

**Provincial Advisory Council for the  
Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities  
Annual Report 2020-21**



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- **Clear Print Accessibility Guidelines** (Canadian National Institute for the Blind). Italics or upper-case letters have not been used for the titles of acts, titles, sub-titles or for emphasis. Bold fonts of medium heaviness are used instead.
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## Chairperson's Message

Honourable John Abbott  
Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities  
Government of Newfoundland and Labrador  
P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Dear Hon. Minister Abbott:

On behalf of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, I am pleased to submit our Annual Report 2020-2021.

This report covers the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021, and compare actual results of the Council's Activity Plan 2020-23.

The Council will continue its mandate, providing advice on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities and continue its focus on the development of the provincial accessibility legislation.

The Council is a Category III entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As chairperson, my signature below is on behalf of the Council and indicative of the Council's accountability for the actual results reported herein.

Sincerely,



Fraser Piccott  
Chairperson

## Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (the Council) was established in November 2009. The Council's role is to:

- Advise the Provincial Government on ways to remove and prevent barriers to ensure persons with disabilities can participate in society and access policies, programs and services on an equitable basis with others.
- Secure and strengthen relationships with communities and businesses, to be informed of current issues, innovative ideas, new priorities and best practices to advise the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

The Council is currently comprised of 13 members including the chairperson. Members are appointed for two or three-year terms and represent various regions of the province, gender, age and urban-rural balance. Members have diverse backgrounds, cultures and perspectives, bringing a wealth of knowledge and cross-disability experience. The Council meets three to four times a year; however, the Council met virtually 9 times this year due to COVID-19 pandemic, public health measures and the digital age. Please refer to the Council's webpage for more information

[www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/disabilities/advisory-council](http://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/disabilities/advisory-council).

Costs of the Advisory Council are covered by the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD). The Disability Policy Office (DPO) of CSSD provides secretariat and administrative support to the Council.

Through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, the Council is mandated to:

- Bring knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government;
- Advise the Provincial Government as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities; and
- Promote awareness to the Provincial Government of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

The Council supports the following values:

- Access – providing equitable access to the same opportunities, on an equal

basis with others.

- Respect – understanding that everyone is different, valuing everyone's contribution and treating everyone with dignity.
- Inclusion – full and effective participation in all aspects of society.
- Choice – having choice on an equal basis as others.
- Self Determination – the right to have full control of one's own life; making informed choices that are free of persuasion and based on one's own personal beliefs, values, interests and goals.
- Privacy – maintaining the confidentiality of personal information that is important and sensitive.

The Council's vision is that Newfoundland and Labrador will be a province where persons with disabilities have the same opportunities as persons without disabilities – a province that is accessible and inclusive.

## **Physical Location**

The Council can be contacted through the DPO, which is located within CSSD, 3rd Floor, Confederation Building, West Block, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador.

## **Representation**

The Council can have between 12 to 18 volunteer members (currently there are 13 members) who are appointed through the merit based process with the Independent

Appointment Commission. The Council meets three to four times a year (see Appendix A: Terms of Reference and Appendix B: Council Biographies).

## **Membership List**

Fraser Piccott (chair)  
Paula Corcoran-Jacobs  
Pauline Duffy  
Patricia Lorraine Dwyer  
Erika Breen Hearn  
Bruce Oldford  
Kimberley Maich  
Wendy Monk  
Nancy Reid  
Jennifer Rimmer  
Katarina Roxon  
Debbie Ryan  
Rose Wilson

## **Primary Clients**

The Council brings knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government and advances the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society. In this capacity, the Council serves its primary client, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, by providing advice to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities.

## **Description of Expenditures**

Council members serve in a volunteer capacity and are reimbursed for expenses to attend meetings as per Provincial Government policy. The travel expenses and costs associated with the work of the Council are covered by CSSD and are included in the CSSD departmental budget.

## Expenditures for Fiscal Year 2020-21

Area of Expenditures	Amount
Travel <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flights, hotels, mileage, per diems, incidentals, taxi, disability-related supports</li> </ul>	0
Purchased Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoom Conferencing license (yearly)</li> <li>• Disability-related supports (real time captioning, sign language interpreters, audio support)</li> </ul>	\$400.00 \$6987.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,387.55 *</b>

**\*Note: During 2020-21 there were no in-person meetings due to COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, there were no costs for travel in 2020-21.**

## Highlights and Partnerships

In 2020-21, the Council provided advice to the Provincial Government on the inclusion of persons with disabilities including accessibility legislation, disability-related supports, supports to live in the community, built environment and supported decision-making.

The Council had focused discussions and insights on the provincial accessibility legislation, components and structure, including input on standard development.

Council received a presentation on the overview of the final report, **Supported Decision Making: A Roadmap for Reform in Newfoundland & Labrador** report by NL Association of Community Living and advocates (Dr. Michael Bach, Lana Kezner and Ray McLissac).

The commitment to enhance inclusion in the province is shared among all levels of government, the Council, communities and businesses. The Council continues to engage, discuss and provide advice to the Provincial Government. This commitment also adheres to the principles and spirit of the **UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**; a vision of inclusion for everyone in all aspects of daily living including access to disability-related supports, the built environment and universal

design, supported decision-making, mental health, community and healthcare.

## Report on Performance

The Activity Plan 2020-23 includes two key activities with objectives and indicators for three fiscal years (2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23):

- Advise on Issues Critical to the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities
- Advise on the Accessibility Legislation

### Activity 1: Advise on Issues Critical to the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities

The Council is mandated to advise and inform the Provincial Government, through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities, on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador. In carrying out this role, the Council provides advice on many issues including the development of policies, programs, strategies to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

#### Objective:

By March 31, 2021, the Council provided advice on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Indicators	Results
<p>Provided advice via correspondence, position statements, advice papers and presentations to the Minister Responsible and other Provincial Government officials on systemic issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities.</p>	<p>Engaged in dialogue and presented to the Minister Responsible insight on issues critical to the inclusion of persons with disabilities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact of COVID-19 pandemic on persons with disabilities – examples of loss of freedoms and abilities, accessibility parking barrier experienced by persons with disabilities and isolation all of which had negative impact on their daily lives and access to services.</li> <li>• Accessibility of buildings not being up to code.</li> </ul> <p>The Council flagged Supported Decision Making as a discussion topic to advise on the Minister in the future.</p>
<p>Provided advice on the</p>	<p>Engaged in dialogue and provided insight on the</p>

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Results</b>
development of Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, as per Minister Responsible's mandate letter.	establishment of a Disability Advocate including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability Advocate must stand alone like Seniors Advocate or Child and Youth Advocate. If it was connected to the accessibility legislation, it would have to be established first and might delay the process of establishing the accessibility legislation.</li> <li>• The Advocate's role should focus on advocacy work. The DPO's advocacy work could eventually become the Disability Advocate's work.</li> </ul>

Summary:

As of March 31, 2021, the Council continued to provide advice to the Minister Responsible and Provincial Government officials on issues critical to persons with disabilities.

## Activity 2: Advise on the Accessibility Legislation

The government is committed to developing and enacting new provincial accessibility legislation. The Council has been very involved in the engagement process to date, going forward will continue to provide advice on barrier prevention and removal that can be addressed in the development of accessibility legislation. The Council’s advice will impact the subsequent development of standards to encourage participation of persons with disabilities and ensure effective representation of the disability community.

### Objective

By March 31, 2021, the Council will have advised on the development, implementation and delivery of provincial accessibility legislation.

Indicator	Results
<p>Provided input on the development of materials to ensure a common understanding of what provincial legislation can achieve.</p>	<p>Identified potential challenge of communicating what enabling legislation/accessibility legislation means so the public understands clearly.</p> <p>Discussed and provided input on drafted plain language documents and accessible information guide to address public’s confusion on the legislation’s purpose and scope.</p>
<p>Provided input on considerations when drafting accessibility legislation.</p>	<p>Reviewed Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Canada’s accessibility legislations’ purpose and definitions of barrier, equity and disability.</p> <p>Engaged in dialogue and provided insight on considerations when drafting legislation including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purpose of the legislation to include standards as follows: the built environment including public transportation and transportation infrastructure; the design and delivery of programs and services including the procurement of goods and services; education, employment, and information and communication.</li> <li>• Reference to <b>United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.</b></li> <li>• Include a principles section to ensure a common</li> </ul>

Indicator	Results
	<p>understanding of the purpose of the legislation itself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include an acknowledgement of the values: all people have choice in all areas of life; access is provided in a way that is usable by all people, regardless of age, size, ability etc., to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Universal Design) and that accessibility is a shared responsibility; community, government, private sectors, industries and individuals must work together to create an accessible and inclusive province.</li> <li>• Defining disability as a social model and definition must be clear that barriers are created in society and are not about individual's ability or disability.</li> <li>• Using equitable access and opportunities instead of using equality. Equality is used in the legal definitions in legislative writings and may not be able to reflect differences among words nuanced in disability culture.</li> <li>• Ensuring mental health included in legislation and standards.</li> <li>• Importance of clear common understanding on different languages and ways of communicating i.e. picture exchange, written, visual, spoken, and signing.</li> </ul>
<p>Provided input on the development of the regulations and what regulations can achieve.</p>	<p>Engaged in dialogue and provided insight on the development of regulations including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Priority of using plain language and universal design in information and communication so all citizens have a common and clear understanding of accessibility legislation and standards.</li> <li>• Acknowledgement and understanding of the barriers that exist for Deaf citizens from a primary language perspective.</li> </ul>

Indicator	Results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Importance of having access to sign language interpreters in the standards so that everyone has equitable and fair rights.</li> <li>• Implementing statutory reviews every five years.</li> </ul>
<p>Provided feedback on the development and the process for standards.</p>	<p>Engaged in dialogue and provided insight on the development and process for standards. Feedback includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Council will continue to advise on legislation and dissolve when the Standards Development Committee/Board is established and remuneration be put in effect under existing independent appointment's commission and merit-based appointment guidelines and processes. Cross disability representation is crucial.</li> <li>• Include a section in the legislation/regulations on continuation of Disability Policy Office to clearly state their role in supporting legislation and standards development</li> <li>• Re-profiling funding where possible such as CSSD's capacity or inclusion grant funding if required to support the new standards development committee or to create incentive – based initiatives.</li> </ul>

Summary:

As of March 31, 2021, the Council provided insight and advice on the development, implementation and delivery of provincial accessibility legislation.

## Opportunities and Challenges

Council continues its mandate on advising the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on issues related to inclusion of persons with disabilities and primary focus of providing insight on the provincial accessibility legislation. This strengthens the government commitment to improve inclusion and accessibility in the province.

### Opportunities:

- Advising on development of the provincial accessibility legislation with its goal to enable legislation for a more accessible and inclusive province;
- Advising on the development of the Disability Advocate;
- Continuing to build and maintain relationships with government and stakeholders to strengthen the common goal of a fully inclusive province; and
- Building on the government and community relationships created during the COVID-19 pandemic with the network of organizations of and for persons with disabilities to integrate lessons learned in creating inclusive social policy.

### Challenges:

- Creating digital accessibility options in community and government to strengthen partnerships and innovations to work together in current economic times;
- Addressing economic and social impacts of the COVID pandemic;
- Addressing the existing stigma and discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities in our communities.

## **Appendix A: Terms of Reference**

### **Mandate**

The Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities advises and informs the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities on matters concerning persons with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

### **Role and Functions**

The Council:

- Brings knowledge and understanding of disability-related issues to the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible;
- Advises Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible as it develops policies, programs, strategies and recommendations to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- Promotes awareness to the Provincial Government through the Minister Responsible of barriers experienced by persons with disabilities and how to remove and prevent them.

### **Membership and Structure**

The Council is comprised of 12 to 18 members appointed by the Provincial Government. The chair of the Council is appointed to serve a three year term. Council members are appointed for two year and three year terms.

Council members serve in a volunteer capacity and do not receive remuneration other than reimbursement for expenses to attend meetings. The Disability Policy Office provides secretariat and administrative support to the Council.

### **Application Process**

Individuals who have a broad knowledge and understanding of disability-related barriers and issues experienced by people with disabilities in this province, interested in serving on the Council complete an application form for agencies, boards and commissions, accessed from the Public Service Commission website.

Consideration is given to cross-disability, regional, urban-rural representation and gender balance. Applications are accepted in alternate formats. Steps in applying online:

1. Go to the [Public Service Commission website \(https://www.iacnl.ca/\)](https://www.iacnl.ca/).

2. In the left menu bar, click on [Apply Online](#), which directly opens to the online form page.
3. Fill out the form and apply to any agencies, boards and commissions that are of interest.

Please contact Public Service Commission for alternate format of form.

### **Accountability**

The Council reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the Council is a Category 3 Public Body and; therefore, must submit an annual report to be tabled in the House of Assembly. In addition, it must prepare and submit a three year activity plan.

## **Appendix B: Council Biographies**

**Fraser Piccott** is semi-retired having most recently worked for the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living; Avalon Region, as both the Solutions Lab Project Coordinator and Development Coordinator. He is a retired Canadian Armed Forces veteran who has professional experience in business and community in supporting and advancing the lives of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Fraser brings vast experiences from work with numerous associations and boards, including: founding Chairperson of the Eastern Residential Support Board, Past Vice-President of Inclusion Canada, Past President of the NL Association for Community Living, Past President of the Vera Perlin Society as well as council member of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities since March 2017. Fraser is currently a board member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, the Bowring Park Foundation and is Vice-President and the Founding Chairperson of Avalon Employment Inc.

**Paula Corcoran** is a National Master Trainer with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and represents the voice of living experience in many capacities. Paula passionately utilizes her experiences of living a Recovery lifestyle with mental illness and utilizing the mental health and addictions system to affect change, specifically through her role as Chair of the Recovery Council. She is also an appointed member of the Provincial Advisory Council on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities since 2014, the Provincial Advisory Council on Mental Health and Addiction since 2015 and most recently the WorkplaceNL Board of Directors. She holds a Bachelor in Psychology from Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador. Paula has been the Provincial Executive Director of CHANNAL, a mental health peer support organization, for the past 11 years and is now embarking on a new journey. Using her unique experiences gained in running such an organization, Paula is now offering her experiences to other businesses seeking to ensure a psychologically safe workspace.

**Pauline Duffy** has personal lived experience with disability and has vast professional and volunteer experience with accessibility and inclusion. She was a board member with Epilepsy NL for over 20 years, as well as a treasurer and a tutor with the Laubach Literacy Association for over five years. Pauline is currently an active Rotarian and lives in Stephenville.

**Patricia Lorraine Dwyer** has personal experience fostering and supporting children with disabilities. Her longtime volunteering in her community includes the Royal Canadian Legion, the Lions Club, the Girl Guides and the Army Cadets and, formerly, the adaptive ski program at Marble Mountain. She has received several awards for her work in the community and provincially. Patricia lives with her husband, Fraser, in Steady Brook and has two grown children.

**Erika Breen Hearn** lives in Gander with her husband and two small children. Erika has professional experience in law and lived experience in accessibility. She also has a background of advocacy and volunteer work particularly with the Canadian Hard of Hearing Association Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Kimberly Maich** has professional experience and lived experience with disabilities and inclusion. She is an associate professor in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University and works in the field of inclusive education, researching, writing, and teaching on autism spectrum disorders in inclusive classrooms. She has studied, lived, and worked across Canada from Vancouver to St. Anthony. Kimberly has three grown children with disabilities and lives in a four-generation family outside of St. John's.

**Wendy Monk** has vast professional experience in education in various roles including teacher, Guidance Counsellor and Adult Basic Education instructor. She is an Accessibility Services Coordinator with College of the North Atlantic. Wendy is a parent to two extraordinary children who are hard of hearing.

**Bruce Oldford** has lived experience with removing barriers in the workplace, in the community and in his personal life. He has passion in finding adaptive ways and solutions to daily barriers in the environment experienced by persons with disabilities and sharing his learnings with others to strengthen inclusion in his community. Bruce lives in Central Newfoundland.

**Nancy Reid** has personal lived experience with disability and is a parent of a young adult who has multiple disabilities. She has a passion for advocacy and has worked in various related roles. Today, Nancy uses her professional and personal experience in her work with the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities – Newfoundland and Labrador.

**Jennifer Rimmer** is a proud user of American Sign Language (ASL) as her primary language. She is committed to Deaf activism and has had lifelong connections with Deaf and women's organizations across Newfoundland and Labrador as well as Canada. Jennifer is committed to Deaf activism as a volunteer, advocate and outreach consultant. She works with the Newfoundland and Labrador Association of the Deaf as a Family

Communication Program ASL consultant and has assisted with and co-lead wellness sessions with NLAD Health and Wellness. She is a recipient of 2014 Cecilia Carroll Award for Independent living and has a long-term and extraordinary personal commitment to full inclusion of people with disabilities in Newfoundland and Labrador, locally and nationally. Jennifer is a proud Memorial University of Newfoundland alumna with a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology/Anthropology and Women Studies. She is also a member of Newfoundland and Labrador Deaf Choir and has worked with Canada Video Relay Service as Community Outreach Specialist.

**Katarina Roxon** is a recipient of the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal and is a 2016 Paralympic Gold Medalist. She lives and trains in Kippens-Stephenville, and has successfully represented Canada in major world swimming championships and Paralympic Games for 15 years.

**Debbie Ryan** has vast lived and professional experience with vision loss and is a strong advocate for persons with disabilities. She has been very active with CNIB, promoting awareness, eye health, self-advocacy, and removing barriers. She is currently a member of the City of St John's Inclusion Advisory Committee and Marine Atlantic's Inclusion Advisory Committee, and works with businesses on the best practices of diversity and accessibility. She is a past Board Member of the Coalition of Persons with Disabilities Newfoundland and Labrador and past president of the International Association of Business Communicators Newfoundland and Labrador (IABCNL). In 2019, Debbie was recognized by IABCNL as the Communications Professional of the Year for her work in inclusion and the prevention of vision loss.

**Rose Anna Wilson** is a Military veteran who served for 23 years, and has lived experiences with disabilities, mental health and issues related to seniors. She actively volunteers in her community as an Area Director of the Northern Peninsula for the Newfoundland and Labrador 50+ Federation, is a peer supporter for Seniors NL, secretary to local Royal Canadian Legion, and a current member on the Buildings Accessibility Advisory Board. Rose is originally from Buchans Junction and currently lives in Deer Lake.