



House of Assembly Chamber
Newfoundland and Labrador



2023-2026 Activity Plan House of Assembly Service



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MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER



The House of Assembly Service is designated a Category 3 entity, and as per section 7 of the *Transparency and Accountability Act* (the Act) must submit an Activity Plan every three years.

I am therefore pleased to present the House of Assembly Service Activity Plan for the period from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026. It has been prepared as appropriate for a Category 3 entity in accordance with the provisions of the Act.

The House of Assembly Service prepared this 2023-26 Activity Plan. 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. Derek Bennett, MHA
Speaker of the House of Assembly



OVERVIEW

The *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act* (HOAAIAA) established the House of Assembly Service (the Service) by statute 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 (MHAs). The Service supports the work of the Legislative branch (the Legislature) of government, which has three main functions:

1. Passing legislation that provides power to the Executive branch;
2. Reviewing finances of the Executive branch; and
3. Investigating policies and activities of the Executive branch.

As of April 1, 2023, the Service had 49 employees, which includes permanent, sessional and temporary employees in Office of the Speaker, 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 encompass 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. The Clerk 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 safekeeping 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 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 Office of the Clerk provides support services to all Standing and Select Committees of the House, and provides full administrative and secretariat support to the House of Assembly Management Commission and Audit Committee. The Clerk's Office also provides legal advice and services; strategic communications; policy research and analysis; and visitor services, outreach and education.

The Corporate and Members' Services Division provides the functions of Accounts Payable; Financial Planning and Reporting; General Operations and Purchasing; and



Human Resources and Payroll Administration. The Information Management Division includes provides the functions of the Legislative Library, Broadcast Services, Hansard and Records Management.



BUDGET

The House of Assembly has a budget of **\$16,777,100** for the 2023-24 fiscal year. In addition to funding for the House of Assembly Service, this includes funding for Members' Resources, Government members' caucus, Official Opposition caucus, Third Party caucus and independent Members. It does not include the budgets for the statutory offices.

The details are noted as follows:

Salaries	\$12,689,500
Employee Benefits	16,800
Transportation and Communications	335,900
Supplies	212,800
Professional Services	534,700
Purchased Services	453,000
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	113,900
Allowances and Assistance	2,363,700
Grants and Subsidies	84,800
Revenue	(28,000)
Total	<hr/> 16,777,100

Source: 2023-24 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* (HOAAIAA). The *House of Assembly Act* and the *Elections Act, 1991* also informs this mandate.

The mandate of the 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.



LINES OF BUSINESS

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

Support to House of Assembly Management Commission

The Office of the Clerk is the primary support for the House of Assembly Management Commission. This includes coordinating and facilitating Commission meetings, conducting policy analysis, preparing all briefing materials, implementing all decisions of the Commission and maintaining all Commission records.

The Clerk's Office also provides strategic communications advice and support to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission, including media relations.

Support to Standing & Select Committees of the House

The Office of the Clerk supports all Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly by providing procedural and legal advice, drafting minutes and reports, maintaining Committee records, organizing meetings, conducting research and carrying out other duties as required at the Committee's direction.

Legal Services

The Office of the Clerk provides legal advice on parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and all Members and caucuses of the House of Assembly. This includes the provision of drafting services on amendments in Committee, where required, and for private Members' bills. The Law Clerk also provides in-house corporate legal advice to the Speaker, the Management Commission and the House of Assembly Service.

Strategic Communications & Policy Analysis/Development

The Office of the Clerk provides all policy and communications support to the Speaker, the House of Assembly Management Commission and the House of Assembly Service. Communications support includes strategic internal and external communications planning, media relations and social media management. Policy support includes support to the House of Assembly Management Commission in the form of conducting research and policy analysis, preparing briefing materials and implementing decisions of the Commission; as well as coordinating the strategic planning and reporting process required under the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. The Office of the Clerk is also responsible for developing all orientation and training materials for MHAs, constituency assistants and caucus support employees to facilitate mandatory training provisions under the HOAAIAA.



Visitor Services, Education & Outreach

Visitor services and outreach is also the responsibility of the Office of the Clerk. This function includes tours of the House of Assembly and supporting educational materials, as well as development and execution of other outreach and educational programming.

Legislative Library

The Legislative Library's primary purpose is to provide parliamentary library and information services to all Members, Officers of the House of Assembly and their support staff. These include reference and research services, and dissemination and preservation of information. The Library is the official depository of publicly released government documents of Newfoundland and Labrador (*The Rooms Act*, s.21). It is also responsible for developing and maintaining the House of Assembly website and intranet.

Hansard (Transcription Services)

Hansard is responsible for producing the complete report of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly, its Committees and the meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission. The Hansard document is a near-verbatim transcript. Hansard applies limited editing to ensure proper grammar, spelling and punctuation, to observe parliamentary forms and to minimize repetition and redundancy.

Broadcast Services

Broadcast Services is responsible for recording and broadcasting all sittings of the House of Assembly and all meetings of the Management Commission. It also records the audio of certain Committees of the House. Broadcasts are televised and web-streamed live, while webcasts are available for on-demand viewing via the archives. Audio recordings of Committee meetings are available on the House of Assembly website within 24 hours of the meeting's end.

Records Management

Records Management is responsible for the development and implementation of policies, procedures and guidelines as they apply to standard and electronic records and for information management in the House of Assembly in accordance with the *Management of Information Act*. Records Management oversees and maintains the administrative and operational records of the House of Assembly and advises on related matters to the statutory offices. Records Management also facilitates the application of the *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015* (ATIPPA, 2015) for the House of Assembly in response to requests for information, and provides advice and guidance respecting the collection of personal information and protection of privacy.



Human Resources Services & Payroll Administration

Human Resources Services and Payroll Administration provides services in payroll administration; benefits coordination; recruitment and staffing competitions; advice on learning and development opportunities; employee relations and counselling; occupational health and safety; conflict of interest; service recognition; and position classifications.

Financial Planning & Reporting

Financial Planning and Reporting provides financial analysis, development and advice on financial policies and procedures. Financial Planning and Reporting also coordinates the annual estimates process; provides internal financial reports; provides external financial reports, including Members' expenses; and coordinates all audit processes. It is also responsible for the accounts receivable/revenue function.

Accounts Payable

Accounts Payable is responsible for processing all Members' expense claims, as well as all other payables.

General Operations & Purchasing

General Operations and Purchasing provides support for day-to-day operational matters, central purchasing and asset management activities. It also manages the process for setting-up district constituency offices and coordinates the furniture, equipment and services entitlements for all Members



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	Employees provide services in a non-partisan manner to all Members and their staff.
Fairness	Employees perform their duties in an unbiased and independent manner.
Respect	Employees perform their 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	Employees 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	Employees perform their duties honestly, ethically and free of personal interests and activities that may appear to interfere with their duties.
Quality Service	Employees build and sustain relationships by assessing, anticipating and fulfilling the needs of clients.

Employees of the Service are subject to the Code of Conduct for Officers and Employees of the House of Assembly, which requires the highest standards of accountability, integrity and impartiality with respect to carrying out roles and responsibilities. In accordance with subsection 35(3) of the HOAAIAA, the Management Commission adopted the Code and each employee is required to sign it annually as a means of declaring their ongoing commitment to the standards of accountability, integrity and impartiality.



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) Members of the House of Assembly;
- b) Members of the Management Commission and Audit Committee;
- c) Members of Standing and Select Committees;
- d) Caucus support employees;
- e) Employees of the statutory offices;
- f) Employees of the Executive branch; and the
- g) General public.

VISION

The vision of the House of Assembly Service is to ensure excellence in providing non-partisan procedural, legal, administrative, research and educational services to support the operations of the Legislative branch of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador in the execution of its constitutional functions.



ISSUES

A main priority for the House of Assembly Service is to ensure fulfillment of the primary role of Parliament as the elected body that approves legislation and holds oversight of the Government within provincial jurisdiction in accordance with the Constitution of Canada.

In consideration of its lines of business, the following will guide the work of the Service over the 2023-26 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 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 Service is critical to the Commission in carrying out its mandate as established in the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2024, the Service will have supported the operations of the House of Assembly Management Commission and Audit Committee.

Indicators:

- Conducted research and prepared all briefing materials necessary for meetings of the Commission and Audit Committee.
- Prepared and distributed Minutes of all Commission and Audit Committee meetings.
- Tracked all decisions of the Commission and Audit Committee, and completed the work necessary for their implementation.
- Updated and maintained manuals and templates that support the work of the Commission and Audit Committee, as necessary.
- Developed and maintained orientation and training materials for members of the Commission and Audit Committee, and facilitated their delivery to new members, as required.



As the focus of the Service will remain consistent, it will report on the objective and indicators noted above for the years ended March 31, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

ISSUE 2: SUPPORT TO MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

A main line of business for the Service is providing support to all Members of the House of Assembly. The Service is responsible for ensuring that Members have the tools and resources they require to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities as elected officials. While the Service provides supports and services to Members on an ongoing basis, the volume of work required increases following general elections and by-elections. It is anticipated that a provincial general election will take place during the upcoming reporting cycle. This will require additional planning and work by the Service to ensure the necessary tools and resources are in place to support the transition between general assemblies.

Objectives:

By March 31, 2024, the Service will have 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 Members, constituency assistants and caucus support staff, as required.
- Provided ongoing services to support Members in carrying out their constitutional roles as elected officials, as required.

As the focus of the Service will remain consistent, it will report on the objective and indicators noted above for the years ended March 31, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

ISSUE 3: SUPPORT TO STANDING AND SELECT COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Another main line of business for the Service includes support to the Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly. The Office of the Clerk, and other areas of the Service as required, provides supports to assist Committees in their work, such as procedural advice and expertise, research, report writing and media relations.

Officials in the Office of the Clerk are the procedural and administrative advisors to both the Chair and the Committee, carrying out these duties and responsibilities in consultation with the Chair and at the direction of the Committee. These officials provide advice on the operation, procedural rules or mandate of the Committee and also conduct non-partisan research, drafting reports and other documents; or delegating the work to other Service employees, as needed.



Objectives:

By March 31, 2024, the Service will have continued to provide support, as required, to Standing and Select Committees of the House of Assembly.

Indicators:

- Organized logistics for Committee meetings, including the preparation of meeting agendas, minutes and clerking Committee meetings.
- Provided parliamentary procedural and operational advice, as required.
- Conducted non-partisan research and reference support, as required.
- Drafted Committee reports and other documents, as required.
- Developed and updated related orientation and training materials, as required.

As the focus of the Service will remain consistent, it will report on the objective and indicators noted above for the years ended March 31, 2025 and March 31, 2026.