

*House of Assembly
Newfoundland & Labrador*



*Colonial Building
1850-1959*

*Confederation Building
1960-present*



2014-17 Activity Plan

House of Assembly Service





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MESSAGE FROM SPEAKER



On March 13, 2014, the House of Assembly Service was re-categorized to a Category 3 entity by the House of Assembly Management Commission. Under Section 7 of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* (the Act), Category 3 entities must submit an Activity Plan.

I am therefore pleased to present the House of Assembly Service Activity Plan for 2014-2017 planning cycle. This plan has been prepared as appropriate for a Category 3 entity in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

This Plan was prepared by the House of Assembly Service. In accordance with my obligations under the Act, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific objectives contained therein.

Hon. Ross Wiseman, MHA
Speaker of the House of Assembly



OVERVIEW

The House of Assembly Service (HOAS) was established by statute in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, which was proclaimed on June 14, 2007. It was established to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its committees, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

The House of Assembly Service has a total of 52 employees (as of May 1, 2014). It includes the Speaker, the Clerk, and employees of the Office of the Clerk, Corporate and Members' Services Division and Information Management Division.

The Speaker is the impartial presiding officer of the House and is the guardian of its rights and privileges. As established by statute, the Speaker must also act as the Chair of the House of Assembly Management Commission. The Speaker's Office provides support to the Speaker in carrying out these duties and responsibilities.

The Office of the Clerk supports the activities of the Clerk of the House of Assembly in all parliamentary and administrative matters. The Clerk is the non-partisan, chief permanent officer of the House whose duties can be divided in two main areas: Chief Parliamentary Officer and Chief Administrative Officer.

As the Chief Parliamentary Officer the Clerk provides advice to the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly on matters pertaining to parliamentary procedure. He or she is responsible for interpreting the Standing Orders, conventions, precedents and usages of the House and must ensure the preparation of the Order Paper and Minutes of proceedings. The Clerk also has a responsibility for the safe-keeping of all records of the House of Assembly.

As the Chief Administrative Officer the Clerk is responsible for the management of the operations of the House of Assembly Service and the administration of the Statutory Offices. The Clerk also serves as Secretary to the House of Assembly Management Commission and is responsible for providing full administrative support to the Commission.

The Corporate and Members' Services Division provides services in Accounts Payable; Financial Planning and Reporting; General Operations and Purchasing; and Human Resources and Payroll Administration. The Information Management Division includes the services of the Legislative Library, Broadcast Centre, Hansard and Records Management.



BUDGET

The House of Assembly has a budget of **\$15,772,100** for 2014-15 fiscal year. This includes Members' Resources, Government Members' Caucus, Official Opposition Caucus and Third Party Caucus; in addition to funding for the House of Assembly Service. It does not include the budgets for the Statutory Offices.

The details are noted as follows:

Salaries	\$12,064,600
Employee Benefits	21,100
Transportation and Communications	354,500
Supplies	165,900
Professional Services	93,000
Purchased Services	551,100
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	144,000
Allowances and Assistance	2,365,600
Grants and Subsidies	84,100
Related Revenue	(71,800)
Total	15,772,100

Source: 2014-15 Estimates

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MANDATE

The House of Assembly Service derives its mandate from the provisions of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* (the Act). It is also informed by the *House of Assembly Act* and the *Elections Act, 1991*.

The mandate of the House of Assembly Service is contained in subsection 25 (1) of the Act, which states:

25 (1) The House of Assembly Service consists of operations established, whether by law or otherwise, for the purpose of supporting the functioning of the House of Assembly, its committees and members, and includes

- (a) the speaker;*
- (b) the office of the clerk and other officers of the House of Assembly;*
- (c) the law clerk;*
- (d) the financial and administrative services;*
- (e) the legislative library;*
- (f) the office of Hansard;*
- (g) the broadcast centre; and*
- (h) other divisions that may be assigned by law or designated and provided for by the commission.*

The House of Assembly Service supports the work of the Speaker, the Clerk, the House of Assembly and its Committees, Members, and the House of Assembly Management Commission by:

- Coordinating and supporting the decision-making process of the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Providing advice and interpretation on parliamentary procedure and protocol;
- Providing financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, administrative and information services;
- Providing legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly;



- Providing parliamentary library, records and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly, including reference, research and records organization and control;
- Providing compliance with Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act;
- Providing official transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly and the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Broadcasting the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Communications; and
- Providing strategic communications advice and support to the Speaker, the Clerk, and the House of Assembly Management Commission.



LINES OF BUSINESS

In fulfilling its mandate, the House of Assembly Service provides the following lines of business.

1. Support to the House of Assembly and the Committees of the House

The House of Assembly Service provides executive, administrative, and advisory support to the House of Assembly and its Committees. It advises the Speaker and Members on parliamentary procedure, provides procedural advice to Committees, drafts minutes and reports, keeps records, and organizes meetings.

The House of Assembly Service, through the Law Clerk, provides legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly, and provides in-house corporate legal advice. The Law Clerk provides drafting services on amendments in committee where required and for Private Members' Bills.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for preserving order and maintaining security in the galleries, corridors and other areas in the Parliamentary Precinct.

Hansard provides the official and complete transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly, its Committees and the meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

The Broadcast Centre is responsible for televising the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

2. Support to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission

The House of Assembly Service is the primary support for the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role incorporates the preparation of briefing materials, the coordination and facilitation of Commission meetings, and the maintenance of all Commission records.

Strategic communications advice and support are provided to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role includes developing communications policy and procedures and advising on communications issues.

3. Support to Members of the House of Assembly

The House of Assembly Service supports the Members of the House of Assembly in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. This includes providing Member orientation and relevant training as required, setting up Members' offices,



purchasing required supplies and services for Members, processing Members' expense claims, and providing payroll and human resources services.

The Legislative Library provides parliamentary library and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly in the execution of their duties, including reference and research services and information access and awareness.

4. Support to Statutory Offices

The House of Assembly Service supports the Statutory Offices in carrying out administrative responsibilities. This includes financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, and information management services.



VALUES

The following values are fundamental to all interactions and communications between the House of Assembly Service and its clients.

<u>Value</u>	<u>Action Statement</u>
Impartiality	Each employee provides services in a non-partisan manner to all Members and their staff.
Fairness	Each employee performs his or her duties in an unbiased and independent manner.
Respect	Each employee performs his or her duties in a manner that respects the rights of other employees, Members of the House of Assembly and the public.
Confidence	Employees will not abuse their official position for personal gain and will not accept any gift or benefit which may result in an obligation to a third party.
Trust	Each employee exercises due care and control of records created or collected in the exercise of their responsibilities, ensuring that records are organized, secured and managed according to applicable policy and legislation.
Integrity	Each employee performs his or her duties honestly, ethically and free of personal interests and activities which may appear to interfere with their duties.
Quality Service	Each employee builds and sustains relationships by assessing, anticipating, and fulfilling needs of the clients.



PRIMARY CLIENTS

The House of Assembly Service defines its primary clients as those individuals, groups and organizations who are the principal beneficiaries of its lines of business. These clients include the following:

- a) House of Assembly and its Committees
- b) Members of the House of Assembly
- c) House of Assembly Management Commission
- d) Caucus Offices of the House of Assembly
- e) Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly
- f) Executive Branch of Government

VISION

The vision of the House of Assembly Service is one where the public, clients, and employees are well informed on the operations of the Legislature.



MISSION

The House of Assembly Service has made significant progress toward establishing a transparent and accountable administrative framework for the Legislature. It recognizes the value in having a public, primary clients and employees that are well-informed on the operations of the Legislature and the democratic process in our province. Through effective efforts in communications outreach and education, the House of Assembly Service can create awareness and understanding while also building confidence and trust.

The current mission statement was established at the beginning of the 2011-14 reporting cycle. At that time, development of an internal communications strategy was selected as a focus area throughout the duration of the mission (up to March 31, 2017). Work in this area commenced as planned and much progress was made throughout the 2011-14 planning cycle.

As a result of shifting priorities and realigning of responsibilities, the House of Assembly Service has decided that internal communications will not be part of its mission focus moving forward into the upcoming reporting period. Internal communications is an operational facet that will become part of internal operational planning for the Legislature. The HOAS is confident that the intent of the mission will still be accomplished through its work in the priority areas included in this plan.

By March 31, 2017, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented initiatives to build awareness, confidence and trust in the operations of the Legislature.

Measure:

Implemented initiatives to build awareness, confidence and trust in the operations of the Legislature.

Indicators:

- Implemented strategy to support Public Education and Outreach.



ISSUES

Maintaining the principles of accountability and openness will always be a priority for the House of Assembly Service. A review of its lines of business with a forward-looking approach has identified the following priority areas over the 2014-17 planning cycle.

ISSUE 1: SUPPORT TO THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

The House of Assembly Management Commission establishes, implements and controls financial and administrative policies applicable to the House of Assembly, the House of Assembly Service and the Statutory Offices. The Commission oversees the finances of the House of Assembly including its budget, revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities. It ensures the proper administration of allowances for Members, as well as reimbursement and payment of their expenditures.

The support of the House of Assembly Service is critical to the Commission in carrying out its mandate as established in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The HOAS conducts research of issues; prepares briefing notes and other materials for Commission meetings; prepares and tracks Minutes of all meetings; and ensures that all necessary work to properly action the decisions of the Commission is carried out.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2015, the House of Assembly Service will have supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

Measure:

Supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

Indicators:

- Conducted research and prepared all briefing materials necessary for meetings of the Commission.
- Prepared and distributed Minutes of all Commission meetings.
- Tracked all decisions of the Commission and completed the work necessary to properly action them.
- Updated and maintained manuals and templates that support the work of the Commission as necessary.



By March 31, 2016, the House of Assembly Service will have effectively supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

By March 31, 2017, the House of Assembly Service will have effectively supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission.



ISSUE 2: INFORMATION, OUTREACH & EDUCATION

The House of Assembly Service recognizes the value of a public that has confidence and trust in elected officials and the democratic process, and is well-informed about the role and operations of the legislature. The effective flow of information, outreach and education are important components to increase awareness and understanding of the role of the House of Assembly, and will help to build confidence and trust in the democratic process and the work of elected officials.

The House of Assembly website (www.assembly.nl.ca) is crucial to the effective delivery of awareness and outreach efforts. It also facilitates the communication of information that allows the House of Assembly Service to maintain its standards of being open, transparent and accountable to the people of the province. The website contains information that is beneficial for many target groups including the general public; MHAs; political and caucus office staff; and officials and employees of the executive branch of government. Given that the website has been in existence substantially in its present form since 2007, the House of Assembly Service plans to review the structure, layout and content to ensure it best meets the needs of the House of Assembly as its primary communication tool.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2015, the House of Assembly Service will have conducted a review of its current web presence and provided recommendations for improvement as necessary.

Measure:

Conducted a review of its current web presence and provided recommendations for improvement as necessary.

Indicators:

- Established committee to carry out the review.
- Conducted review of the structure, layout and content of the existing website
- Provided recommendations on the website to senior leadership as necessary.

By March 31, 2016, the House of Assembly Service will have commenced work on the website according to review recommendations.

By March 31, 2017, the House of Assembly Service will have continued work on the website according to review recommendations.



ISSUE 3: SUPPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

A main line of business for the House of Assembly Service is providing support to the forty eight Members of the House of Assembly. The HOAS is responsible for ensuring that all Members have the tools and resources they require to effectively carry out their role as elected officials. While supports and services are provided to Members on an ongoing basis, the volume of work required by the HOAS is increased following general elections and by-elections. A provincial general election will take place during the upcoming reporting cycle. This will require a great deal of additional planning and work by the HOAS to ensure the necessary tools and resources are in place to meet the needs of both the incoming and outgoing Members.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2015, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.

Measure:

Continued to provide the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.

Indicators:

- Revised and updated Member guides, manuals and orientation materials as required.
- Provided training and orientation to newly elected Members and their staff as required.
- Provided ongoing services to Members as required to support them in carrying out their roles.

By March 31, 2016, the House of Assembly Service will have continued to provide the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.

By March 31, 2017, the House of Assembly Service will have provided the necessary support to Members of the House of Assembly.