

Newfoundland and Labrador  
Housing Corporation

# STRATEGIC PLAN

2020-2023



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NL Housing), I am pleased to present the Corporation's strategic plan for the period April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2023. In the development of this plan, NL Housing considered the strategic directions of Government, the Corporation's mandate and budget, the current and future housing needs of the people of the province, including changing demographics, and feedback from our engagement and dialogue with community partners, clients, stakeholders and employees.

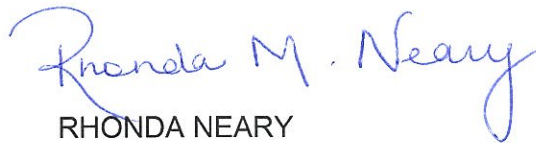
The goals and priorities within this plan reflect the evolving housing challenges of our province. Economic and social shifts within our population have resulted in a range of housing needs across the province, from those facing homelessness, to low-income households who struggle with housing affordability. Residents with distinct needs, including seniors, youth, Indigenous persons, persons with disabilities and those with complex needs will continue to require access to safe, stable housing options that they can afford. This wide range of housing needs requires a collaborative and coordinated approach anchored by partnerships between governments, communities, and the private and not-for-profit sectors. The strategic goals and priorities of this plan are aligned with those of the National Housing Strategy, the subsequent nine-year agreement signed with Canada in 2019 and the related three-year (2019-22) Action Plan of the Corporation.

The Strategic Plan includes the following priority issues: Sustaining the Social Housing Stock; Increasing Access to Affordable and Adequate Housing; and



Strengthening Partnerships to Address Homelessness. The goals in each of these focus areas are supported by programs and services offered at all points along the housing continuum and are facilitated through an organizational culture that strives for continuous process improvements.

NL Housing, as a Category 1 entity, is required under the Transparency and Accountability Act to table a strategic plan every three years and to annually report on its performance. This plan was prepared in accordance with the Act and my signature indicates the Board's accountability for the preparation of the plan and for achieving the specific goals and objectives of the plan.



RHONDA NEARY  
Chair

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2020-23

## Table of Contents

<b>Corporate Overview</b> .....	1
Staff and Budget.....	1
Mandate.....	2
Lines of Business.....	2
<b>Issue 1: Sustaining the Social Housing Stock</b> .....	5
<b>Issue 2: Increasing Access to Affordable and Adequate Housing</b> .....	8
<b>Issue 3: Strengthening Partnerships to Address Homelessness</b> .....	11
<b>Annex A: Strategic Directions</b> .....	14

## Corporate Overview

NL Housing is a provincial Crown Corporation which operates under the authority of the **Housing Corporation Act**. It is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council. The Board represents different geographic areas and interest groups and reports to the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development and Minister Responsible for the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation.

The members of the Board include:

Rhonda Neary (Chair)	Portugal Cove-St. Phillips
David Loveys (Vice Chair)	Conception Bay South
Karen Alexander	Paradise
Derrick House	Kippens
Colin O'Brien	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Fraser W. Piccott	St. John's
George Andrews	Happy Valley-Goose Bay
Bernard Bromley	St. Anthony
Noreen Careen	Labrador City
Liz Palmera-Nunez	St. John's
Darlene Spracklin-Reid	St. John's
Julia Mullaley, CEO (non-voting)	St. John's

## Staff and Budget

As of March 31, 2020, NL Housing had 309 permanent, seasonal, and temporary positions across four regions (7 offices and one satellite office) with the



headquarters located in St. John's. Eighty-nine of the positions (29 per cent) are at the headquarters in St. John's while the regional offices have a combined total of 220 positions or 71 per cent. The workforce is 46 per cent female and 54 per cent male.

NL Housing's gross budget for fiscal 2020-21 is \$123.9 million. This is comprised of \$50.5 million in provincial funding, \$45.3 million in federal funding, rental revenue of \$21.7 million and \$6.4 million in other revenue sources.

## Mandate

NL Housing is a Crown Corporation whose mandate is to develop and administer housing assistance policy and programs for the benefit of low to moderate income households throughout the province, with a focus on serving those most in need.

## Lines of Business


NL Housing's clientele consists of individuals and families with low-to-moderate incomes who require assistance in accessing or maintaining safe, adequate and affordable housing. The programs delivered serve renters, homeowners, those at risk of, or who are experiencing, homelessness and distinct populations whose housing needs are particularly acute, including persons with disabilities, persons with complex needs, seniors, youth, victims of intimate partner violence and Indigenous persons.

NL Housing offers a diverse range of programs across the housing continuum to meet the needs of clients, including:

- Operation and maintenance of the Corporation's 5,575 public social housing units throughout the Province to over 12,000 low-income clients.

- Partner-Managed Housing Program that provides financial and technical support to partner-managed and cooperative housing providers offering subsidized housing to over 1,600 low to moderate income households throughout the province.
- Rental Supplement Program that provides rental assistance to low-income households in private accommodations which assists over 2,000 low-income individuals secure affordable housing.
- Home Repair programs that provide financial assistance to over 1,400 low-income homeowners to complete much needed repairs to their homes, improve accessibility or to make energy efficiency improvements.
- Supportive Living Program that provides grants to non-profit organizations to provide services and supports or build community capacity towards addressing and preventing homelessness. In 2019-20, this program funded 22 partner organizations to deliver 28 projects across Newfoundland and Labrador, supporting over 5,000 individuals.
- Emergency Shelter Program which manages a 24/7 toll free number to support individuals experiencing homelessness. NL Housing engages a range of non-profit and private shelter operators to respond to required emergency shelter placement for individuals experiencing homelessness and connect them to supports to secure permanent housing as quickly as possible. In 2019-20, over 1,000 individuals accessed services of this program.
- Transition Housing Program that provides funding to the Province's 10 transition houses to provide safe short-term accommodations, services and resources to support women and their children who are vulnerable for,





at risk of, or have been subjected to intimate partner violence. In 2019-20, there were almost 850 admissions to this program.

Additional information about eligibility and access to programs and services offered by NL Housing, as well as the current mandate, can be found at the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation website [www.nlhc.nl.ca](http://www.nlhc.nl.ca).

## Issue One – Sustaining the Social Housing Stock

NL Housing is the largest landlord in the province and, along with various non-profit and co-operative housing providers, provides affordable housing options to those in greatest need. One of the challenges facing this affordable housing supply includes the age of the infrastructure, much of which was built 40-60 years ago. Capital investment is required to repair and prevent the deterioration of this existing stock and ensure its long-term sustainability. Another challenge is that the composition of the current NL Housing infrastructure does not match the need of applicants. The portfolio consists primarily of homes with three or more bedrooms while over 90 per cent of applicants require one and two-bedroom homes. Building on work in this area over the last several years, investments in opportunities to redevelop or repurpose some of the existing portfolio will continue to be explored along with much needed investments to sustain the social housing stock.

Preserving and repairing existing social housing stock across Canada is a key priority for funding provided to provinces through the federal National Housing Strategy (NHS). The NHS has set targets for social housing in Canada that would see 100% of the currently funded baseline of social housing units preserved to 2028, while also targeting repairs to 20% of existing units. The nine-year bilateral agreement (2019-2028) between our Province and the Federal government establishes the following targets for Newfoundland and Labrador by the end of March 2028:

- 5,957 social housing units continue to be available for low-income tenant households; and
- 1,192 social housing units receive repairs.

These nine-year targets, along with strategic directions of the provincial government and available provincial and federal funding, were key

considerations in the development of our 2020-23 Strategic Plan. NL Housing also recognizes that investments in energy efficiency improvements, as well as accessibility modifications to better serve our province's aging population, are key elements in the long-term sustainability of its housing stock.

**GOAL:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have improved the sustainability of its social housing stock through the completion of interior and exterior upgrades on units; energy efficiency improvements and accessibility modifications on social housing units.

**Indicators:**

- Number of social rental housing units that receive interior upgrades.
- Number of social rental housing units that receive exterior upgrades.
- Number of social rental housing units that receive upgrades which include energy efficient upgrades.
- Number of social rental housing units that receive upgrades which include accessibility modifications.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2021, NL Housing will have completed repairs including 150 interior and 150 exterior upgrades, energy efficiency improvements and accessibility modifications on its social housing stock.

**Indicators:**

- Number of social rental housing units that receive interior upgrades.
- Number of social rental housing units that receive exterior upgrades.



- Number of social rental housing units that receive upgrades which include energy efficient upgrades.
- Number of social rental housing units that receive upgrades which include accessibility modifications.

### **Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2022, NL Housing will have completed a further 150 interior and 150 exterior upgrades, energy efficiency improvements and accessibility modifications on its social housing stock.

### **Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have completed repairs including an additional 150 interior and 150 exterior upgrades; energy efficiency improvements and accessibility modifications on identified social housing units to support the sustainability of NL Housing stock.

## Issue Two – Increasing Access to Affordable and Adequate Housing

Core housing need is an indicator used to reflect the number of low-income households that cannot access affordable, suitable and adequate housing without spending 30 per cent or more of their total household income on housing. The most recent data from 2016 showed that 22,495 households in the province (10.3 per cent) were in core housing need, with affordability highlighted as the primary challenge facing these households. Of the households identifying as being in core housing need, 59 per cent are renters and 41 per cent are homeowners. Addressing needs throughout the housing continuum, including both renters and homeowners, will require a variety of approaches. It is also acknowledged that housing affordability challenges go beyond rent or mortgage payments and can be the result of other direct housing costs such as utilities and property tax.

In addition to operating its own social housing stock, NL Housing provides rental assistance for almost 1,800 low-income households to access adequate, affordable rental housing in the private market. Through its home repair programs, NL Housing also provides financial assistance to low-income homeowners to make modest repairs to their homes, improve energy efficiency or complete home modifications to improve accessibility. As clients of the home repair program are predominately seniors in rural areas of the Province, this program also supports the benefits of aging within one's home and community, living close to family and friends.

As well as funding and targets for preserving and repairing existing social housing stock across Canada, the National Housing Strategy also includes a 15 per cent expansion target of social and community housing. In the

Newfoundland and Labrador context, 894 units are to be added to the baseline number of 5,957 social housing units by March 31, 2028.

Over the next three years, NL Housing will work to increase overall access to affordable and adequate housing. This will be achieved through: provision of home repair assistance to support low income homeowners to maintain their homes; provision of direct housing affordability benefits for low income renters; and expansion of social and affordable housing units, shelter beds, and supportive housing units.

### **GOAL:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have increased access to affordable and adequate housing for individuals and families throughout the province.

### **Indicators:**

- Implementation of a new portable housing benefit in partnership with the Federal government.
- Number of individuals and families receiving rent supplement/housing benefit.
- Number of individuals and families served through expansion of housing, including social and affordable housing units, shelter beds and supportive housing units.
- Number of homeowners receiving repair assistance, including energy efficiency and accessibility modifications.

### **Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2021, NL Housing will have commenced expansion of social and community housing by having finalized a new housing benefit and provided home repair and modification assistance to up to 1,000 low-income households.



## **Indicators:**

- Finalized a new portable housing benefit in partnership with the Federal government.
- Number of new rent supplement/housing benefit clients.
- Number of individuals served through expansion of housing, including social housing units, shelter beds and supportive housing units.
- Number of homeowners receiving repair assistance, including energy efficiency modifications.

## **Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2022, NL Housing will have further expanded access to social and community housing; provided a portable rental benefit to at least 700 households and home repair and modification assistance to a further 1,000 households.

## **Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have increased access to affordable and adequate housing by expansion of social and community housing options and provision of a portable rental benefit to at least 750 households and home repair and modification assistance to a further 1,000 households.

## Issue Three – Strengthening Partnerships to Address Homelessness

NL Housing is committed to working in partnership with provincial departments, Regional Health Authorities, community organizations and other stakeholders in addressing the housing and support needs for people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing, homelessness. In June 2018, NL Housing assumed responsibility for oversight of transition houses and emergency shelters in an effort to improve linkages along the housing continuum and help people move out of shelters and into more permanent housing as quickly as possible. NL Housing operates a 24/7 toll-free emergency shelter line to manage and prioritize requests for emergency shelter and liaisons with a range of shelter providers. The Emergency Shelter Program provides short-term accommodations, food and transportation to individuals who are experiencing homelessness. NL Housing also works in partnership with community agencies to better connect shelter users with housing and supportive services.

Homelessness is often the result of systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. For some, the experience of intergenerational trauma further compounds the issue. Increasingly, provincial and national data speaks to the prevalence of homelessness among key demographics, including indigenous populations, youth, seniors and those with complex service needs. Given these realities, lasting solutions and meaningful change can only be realized through strong interdisciplinary approaches and partnerships which draw upon the expertise and resources within community organizations and a wide range of government departments and agencies.

The Provincial and Federal funding stemming from the National Housing Strategy provides an important opportunity to strengthen those partnerships and foster better integration across government and community systems in an effort to better serve individuals facing homelessness. A priority of NL Housing includes the development of a comprehensive Provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan, in collaboration with other ministers addressing social systemic barriers related to homelessness, along with community stakeholders working directly with individuals experiencing housing insecurity.

**GOAL:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have strengthened partnerships with government, community and others stakeholders to improve the system of services and supports for individuals facing homelessness.

**Indicators:**

- Low-barrier shelter options created.
- Development and partial implementation of a comprehensive Provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Targeted policy and program responses to support the homeless population.
- Partnerships with government and community agencies to support better coordination of services and supports for those experiencing homelessness.
- Annual reporting on homeless shelter usage and number of individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness transitioned to subsidized rental housing.

**Objective 1:**

By March 31, 2021, NL Housing will have strengthened partnerships with the homelessness serving sector to support improved coordination across the



housing continuum; improved access to low-barrier shelter options on an interim basis and initiated work on permanent shelter options.

### **Indicators:**

- Interim low-barrier shelter option established.
- Consultations with the housing and homeless sector to inform the design and programming for a permanent low-barrier shelter.
- Request for Proposals for permanent shelter space issued and awarded.
- Consultations to inform the development of a comprehensive Provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- Partnership with End Homelessness St. John's and other community agencies to support better coordination of services and supports for those experiencing homelessness.
- Collaboration with regional and rural stakeholders to leverage federal Reaching Home funding to support localized responses.

### **Objective 2:**

By March 31, 2022, NL Housing will have partnered with the homeless serving sector to further strengthen integrated responses along the housing continuum, including the establishment of a low barrier shelter and development of a comprehensive Provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan.

### **Objective 3:**

By March 31, 2023, NL Housing will have further supported improved coordination and integration along the housing continuum; including enhancement of regional emergency shelter responses to support more localized responses for the homeless population.

## Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are statements of desired physical, social or economic outcomes and normally require action by more than one government entity. These directions are generally communicated by Government through Throne and Budget Speeches, policy documents and other communiqués. The **Transparency and Accountability Act** requires departments and public bodies to consider these strategic directions in the preparation of their performance-based plans. This facilitates the integration of planning practices across Government.


### **National Housing Strategy and NL Housing Action Plan**

In 2019-20, a substantial collaborative effort between the Province and the Federal Government resulted in the signing of a nine-year, \$270 million cost-shared bilateral agreement. This agreement, stemming from the National Housing Strategy, is focused on preserving, renewing and expanding social and community housing in Newfoundland and Labrador and bringing new housing solutions to many people in core housing need.

In late 2019-20, NL Housing completed its first three-year Action Plan required under the bilateral agreement that is designed to support the shared goals of the National Housing Strategy and address Provincial housing priorities. We will work across sectors and in partnership with key stakeholders to realize the ambitious goals set forth under the bi-lateral agreement and the Action Plan.

### **Mandate Letter**

The mandate letter for the Minister Responsible for NL Housing outlines a commitment to work closely with our community partners to help improve access to affordable housing, including investments in modernizing or renovating public housing units, and delivering the Home Energy Savings Program in collaboration with the Minister of Environment, Climate Change and Municipalities to help



make homes more affordable and fight climate change. Further commitments include continued support to transition houses and emergency shelters and development of a comprehensive Provincial Housing and Homelessness Plan in collaboration with other ministers addressing social systemic barriers related to homelessness, along with community stakeholders working directly with individuals experiencing housing insecurity.