providing employment and skills developments under the Labour Market Development Agreement; the Workforce Development Agreement; and other employment and training programs. The second largest gross expenditure budgeted is \$29.3 million for Immigration and Workforce Development. Apprenticeship and Trades represents approximately \$11.3 million of the gross budget; Regional Service Delivery accounts for \$5.7 million; and Executive and Support Services accounts for the remaining \$4.2 million.

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,
- assist 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.

Lines of Business

The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills 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 of eligible newcomers for permanent residency through economic pathways, engaging with employers and community stakeholders, delivering multiculturalism awareness activities, and providing recruitment and retention supports.
- **Employment Supports and Career Services** – career counseling, wage subsidies, apprenticeship and trades certification supports, 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** – overseeing for apprenticeship training and certification in the province, supporting individuals pursuing a career in skilled trades, and working with institutions delivering skilled trades training.

Primary Clients

The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills serves several broad groups of clients:

- Immigrants, expatriates and newcomers,
- Employers and employees,
- Apprentices and tradespersons,
- Individuals under-represented in the workforce,
- Community organizations,
- Sector groups and industry associations, and
- Governments and government agencies.

Vision

A province with a diverse and growing population where citizens are educated, skilled, and supported to be gainfully employed.

For more information about the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, please visit www.gov.nl.ca/ipgs.

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 three-year time frame (2023-2024 to 2025-2026) and the objectives provide an annual focus for each respective fiscal year.

For each of the three-year goals, performance indicators are provided along with the first year's objectives (2023-2024). All of these elements assist the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress. Following a thorough review of the departmental mandate, financial resources and key priorities of the Minister, three strategic issues have been identified for the department over the next three years:

1. The need to attract newcomers to the province to support inclusive communities population growth, and job market needs;
2. The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities; and,
3. Strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system.

Strategic Issue 1

The need to attract newcomers to the province to support inclusive communities, population growth, and job market needs

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is increasing efforts to attract more newcomers to the province from elsewhere in Canada and abroad. A commitment was made by the Provincial Government in April 2021 to increase immigration to 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026. The 2021-2023 Strategic Plan began work towards reaching this goal. In 2022, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 3,495 new permanent residents, which is a 70 per cent increase compared to 2021, when the province welcomed 2,055 permanent residents. The work of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan will build on this progress.

Immigration remains an important opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's economic, social and cultural growth. As the population of Canada continues to age and the fertility rate remains at record lows, immigration will be the main driver of population growth. The need for immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly pronounced as the province's proportion of population aged 65 or older grew the most of any province between 2016 and 2021.²

An aging population has created labour supply shortages. Immigration has been and will continue to be an important mechanism in supporting employers experiencing labour supply shortages. Over half of recent immigrants to Canada were admitted because of their potential to economically contribute to labour market needs or create new economic opportunities.³

² [The Daily — In the midst of high job vacancies and historically low unemployment, Canada faces record retirements from an aging labour force: number of seniors aged 65 and older grows six times faster than children 0-14.](#) Statistics Canada, April 27, 2022

³ [The Daily — Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians.](#) Statistics Canada, October 26, 2022

Attracting younger professionals helps to increase the number of families with children which will help sustain the future population. Newcomers that immigrate to Canada tend to be younger than the national population with 64.2 per cent of them being between 25 and 64 years of age and another 28.0 per cent being 24 years of age or younger.³ Currently more than three in ten Canadian children have at least one parent born abroad.³ Ensuring that more newcomers choose Newfoundland and Labrador as their home province would positively contribute to population renewal, economic growth and enhanced diversity.

Attracting newcomers to the province is only the beginning step in a longer process. The purpose of welcoming newcomers is to give them a sense of belonging to the community so that they feel welcome to build their future in Newfoundland and Labrador and decide to do so. Family, friends, jobs, housing and lifestyle are some of the key factors that newcomers consider when selecting their new home.³ Ensuring that opportunities exist for newcomers to obtain meaningful employment in the province and have access to appropriate supports can positively influence the odds of newcomer retention in the short term and therefore improve newcomer attraction in the long term.

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

Issue 1

Attracting newcomers to the province

Goal 1: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have worked to bolster the attraction of new people to the province.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Increased the number of newcomers arriving to the province to 5,100 annually by 2026.
2. Increased the number of in-person and virtual recruitment sessions conducted for foreign labour attraction in different countries to 10, annually.
3. Signed a minimum of five Memorandums of Understanding with foreign governments on labour transfer.

Objective 1 (2023-2024)

By March 31, 2024, the department will have advanced efforts to increase the number of newcomers welcomed to the province to 3,950 annually.

Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Welcomed 3,950 newcomers to the province in the 2023 calendar year.
2. Increased the number of in-person and virtual recruitment sessions conducted for foreign labour attraction in different countries to six annually.
3. Signed two Memorandums of Understanding with foreign governments on labour transfer.

Objective 2 (2024-2025)

By March 31, 2025, the department will have advanced efforts to increase the number of newcomers welcomed to the province to 4,500 annually.

Objective 3 (2025-2026)

By March 31, 2026, the department will have advanced efforts to increase the number of newcomers welcomed to the province to 5,100 annually.

Strategic Issue 2

The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities

A productive, knowledge-based economy requires a workforce that is trained, ready and available for current jobs as well as adaptive to future labour market opportunities. The Provincial Government supports a multifaceted approach to ensuring that people residing in Newfoundland and Labrador can avail of employment opportunities in a changing economy and that local businesses and industry have access to the skilled workers they need to remain competitive.

According to the Survey of Employers on Workers' Skills 2021, 52.2 per cent of businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador reported having employees who lacked the skills necessary to perform their job at the required level.⁴ Addressing this skills gap is critical in preparing people in the province for the more than 81,000 job openings forecasted between 2021 and 2030.

To prepare individuals with the education, skills and work opportunities necessary for participation in the job market, the Provincial Government will partner with industry, labour, education institutions, and other community partners to offer employment and training programming. Employment and training programs must continue to meet the needs of individuals and employers even as technology advances and market conditions change. Therefore, it is crucial to critically review employment and training programs regularly to identify ways to optimize program delivery and ensure that stakeholder needs are being met effectively.

⁴ [Determinants of skill gaps in the workplace and recruitment difficulties in Canada](#). Statistics Canada, November 4, 2022.

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The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years to support the continuous enhancement of employment and training programs.

Issue 2

Enhancing the effectiveness of employment and training programs

Goal: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have enhanced the effectiveness of the employment and training programs offered to individuals and organizations in the province.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Completed a comprehensive review of a minimum of four employment and training programs.
2. Implemented every appropriate recommendation from each review of an employment and training program to enhance program delivery and supports for clients.

Objective 1 (2023-2024)

By March 31, 2024, the department will have worked to review and implement enhancements for one employment and training program to ensure more effective program delivery and supports for clients.

Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Completed a comprehensive review of the Supported Employment Program with the assistance of an external reviewer.
2. Implemented all appropriate recommendations from the comprehensive review of the Supported Employment Program to bolster program delivery and supports for clients with intellectual disabilities.

Objective 2 (2024-2025)

By March 31, 2025, the department will have worked to review and implement enhancements for another employment and training program to ensure more effective program delivery and supports for clients.

Objective 3 (2025-2026)

By March 31, 2026, the department will have worked to review and implement enhancements for a further two employment and training programs to ensure more effective program delivery and supports for clients.

Strategic Issue 3

Strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system

For highly skilled occupations, apprenticeship is a proven workforce training strategy to develop new talent in the province. In 2022-2023, there were approximately 3,500 registered apprentices in Newfoundland and Labrador across 62 designated trades. The 2022 Red Seal pass rate for Newfoundland and Labrador apprentices was the third highest pass rate in Canada and 11 per cent higher than the national average.

The combination of technical in-classroom instruction and practical on-the-job training offered through the apprenticeship process provides individuals with a high-quality education that encourages attachment to the labour force.

The apprenticeship system in Newfoundland and Labrador provides training, supports and services to apprentices, journeypersons, trade qualifiers, employers, training providers and industry partners. It is both comprehensive and responsive. Given the current status of the economy, the evolution of education systems, and our own demographic trends, an innovative and flexible apprenticeship system is essential to ensuring apprentices have the supports needed to obtain certification and contribute to the growth of the provincial labour market. A successful apprenticeship system requires continuous renewal and diversification.

The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years to complete a comprehensive review of the apprenticeship system and support underrepresented groups in achieving certification and participating in skilled trades employment.

Issue 3

Strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system

Goal: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills will have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system to optimize opportunities to achieve certification.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Completed a comprehensive review of apprenticeship and trades certification programs and policies and implemented appropriate recommendations to enhance program delivery and supports to stakeholders.
2. Maintained a red seal pass rate above the national average.
3. Maintained a percentage of female apprentices in non-traditional trades above the national average.
4. Supported the completion of an independent review of the Office for Indigenous and Northern Skilled Trades with a view to ensuring the office is maximizing resources over the 2023-2026 fiscal years to support Indigenous people seeking training and employment in the skilled trades.

Objective 1 (2023-2024)

By March 31, 2024, the department will have facilitated a review of the provincial apprenticeship system and will have undertaken efforts to ensure that apprentices, including those in under-represented groups, have access to the supports they require to achieve certification.

Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Engaged a consultant to complete a comprehensive review of apprenticeship and trades certification programs and policies.
2. Increased the number of spaces available (by 50 per cent) for enhanced virtual supports and services to apprentices with learning barriers.
3. Maintained a Red Seal pass rate above the national average.
4. Maintained a percentage of female apprentices in non-traditional trades above the national average.

5. Funded the completion of a review of the Office for Indigenous and Northern Skilled Trades.

Objective 2 (2024-2025)

By March 31, 2025, the department will have initiated the implementation of the findings of the review to strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system to optimize opportunities to achieve certification.

Objective 3 (2025-2026)

By March 31, 2026, the department will have continued implementation of the findings of the review to strengthen the overall effectiveness, sustainability, governance and accessibility of our provincial apprenticeship system to optimize opportunities to achieve certification.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of a desired physical, social or economic outcome that would normally require action or involvement of more than one government entity. They are a way for government to communicate its high-level priorities to the public.

The Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills' strategic directions are as follows:

- ensure the province has a diverse, highly educated and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands;
- create an economic climate in Newfoundland and Labrador that is conducive to growth, competitiveness, and prosperity;
- increase immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador and position the province as a national leader in settlement and integration;
- find innovative ways to grow Newfoundland and Labrador's population by showcasing the province as a destination of choice for employers, workers and their families;
- ensure that employment and training programs and service delivery models continue to meet the needs of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians; and
- foster innovation, flexibility and accessibility in the province's apprenticeship system.

Annex B: Public Entities

The Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board is the only public entity that reports through the Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills and prepares a separate performance-based plan.

