



# 2017-2020 ACTIVITY PLAN

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER &  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR LEGISLATIVE STANDARDS



# Message from the Chief Electoral Officer and Commissioner for Legislative Standards

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It is with pleasure that I present the 2017-2020 Activity Plan for the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (OCEO) and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards.

The OCEO, also referred to as Elections Newfoundland and Labrador (ENL), is responsible for exercising general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of elections and for enforcing fairness, impartiality and compliance with the *Elections Act, 1991*.

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards is responsible for the enforcement of the Conflict of Interest provisions under the *House of Assembly Act* (Part II – Conflict of Interest). The Commissioner may provide advice and recommendations to members of the House of Assembly in the filing of their annual disclosure statements and is responsible for reporting to the Speaker annually on the affairs of the Commissioner. In addition, the Commissioner is responsible for hearing appeals of public office holders under the *Conflict of Interest Act, 1995*.

This activity plan describes the OCEO's overall work program, establishes our priorities and indicates the performance measures expected to be achieved over the next three years. Additionally, it describes the Commissioner for Legislative Standards' activity plan for the next three years, which includes facilitating member compliance with legislation.

The OCEO and the Commissioner for Legislative Standards are both considered Category 3 entities under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. Therefore, an Activity Plan that sets a clear direction of the actions that have to be completed to fulfill the mandate of both the OCEO and the Commissioner must be prepared. As the Chief Electoral Officer and Commissioner for Legislative Standards, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of its goals and objectives.



**Bruce Chaulk**  
Chief Electoral Officer & Commissioner for  
Legislative Standards



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## Section A: Office of the Chief Electoral Officer

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### Introduction

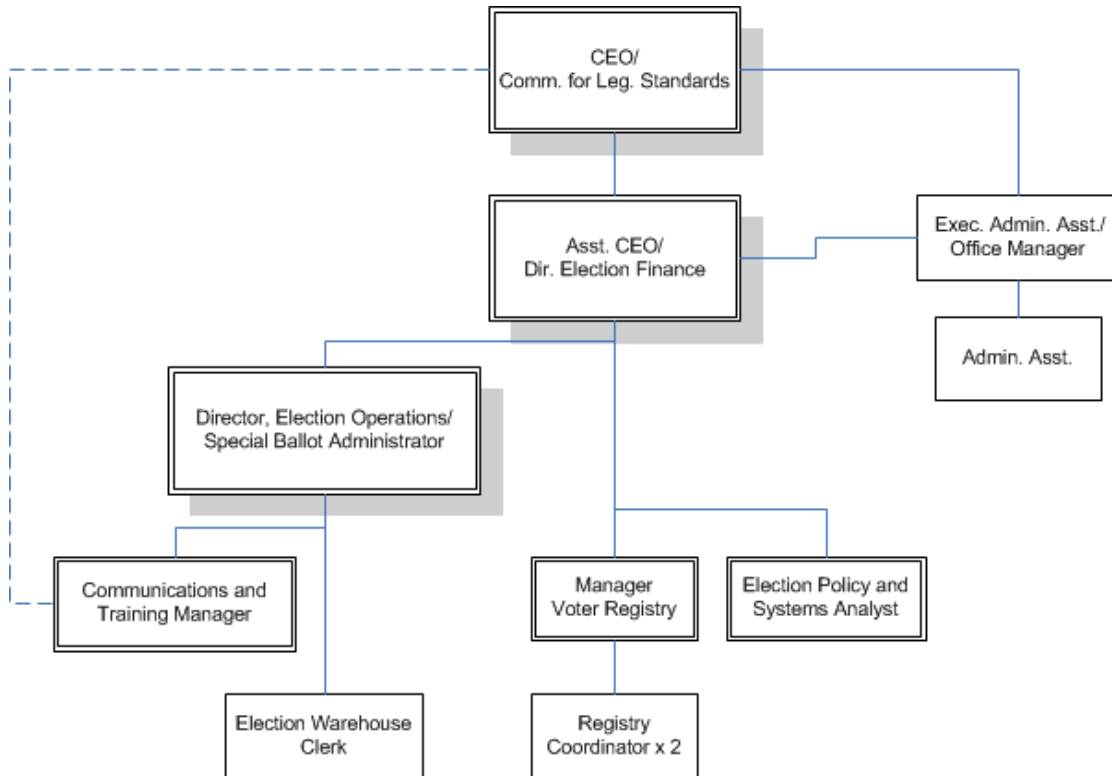
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The Office of the Chief Electoral Officer (OCEO) is a non-partisan office responsible for the conduct of provincial elections, by-elections and plebiscites. The OCEO is accountable to the House of Assembly and to the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

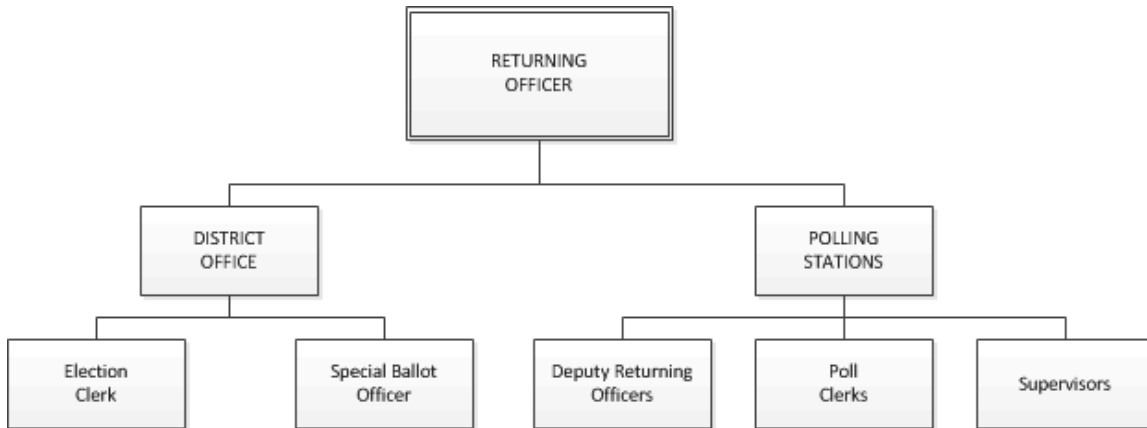
The OCEO is responsible for ensuring fairness, impartiality and compliance with all aspects of the *Elections Act, 1991*.

In addition to responsibilities associated with provincial elections, the OCEO works co-operatively with federal, provincial and municipal governments in the sharing of information relative to the maintenance of an accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date permanent list of electors. These initiatives are supplemented by promotional activities and educational programs aimed at encouraging voter registration.

The OCEO is comprised of a core group of permanent staff as outlined in the organizational chart below.



This core group is supplemented by a significant number of temporary office employees and electoral field staff during election events. During a General Election the OCEO is responsible for hiring and training over 5,000 temporary employees from over 40 field offices to deliver this event. The contributions of these temporary employees before, during, and after electoral events are invaluable to the OCEO. The organizational chart below outlines the staffing requirements of a sample district head office (Returning Officer, Election Clerk and Special Ballot Officer), as well as the district Returning Officer’s responsibility in terms of hiring and training staff for each polling station:



The OCEO is located at 39 Hallett Crescent, St. John’s, in the O’Leary Industrial Park. The toll free telephone number is (1-877)-729-7987 and the fax number is 729-0679. The Elections Newfoundland and Labrador website ([www.elections.gov.nl.ca](http://www.elections.gov.nl.ca)) provides information about the OCEO itself, as well as information for electors about the voting process, information for candidates in electoral events, and various election reports

## Overview

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An Activity Plan must take into account the external and internal environments which affect the organization’s ability to achieve its goals and objectives. There are several factors which affect the OCEO’s planning.

### Demographics

In determining how to more effectively serve the electorate of the province, the population’s demographics must be taken into consideration. The OCEO must be knowledgeable of different elector groups and their specific needs. For example, Special Ballot voting is offered to residents of personal care homes and patients in hospitals around the province on a date prior to the advance poll and regular polling day. This procedure allows residents and patients the option to vote without having to leave the premises.



In addition, the Special Ballot voting option is available to those electors who would be unable to vote in person during an advance poll or on regular polling day. This voting option may fit persons working at remote work sites, students who are pursuing studies either out of the province or outside their home district, or incarcerated electors. For example, during the 2015 Provincial General Election, the OCEO piloted a three-day on-campus voting office which offered students on the Memorial University campus in St. John's to vote by Special Ballot.

The OCEO's advertising plan includes a detailed analysis of the scope of radio, newspaper, magazine and internet advertising to determine which advertising mediums will most effectively communicate key messages. We actively choose varying advertising mediums to reach as many electors as possible.

### **Legislation**

Election planning must be in line with current legislative requirements and the OCEO must be prepared to adapt to changes in legislation and the challenges those changes can present. The OCEO is active in clarifying and interpreting existing legislation to ensure a seamless voting experience.

### **Technology**

Technological advancement is an intricate part of today's society. As technology changes, the expectations of the electorate changes and we must be able to respond to their expectations while still remaining within our legislative framework. The OCEO looks to utilize technology in the delivery of future electoral events, as well as incorporating technology to efficiently and effectively administer the functions of the OCEO.

### **Staff**

The OCEO must maintain a continued state of readiness for elections and by-elections. Although current legislation provides for fixed-date general elections, by-elections can occur at any time, in any district in the province. It is imperative that our staff are equipped with the proper skills, tools, and training in electoral procedures to properly respond when an electoral event occurs.

### **Budget**

Budgetary decisions at the OCEO are primarily driven by electoral events. The operating budget of the OCEO during a non-event year is approximately \$1,100,000. If a by-election is called for any districts during a year, the cost of administering an individual by-election is approximately \$100,000. The OCEO does not budget each year for these events each year as by-elections can be called at any time, multiple by-elections can be held in a given year, or there may not be any by-elections in a year. During a year in which a general election is called, the OCEO budget to administer a general election is over \$5,000,000. The dates of general elections are set in legislation, thus the OCEO appropriately prepares budget submissions in these years to reflect





the increased staffing, materials, and expenditures required for the administration of a general election.

## Mandate

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In accordance with the *Elections Act, 1991 (the Act)*, it is the duty of the Chief Electoral Officer to:

*(a.) exercise general direction and supervision over the administrative conduct of elections and to enforce on the part of election officers fairness, impartiality and compliance with the Act;*

*(b.) issue to election officers those instructions that he or she considers necessary to ensure effective execution of the Act; and*

*(c.) perform all other duties that are imposed on him or her by or under the Act.*

## Lines of Business

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The OCEO provides the following lines of business in carrying out its mandate.

### **Facilitate Electors' Right to Vote**

Every Canadian Citizen who is 18 years of age or older and is a resident of Newfoundland and Labrador has the right to vote. The OCEO facilitates this right by communicating to electors how, when and where to vote: 'how' encompasses the various voting methods available; 'when' details the dates and deadlines that apply to those voting methods; and, 'where' relates to the locations where voting is available. The OCEO works to ensure our headquarters and field staff are well trained in electoral processes and procedures so the electorate will have the best possible election experience.

### **Election Preparation**

Preparation for an election is a continuous process consisting of diverse and numerous types of duties and responsibilities, including:

- hiring election field and headquarters staff;
- designing and delivering training;
- preparing and printing voters lists and electoral district maps;



- responding to and incorporating feedback from stakeholders;
- organization and planning of administrative and legislated electoral events, such as opening district offices throughout the province, Special Ballot voting, the issuance of the election writ, the nomination deadline, advance poll voting, voting in Personal Care Homes and Hospitals, election results and election day;
- procurement and maintenance of supplies for main office and satellite offices;
- coordination and delivery of supplies throughout all parts of Newfoundland and Labrador (factoring in geographical and weather challenges); and,
- maintenance of communication channels with internal and external stakeholders, including Voter Information Cards, advertising and outreach campaigns.

## **Election Training**

The staff at the OCEO is responsible for designing and delivering election training to all field staff required for the electoral event. In the case of a general election, training is delivered to over 120 Returning Officers, Election Clerks and Special Ballot Officers.

The OCEO holds multiple training sessions over the course of several weeks in the lead up to an election. The content is developed in-house and is delivered and facilitated by OCEO core staff members. The OCEO updates this training as internal processes are modified to make the delivery of a voting event more efficient.

Designing and delivering such a large training package also requires that the staff at OCEO stay up to date on adult learning principles, training and facilitation techniques. This is achieved through continuous training for internal staff and participation in interjurisdictional groups on new and innovative electoral training techniques and practices.

## **Communications & Outreach**

Information pertinent to an electoral event must be communicated to the public clearly and in a timely manner.

For a general election, the OCEO typically launches three campaigns for advertising: 'Are you on the Voters List', Special Ballots, and General Election Information. These campaigns include print, radio and online advertising, as well as householder mail-outs and an addressed Voter Information Card that is distributed to over 320,000 registered voters in the province. Twitter is also used to relay messages to the public.

Public notices and public service announcements, information brochures, news releases and media kits are also a few of the tools used to inform key stakeholders about our processes.

In terms of outreach, the OCEO works with public interest groups and community groups in an effort to better meet their needs. During the 2015 Provincial General Election, the OCEO was engaged by the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities to collaborate on improving the



accessibility of election information and resources. Presentations are also given to other similar community groups to explain what accessible resources are available to electors.

Finally, OCEO's website ([www.elections.gov.nl.ca](http://www.elections.gov.nl.ca)) is an effective tool in the communication of up-to-date information pertaining to our business operation.

### **Voter Registry & Boundary Issues**

The Voter Registry group of the OCEO maintains voter and geographic data necessary to ensure a continued state of readiness for elections, by-elections, plebiscites and/or boundary redistribution.

The exchange of information with federal, provincial and municipal governments and the continuous updating of both voter and geographic data are key functions of the Registry and the production and maintenance of the Permanent List of Electors.

In addition, the Registry provides a range of services to Newfoundlanders and Labradorians during and between electoral events through maintenance of voter and address data; implementation of voting area boundary adjustments; managing address resolution and collection; and responding to information requests and ensuring safeguarding of data.

### **Election Finance**

The Election Finance area provides education, guidance and assistance to candidates and political parties with respect to the Election Finance provisions of Part III of the *Elections Act, 1991*.

Duties in this area include examination of financial returns from political parties and election candidates, provision of guidelines respecting Part III requirements to auditors, registered candidates and political parties, reimbursement of election expenses and publishing of reports upon the affairs of the office concerning political financing.

## **Values**

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An organization's values are a reflection of its core beliefs and how it connects to their primary clients. The values that the OCEO strive to achieve are those that are consistent with ensuring the satisfaction of our primary clients and that we have performed our duties enforcing fairness, impartiality and compliance with the *Elections Act, 1991*.



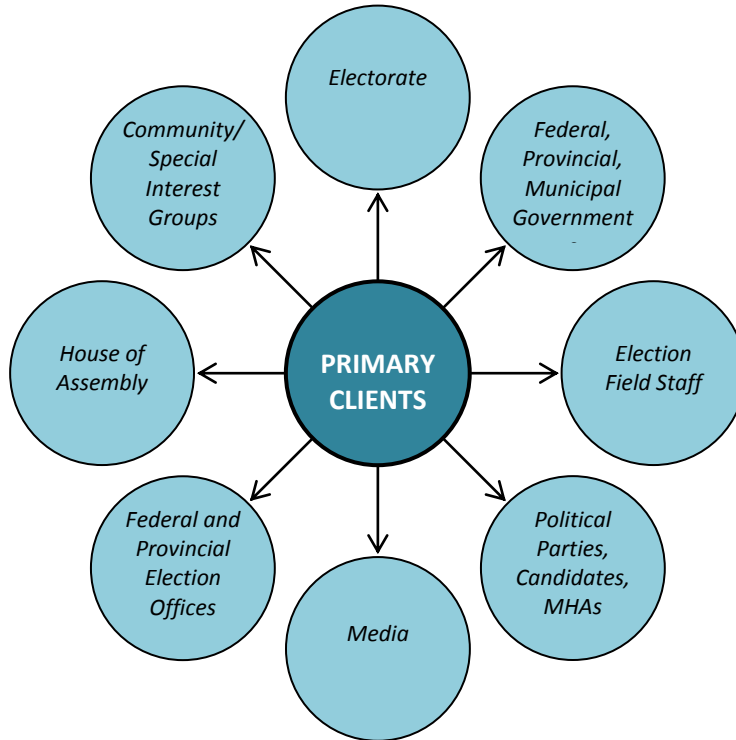
VALUES	ACTION STATEMENTS
<b>Confidence</b>	Approach your duties with the confidence that you are properly trained and knowledgeable in your field. Pursue professional and personal development and strive to create confidence amongst your co-workers. Be proud of what you accomplish and work hard to ensure that our stakeholders are confident in our performance.
<b>Integrity</b>	Exhibit the courage to face problems, accept responsibility for your actions and work towards solutions. Take pride in the fact that you have given a fair and honest effort.
<b>Fairness</b>	Perform all tasks and duties with a view to ensuring the electoral process is not only fair for all involved but that it is seen to be so.
<b>Impartiality</b>	Maintain a non-partisan environment in your dealings with all our stakeholders.
<b>Accountability</b>	Hold yourself accountable for what you do and expect others to do the same.
<b>Professionalism</b>	Strive to maintain professionalism in your day to day interactions with coworkers, as well as with all other stakeholders. Use a customer service based, innovative approach to help electors find the best voting option to suit their needs, resulting in a positive voting experience.

## Primary Clients

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Primary clients are those individuals, groups and organizations which the OCEO deals with on a regular basis and which require significant use of available resources and services.





## Vision

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OCEO’s vision is to be an organization that inspires confidence on the part of all those involved in the electoral process by exercising impartiality, excellence, and professionalism.

## Activities

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### PREPAREDNESS

#### Election Operations

The OCEO is expected to maintain a continued state of readiness for elections and by-elections. Therefore, the OCEO must ensure that all business areas are working together to form a cohesive and efficient operation. The Election Operations division of the OCEO is responsible for the overall administration of an election, covering an array of areas such as Special Ballot voting, advance and regular poll voting, election training, creation and revision of election forms and coordinating envelopes, maintenance of election supplies and recruitment and hiring of election officials.



In between general elections, work is completed to evaluate, research and amend administrative procedures; review legislation; review and revise election training; ensure all supplies required to administer an election are on site and available; and recruit and hire election staff for district and headquarters support.

**Objective #1:** By March 31, 2018 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have completed a review of Special Ballot and regular poll voting procedures in preparation for the 2019 Provincial General Election.

**Indicators:**

- Reviewed current election forms and coordinating envelopes
- Complete process documentation of Special Ballot and regular poll voting procedures
- Identification of new procedures and guidelines for Special Ballot voting

**Objective #2:** By March 31, 2018 the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have commenced a revision of election training materials, including curriculum and method of delivery, in anticipation of election official training during the summer of 2019.

**Indicators:**

- Commence review of training objectives and revised training activities for Returning Officers, Election Clerks and Special Ballot Officers for the 2019 Provincial General Election.

## **Voter Registry**

The Voter Registry group is engaged in a number of preparedness activities to ensure that the OCEO is in a continued state of readiness to meet its legislative mandate. Two of these activities are considered absolutely critical from a preparedness perspective. The first is ensuring that the permanent list of electors is as current and as accurate as possible. The second, and closely related activity, is ensuring that polling divisions within the electoral districts are apportioned based on registered electors and that the geographic data and descriptions of the polling divisions are as current and accurate as possible.

In addition a significant emphasis is placed on review of processes and procedures that will be administered during upcoming electoral events. The review process is voter-centric with the focus being to create a positive experience for the electorate while facilitating improvements to efficiency, quality assurance, accuracy and protection of privacy.

Since the focus of Voter Registry group will be consistent over the period covered by the plan, the following objective and indicators will be reported on for all three years.



**Annual Objective:** By March 31, 2018 the Voter Registry division of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have successfully identified, assessed, and implemented improvements to preparedness activities that enable the office to enhance its ability to maintain a continued state of readiness for electoral events and plebiscites, as well as assisting in the administration of electoral events by other jurisdictions (municipal, school boards, etc.).

**Indicators:**

- Efficiently and accurately maintain the permanent list of electors
- Apportion population to polling divisions within established electoral districts
- Accurately maintain geographic data and descriptions of polling divisions
- Explore technical solutions for process improvements during the administration of electoral procedures

## MAINTENANCE

### Election Operations

An integral part of the election process is the maintenance of the permanent list of electors, which must be kept up to date to ensure an accurate elector database. The Voter Registry division at the OCEO is responsible for the maintenance of the permanent list of electors and apportioning population to polling divisions within established electoral districts. In addition, the OCEO will have improved availability of voter information in support of the 2019 Provincial General Election.

The objective and indicators below will be reported on each year in the planning cycle.

**Annual Objective:** By March 2018, the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have maintained the Voter Registry to ensure readiness for elections and by-elections, and will report on this objective each year in the planning cycle.

**Indicators:**

- Maintained the permanent list of electors
- Apportioned population to polling divisions within established electoral districts
- Explored options for future developments and improvements to electoral management systems



## Voter Registry

The Voter Registry division is responsible for a wide range of on-going maintenance activities and service provisions to residents of Newfoundland and Labrador; The House of Assembly; municipalities; local service districts; provincial government departments, boards and agencies; and school districts. These include: facilitating updates, and responding to requests and queries as they pertain to the permanent list of electors; delivery of the permanent list of electors to registered political parties on an annual basis; working with municipalities to ensure poll boundary divisions are updated to reflect current civic infrastructure and development; creation and maintenance of a provincial Directory of Streets, Cities, Towns and Communities; creation, maintenance, and distribution of poll boundary division maps; assisting with the administration of municipal and school board electoral events and plebiscites through the provision of elector lists and geo-spatial data; implementing, monitoring and enforcing compliance of information sharing agreements; and safeguarding the privacy and protection of personal information under the care of the OCEO.

These activities are reviewed on a continual basis. Improvements are ongoing through procedural review, the introduction of new processes, and enhancement of existing procedures; identification and development of progressive technology solutions; and subsequent improvement to training material and delivery.

**Annual Objectives:** By March 31, 2018 the Voter Registry division of the Office of the Chief Electoral Officer will have completed a review of key maintenance and service provision activities.

### Indicators:

- Implementation of more efficient and secure procedures to facilitate data exchange
- Explore geo-spatial technology solutions to improve poll boundary maintenance and service provisions
- Update data sharing agreements for new ATTIPA legislation





## Section B: Commissioner for Legislative Standards

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### Introduction

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The Commissioner for Legislative Standards is an officer of the House of Assembly. The Office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards has traditionally been held by the same individual who holds the position of Chief Electoral Officer.

In addition to the responsibilities assigned under the *House of Assembly Act* and the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, the Commissioner is also responsible for hearing appeals of public office holders under the *Conflict of Interest Act, 1995*.

The Commissioner's office is located at 39 Hallett Crescent, St. John's, NL, A1B 4C4. The telephone number is 729-0714 and the fax number is 729-0679.

### Mandate

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Under the *House of Assembly Act* (Part II – Conflict of Interest), the Commissioner is responsible for the enforcement of the Conflict of Interest provisions of the Act as they pertain to current and former Members of the House of Assembly (MHAs).

On April 1 of each year, every elected MHA is required to file disclosure statements with the Commissioner. After doing so, the Commissioner prepares public disclosure statements for each member, which are then made available for viewing by the public.

The Commissioner may provide advice to members regarding whether or not steps need to be taken to ensure their obligations under legislation are fulfilled. The Commissioner may also be required to provide opinions, make recommendations or conduct inquiries on matters pertaining to the obligations of members under Part II of the *House of Assembly Act* or under the Code of Conduct provisions of Part V of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

As an officer of the House of Assembly, the Commissioner must report annually on the affairs of the office to the Speaker of the House of Assembly, who then presents the report to the House of Assembly.

The mandate of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards is to ensure that the Conflict of Interest legislation is followed by all members and to hear appeals of public office holders.



## Lines of Business

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The Commissioner for Legislative Standards provides the following lines of business in carrying out his mandate.

### **Inquiries**

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards may conduct inquiries to determine whether a member has failed to fulfill an obligation under the conflict of interest provisions of the *House of Assembly Act* or the code of conduct provisions of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

### **Disclosure Statements**

Within 60 days of his or her election or appointment, before the second April 1 following this date and before each April 1 thereafter, every elected member and appointed minister is required to file with the Commissioner a disclosure statement in a form determined by the Commissioner that is a full statement of the member's private interests other than certain personal property identified under subparagraph 20(a)(iv) of the *House of Assembly Act*.

The Commissioner then prepares a public disclosure statement for each member, which is submitted to the member for review and which is placed on file at the Commissioner's office and made available for public inspection during normal business hours.

During this process the Commissioner may provide advice, give an opinion and/or make recommendations to members to ensure the member has fulfilled the member's disclosure obligations under the Act.

### **Annual Reporting**

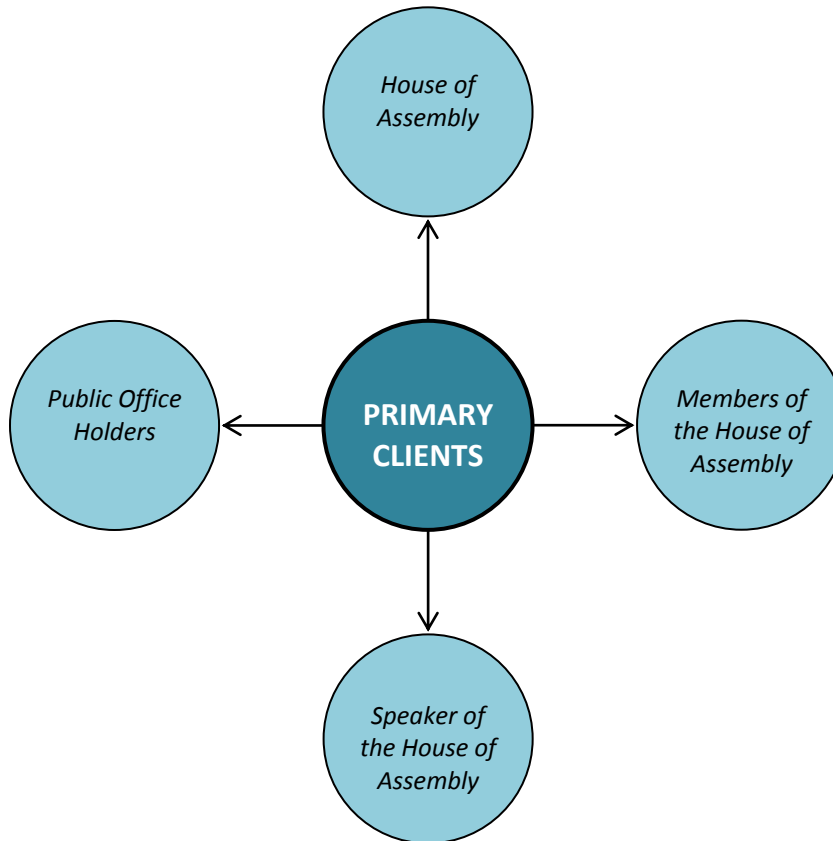
The Commissioner reports annually upon the affairs of his/her office to the Speaker who presents the report to the House of Assembly.



## Primary Clients

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The Commissioner for Legislative Standards has four primary clients and they are as follows.



## Vision

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The office of the Commissioner for Legislative Standards' vision is to maintain an environment where the highest ethical standards are in place for the House of Assembly.



# Activity

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## Compliance with Legislation

The Commissioner for Legislative Standards is assigned responsibility for investigating and conducting inquiries (if necessary) to determine whether a member has failed to fulfill any obligation under the Code of Conduct. The Commissioner is also responsible for reporting to the House with recommendations as to appropriate sanctions similar to the ones that are available for breached Conflict of Interest duties in Part II of the *House of Assembly Act*. Therefore, the primary issue for the Commissioner for Legislative Standards is 'Ensuring Compliance with Legislation'.

The objective, measure and indicators below will be reported on each year in the planning cycle.

**Annual Objective:** By March 31, 2018 the Commissioner for Legislative Standards will have facilitated member compliance with legislative requirements regarding annual disclosure statements.

**Indicators:**

- Provided support to members, as necessary
- Reviewed annual disclosure statements
- Provided advice to members, as necessary
- Responded to inquiries and/or complaints, as necessary

