

2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Labrador Affairs Secretariat





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

It is my pleasure to present the Labrador Affairs Secretariat Annual Performance Report covering April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's **Transparency and Accountability Act** provisions under which the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is a category three entity. As the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, I am accountable for the preparation of this report and the results reported herein.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat, through hard work, advocacy and collaborative working relationships, plays a pivotal role in supporting the economic and social development of Labrador, as well as focusing on the relationships with Labrador residents, partners and stakeholders. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat is committed to supporting the people of Labrador and reflecting the unique perspectives of the region in governmental programs and policies.

This year has been a challenge in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Secretariat engaged Labrador stakeholders throughout the year on challenges associated with the pandemic. I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the staff within the Labrador Affairs Secretariat and I look forward to addressing the opportunities and challenges in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa Dempster". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Hon. Lisa Dempster
Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs

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Departmental Overview

Mandate:

The mandate of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is to advance the social and economic development of Labrador by ensuring the unique perspectives of Labrador are considered in the formation of government policy and in the delivery of provincial government programs and services in Labrador.

Lines of Business:

1. Policy, Programs and Planning

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of provincial policies and programs respecting Labrador issues. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat aims to ensure that provincial policies, programs and services consider Labrador related issues by providing advice to provincial government departments and agencies and through its participation in provincial horizontal initiatives.

The Secretariat is responsible for the administration of Labrador specific programs and grants that include:

- the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy;
- the Labrador Aboriginal Nutritional and Artistic Assistance Program;
- the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy Program and School Sport Program; and,
- annual funding support for the Combined Councils of Labrador.

2. Coordination, Collaboration and Advocacy

To achieve its mandate to advance the social and economic development of Labrador, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat coordinates, collaborates, and advocates for Labrador related initiatives. The Secretariat collaborates with Provincial Government

departments/entities, federal, territorial and municipal governments, industry organizations and social enterprises.

In addition to programming, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat often takes a prominent role on Labrador-focused committees such as the Arctic Policy Working Group. The Secretariat liaises with other Northern ministries and assists in the management of intergovernmental relations on Labrador and Northern issues, such as the Northern Development Ministers Forum and the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. The Secretariat is also consulted on Labrador-related initiatives by other provincial departments and provides support as required.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat works in collaboration with the Public Engagement Division of the Communications and Public Engagement Branch to support stakeholder engagement and consultation in Labrador. The Secretariat is consulted on Labrador-related initiatives by other provincial departments and provides support as required. The Secretariat also works with Labrador stakeholders on issues relevant to the region.

Clients/Stakeholders:

The primary clients and stakeholders of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat include:

- Labrador residents, communities and groups, that expect leadership in facilitating economic and social development in Labrador;
- The Provincial Government and its departments/entities which require policy advice and input on Labrador issues;
- Federal, Municipal, and Indigenous Governments and Organizations that seek information and input on Labrador issues; and,
- Clients of the Labrador-specific programs in which the Secretariat administers.

Additional information on the mandate and lines of business of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is located on its website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/las/>.

Organizational Structure

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat supports the entire Labrador region and is located at 438-440 Hamilton River Road in Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Below is the Secretariat's staff complement.

- Deputy Minister
- Director of Labrador Affairs
- Director of Communications
- Secretary to the Deputy Minister
- Four Senior Analysts
- Clerk Typist III
- Trail Inspector (seasonal)

The Director of Communications is also responsible for providing support to the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat and the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation.

Staff and Budget

Location	Number of Employees
Happy Valley-Goose Bay	10
St. John's ¹	1

Budget 2020-21:

Total Department	Salaries	Operating
\$2,568,200	\$1,077,400	\$1,490,800

¹ Resultant of the reorganization from the latest administration, the Secretariat funded an Executive Assistant position, effective August 19, 2020, in 2020-21. This will be moved under the Minister's Office in 2021-22.

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

Pandemic Relief Grant

In July 2020, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador provided a pandemic relief grant to isolated communities in Labrador. These communities are vulnerable to the impacts of the COVID-19 virus, and more severely affected by measures to contain the virus. In order to help alleviate these issues, a grant in the amount of \$250 was issued in July 2020 to approximately 1200 households in nine communities that included Nain, Hopedale, Natuashish, Makkovik, Postville, Rigolet, Mud Lake, Black Tickle and Norman Bay. One-time funding of \$323,000 was provided by Government and administered by the Labrador Affairs Secretariat.

Labrador Leaders Meetings

During the COVID-19 pandemic, teleconferences with the Labrador leaders and stakeholders were led by the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs and other government officials. Meetings included representation from the Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, and NunatuKavut Community Council, along with AngajukKaks from Inuit Community Governments, and officials from Town Councils and Local Service Districts in Labrador. These meetings provided the opportunity to discuss impacts of COVID-19 in Labrador and community concerns. Some of the issues that were raised included border controls and Labrador points of entry; travel restrictions; health care supports and vaccine distribution.

Arctic and Northern Initiatives

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat leads Arctic and Northern policy initiatives for the Province. This falls within its mandate to advance the social and economic development of Labrador while providing advice on government policies, planning and programs that impact Labrador. Since 2000, the Secretariat has played a lead role in the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) for the Province. The 2020 NDMF, hosted by

Manitoba, was postponed due to the pandemic. The Secretariat continues to work with its NDMF partners on priority projects and other work in advance of a rescheduled forum.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat chairs the Arctic Policy Working Group. The working group is comprised of various provincial departments/entities that have an active involvement or interest in the Arctic and Canada's North. The mandate of the group is to facilitate the coordination and collaboration between Provincial Government departments and entities on the social and economic development activities of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador related to the Arctic and Canada's North. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat represents the Province on the working groups for the Government of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, the Arctic Council Advisory Committee, and the Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative.

Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy

In 2020-21, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat continued to provide funding to support the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy (LTGS). The purpose of the LTGS is to maintain snowmobile trails to remote Labrador communities that do not have year-round road connection to service centres. The communities include Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, Rigolet, Nain, Norman Bay, Black Tickle, and Mud Lake. Funding for the program is \$471,000 annually. In 2020-21 the program was impacted by restrictions due to COVID-19 with portions of the trails either closed or with limited access due to travel restrictions. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat worked with our program Service Providers regarding guidelines for physical distancing and provided additional funds for personal protective equipment and cleansers.

Partnerships

Vulnerable Populations in Central Labrador

The Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay has experienced an increase in both its homeless and transiently homeless populations in recent years. A Senior Officials Working Group (SOWG) for the transiently homeless population was formed in 2019,

co-chaired by the Town and the Labrador Affairs Secretariat. The SOWG met regularly in the summer of 2020 then opted to defer the SOWG to better understand the issue and determine a collective approach towards supports. The Secretariat then begun stakeholder engagement with community and Indigenous organizations which took place between November 2020 and March 2021.

Reaching Home Newfoundland and Labrador

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat represents the Province on Reaching Home Newfoundland and Labrador, which is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness by providing direct support and project funding. There are two boards, Rural and Remote, and Indigenous, which are responsible for setting direction for addressing homelessness in communities and regions. The Boards review and approve funding applications for community-based projects that provide support to people who are homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless.

Cooperative Management Boards for the Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat represents the Province on the Cooperative Management Boards for the Akami-Uapishk^U-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve. The Secretariat works with other relevant departments to share issues related to the Park Reserve. The Secretariat has observer status on the management boards for the Innu Nation and the Nunatsiavut Government. While most meetings for both boards were held virtually throughout the year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Secretariat participated in the Nunatsiavut Government meeting in Rigolet in October 2020. The cooperative boards will be developing management plans that include the sustainability of the land; heritage of the park and requirements for protection; and, guest services management.

Report on Performance

The goals and objectives identified below are based on the assigned 2020-21 reporting period.

Issue One: The Socio-Economic Development of Labrador

The mandate for the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is to ensure provincial policies and programs appropriately respond to the unique issues and opportunities that exist in Labrador.

The Secretariat collaborates with provincial government departments/entities, federal, territorial, Indigenous and municipal governments, industry organizations and social enterprises to advance social and economic development in Labrador. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat works with entities that provide frontline delivery of important supports such as housing, food security, health and transportation to address issues of social and economic relevance.

Resource development in Labrador contributes to the economic progress of Labrador, and to the province as a whole. As these developments are pursued, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat works with departments and entities to ensure they reflect the social, cultural, geographic and economic needs of the region.

Advocacy, open communication and support are required to ensure that matters of importance to Labrador are addressed, with the Labrador Affairs Secretariat often taking leadership in these areas.

Through Government's strategic planning, the Secretariat will help ensure the Province is prepared for existing and future demands.

Goal Statement

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will have supported the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and input from a Labrador perspective.

2020-21 Objective

By March 31, 2021, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and providing information from a Labrador perspective.

Indicator	Status
Lead Arctic and Northern Policy initiatives for the Province	<p>The Labrador Affairs Secretariat leads Arctic and Northern policy for the Province which entails various initiatives such as the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework (ANPF), the Arctic Council Advisory Committee (ACAC), the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF), the Northern Transportation Adaption Initiative (NTAI), and the Arctic Policy Working Group (APWG).</p> <p>With these initiatives, the Secretariat worked with the three Territorial Governments, Provincial Governments with northern jurisdictions, the Government of Canada and Indigenous organizations across the North. While some in-person meetings such as the NDMF were postponed due to COVID-19, most of these initiatives continued with regular meetings occurring virtually.</p> <p>The move to virtual allowed for new opportunities such as Labrador Affairs participating as an observer for Canada during an Arctic Council meeting with Arctic Council States in June 2020. LAS regularly participated in virtual ANPF meetings and met with the federal government to discuss important issues to Labrador such as housing, food security and Indigenous participation.</p>
Administer Labrador specific programming	<p>The Secretariat is responsible for the administration of Labrador specific programs and grants that include the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy (LTGS); the Labrador Aboriginal Nutritional and Artistic Assistance Program (LANAAP); the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy Program (LSTS) and School Sport Program; and, annual funding support for the Combined Councils of Labrador (CCL).</p> <p>While there were challenges associated with COVID-19 that</p>

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	<p>limited programming in Labrador, contracts and funding were distributed for each program and grant. There were restrictions on travel that limited usage of the LTGS and LSTS. The Secretariat worked with the Service Providers for the LTGS on challenges associated with the program and implemented safety protocols around COVID-19 in consultation with the Service Providers.</p> <p>There was limited uptake for the LSTS due to restrictions on sporting activities with approximately \$23,000 expended. The Secretariat provided funding of \$100,000 to the School Sport Program for planned school sporting activities in Labrador, however COVID restrictions resulted in these activities being cancelled.</p> <p>Funding of \$50,000 for LANAAP was distributed to Labrador's three Indigenous organizations and was used to support food security initiatives such as a breakfast program, community food bank, and the transportation of moose meat.</p> <p>Operational funding of \$100,00 was provided to the CCL. While the CCL was not able to hold an Annual General Meeting in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Secretariat was able coordinate and participate in meetings with Ministers and government officials with the CCL executive which occurred in November 2020. See issue two on the CCL for further details.</p>
<p>Consider collaborative approach across Government departments to support social and economic development in Labrador</p>	<p>The Labrador Affairs Secretariat continued to work collaboratively with Government departments and entities, as well as industry, and federal government officials throughout the reporting period by sitting on working groups, attending meetings and engagement sessions. Information gathered during these activities assists the Labrador Affairs Secretariat in providing advice from a Labrador lens on government policies and programs and support social and economic development in Labrador.</p>
<p>Participated on boards/committees and in consultations/meetings to provide input from a Labrador perspective</p>	<p>While COVID-19 presented challenges to many in-person meetings, Labrador Affairs adapted to the use of technology to continue to advocate and provide input from a Labrador perspective on committees, boards and in meetings. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat participated in various consultations and meetings covering a wide variety of topics throughout 2020-21. Some include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Minister committee on the transiently homeless population in Happy Valley-Goose Bay (chair); • Arctic Policy Working Group (provincial) (chair); • Arctic and Northern Policy Framework Working Group (federal); • Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Committee on Oceans Management (CNLCOM);

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northern Transportation Adaptation Initiative; • Northern Development Ministers Forum Senior Officials Working Group; • Chaired the Transiently Homeless Senior Officials Working Group; • Destination Labrador; • Labrador Friendship Centre Annual General Meeting; • Violence Prevention Labrador; • Cooperative Management Boards for the Akami-UapishkU-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve; and, • Local River Watch Committee.
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2021-22 Objective

By March 31, 2022, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and providing information from a Labrador perspective.

Indicators:

- Lead Arctic and Northern policy initiatives for the Province;
- Administer Labrador-specific programs to address the needs of Labradorians;
- Provide advice on all relevant government policies, programs and planning impacting Labrador; and,
- Participate on boards/committees and in consultations/meetings to provide input from a Labrador perspective.

Issue Two: Labrador Relationships

Through open communication and consultations with stakeholders, residents, and community advocates, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat may better understand and represent the concerns of Labradorians.

In addition to the open dialogue and communication with Labrador's stakeholders, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat communicates and collaborates with other provincial departments and agencies to ensure that information and advice is reviewed with a Labrador perspective.

Through information gathering and knowledge, the Secretariat’s mission to advocate for the appropriate consideration and integration of Labrador’s needs into provincial policies, planning and programs may be achieved.

Goal Statement

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will have increased collaboration with Labrador stakeholders through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

2020-21 Objective

By March 31, 2021, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will have increased collaboration with Labrador stakeholders through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

Indicator	Status
<p>Enhance Labrador Affairs Secretariat presence in all regions of Labrador by engaging Labrador stakeholders</p>	<p>Despite COVID-19 restrictions, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat continued to hold virtual and teleconference meetings with stakeholders throughout Labrador. As noted previously, the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs held Labrador Leaders meetings to discuss impacts and concerns around the pandemic. The Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs was joined by Premier and Health and Community Services Minister, John Haggie when required.</p> <p>The Minister and officials traveled to Labrador West and met with stakeholders such as the Town Councils of Labrador City and Wabush in September 2020. The Minister and officials also attended in-person engagement in Central Labrador with stakeholders such as the Town Council of Happy Valley-Goose Bay, the Innu Nation, Nunatsiavut Government, Labrador Institute and other organizations in the region.</p>
<p>Continue to conduct meetings with service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy program</p>	<p>Staff with the Secretariat worked with Service Providers throughout the year to discuss program operations. Meetings were held in early Fall 2020 to discuss the upcoming season and COVID-19 safety protocols and determine the next steps for the program related to the pandemic. Meetings were also held in January 2021 to discuss the season. Following the return of COVID-19 restrictions in February 2021, the</p>

	<p>Secretariat met with Service Providers to discuss restrictions and next steps.</p> <p>The Trail Inspector is a seasonal position within the Secretariat and traditionally works from mid-December through early May. As the Secretariat had to recruit for the position this year, the Trail Inspector did not start until early February. The Trail Inspector was able to travel the groomed and marked trails in the South Coast, Central Labrador and North Coast to meet the groomer operators and program administrators. The purpose of the trail visits is to engage the service providers and identify any concerns and/or deficiencies with the trails.</p>
<p>Assist with the coordination of meetings between the Combined Councils of Labrador and provincial government departments</p>	<p>As noted the 2020-21 CCL Annual General Meeting (AGM) was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Labrador Affairs Secretariat coordinated meetings between the CCL Executive Board and provincial government departments. On November 3-5, 2020, the CCL Board met with officials from Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities, Health and Community Services, Transportation and Infrastructure, Digital Government and Service NL, and Industry, Energy and Technology and Tourism, Culture and Recreation in St. John's to discuss issues the CCL felt were relevant to their membership. The CCL board was also met with the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs during that period.</p> <p>The Secretariat also engaged with the CCL throughout the year to discuss COVID measures related to Labrador.</p>
<p>Participate in Labrador-related conferences and events such as Expo Labrador, Northern Lights, and Cain's Quest</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the cancellation of many conferences and large scale events in 2020-21. The Labrador North Chamber of Commerce (LNCC) hosted a virtual Expo Labrador in October 2020 in which the Premier gave a keynote address. The Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs participated with the Premier in a question and answer session following the address. The Secretariat participated in Expo Labrador and other virtual events held by the LNCC.</p>

2021-22 Objective:

By March 31, 2022, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support Labrador relations through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

Indicators:

- Enhance Labrador Affairs Secretariat presence in all regions of Labrador by engaging Labrador stakeholders;

- Continue to conduct meetings with service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy program;
- Assist with the coordination of meetings between the Combined Councils of Labrador and provincial government departments; and,
- Participate in Labrador-related conferences and events such as Expo Labrador, Northern Lights, and Cain's Quest.

Opportunities and Challenges

Labrador faced challenges with the COVID-19 pandemic. It impacted all facets of life including industry, business, social and economic development. However, industry responded well during the pandemic and was able to implement special measures while ensuring ongoing operations. The mining industry in Labrador has shown remarkable growth in 2020-21. The Labrador West region has a thriving iron ore mining industry and is home to one of the largest private sector employers in the province, the Iron Ore Company of Canada (IOC).

The region is experiencing growth with Tacora Resources' operation in Wabush and IOC's new mining pit Wabush 3. On the North Coast, Vale is proceeding with its underground expansion in Voisey's Bay which is expected to extend the life of the mine by at least 15 years. In addition to these projects, there is mineral exploration occurring throughout Labrador with potential for future development. Search Minerals is in the environmental assessment process to develop a rare earth mineral mine on the South Coast and has an Exploration Activity Agreement with the NunatuKavut Community Council. In addition to these projects, there is mineral exploration occurring throughout Labrador with potential for future development.

There is opportunity for new developments in the agriculture, tourism and other renewable resource sectors in Labrador. A priority for Newfoundland and Labrador is to be a strong, diversified province with a high standard of living. Labrador has an abundance of natural resources that will play a strong role in the future economic development.

Transportation remains a critical focus for development in Labrador. Widening and hard surfacing continues along the Trans Labrador Highway and Government continues to explore a fixed link between Labrador and the Island of Newfoundland. The Secretariat will work with the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure, on options and feasibility of a road connecting the north coast of Labrador.

Social issues, such as homelessness, affordable housing, and mental health and addictions, remain a concern across Labrador. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat continues to work with stakeholders in the region and sits as an ex-officio executive member on Violence Prevention Labrador, and on the Reaching Home Newfoundland and Labrador boards.

In July 2020, Memorial University announced the School of Arctic and Subarctic Studies as its newest academic unit. The School will offer northern-led, northern-focused post-secondary programs in Labrador. This, along with the work of the University's Pye Centre for Northern Boreal Food Systems in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, supports educational opportunities in Labrador. In recognition of the changing demands in the labour development market in Labrador, the Secretariat will continue to work with our government partners and other stakeholders to advocate for training opportunities that meet current and future employment opportunities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of broadband connectivity for work, school, health care and to stay connected. Recognizing that connectivity is fundamental for both social and economic development, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to work with government departments to identify ways to increase capacity in the region.

Opportunities in the North and Arctic and how the province maximizes these developments will be high on the agenda for the Labrador Affairs Secretariat. The Secretariat will continue to participate and represent the province through the Northern Development Ministers Forum and lead initiatives such as the Arctic Policy Working Group.

Climate change is impacting Labrador communities with changing weather patterns that impacts program delivery, particularly in transportation. The Secretariat has been working with Service Providers on the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy to look at ways to adjust to the impacts of climate changes with the program.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to offer Labrador-specific programming and to provide advice and input on government policy and programming that impacts Labrador. Ultimately, the Secretariat strives to advance the well-being of all Labrador communities and is optimistic about future opportunities for the region.

Financial Information

	2020-21		
	Actual	Revised Budget	Original Budget
01. Salaries	488,686	488,700	489,500
Employee Benefits	150	200	2,800
Transportation and Communications	16,442	16,400	63,000
Supplies	1,635	1,600	2,300
Purchased Services	361	400	1300
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	1,344	1,300	-
Total: Executive Support	508,618	508,600	558,900

01. Salaries	456,421	456,400	587,900
Employee Benefits	150	200	2,100
Transportation and Communications	16,467	16,500	48,600
Supplies	11,443	11,400	7,800
Purchased Services	3,661	3,700	11,900
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	2,129	2,100	-
10. Grants and Subsidies	956,048	938,000	1,351,000
Total: Labrador Affairs	1,446,319	1,428,300	2,009,300
Total: Labrador Affairs Secretariat	1,954,937	1,936,900	2,568,200

*Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on public information provided in the Report on Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Fiscal Year Ended 31 March 2021.

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