

Income and Employment Support Appeal Board

Activity Plan 2026-2029

Chairperson's Message

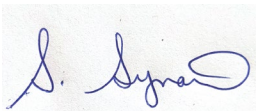
I am pleased to submit the Income and Employment Support Appeal Board's 2026-29 Activity Plan, which covers the period of April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2029. As a Category 3 government entity, the Board has prepared this performance-based plan in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. The strategic directions of the provincial government were considered in the development of this plan.

The Income and Employment Support Appeal Board is an independent, external body authorized to hear appeals related to the Income Support program; eligibility for provincially-funded employment supports; and coverage under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program.

The Board meets regularly to conduct appeal hearings where sworn evidence is received and considered. Decisions are rendered following the conclusion of each hearing. The Board's primary objectives are to process appeals fairly and efficiently and to issue decisions that are clear, consistent, and compliant with the **Income and Employment Support Act** and Regulations, and, where applicable, the **Health and Community Services Act** or the **Pharmaceutical Services Act**. The Board recognizes the important contribution of its members in achieving these objectives and supporting the effective administration of the legislation.

The Board is accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of its objective.

Respectfully submitted,



Sam Synard
Chairperson

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Overview

The **Income and Employment Support Act** authorizes the Lieutenant-Governor in Council to appoint an appeal board. The Income and Employment Support Appeal Board (the Board) is an independent, arm's-length body that hears appeals related to Income Support decisions and eligibility for employment supports funded by the provincial government. In addition to its role under the **Income and Employment Support Act**, the Board also hears certain appeals under the **Health and Community Services Act** and the **Pharmaceutical Services Act** (see Appendix A).

The Board is comprised of a Chair, Vice-Chair and a member, one of whom must be a current or former recipient of income or employment supports. Three alternate members are also appointed, one of whom must also be a current or former recipient of income or employment supports. Each member is appointed for a three-year term by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council and is eligible for re-appointment.

As of April 1, 2026, the following members comprised the Board:

- Sam Synard, Chair
- Brittany Keating, Vice-Chair
- Gail Hickey, Member
- Bernice Pritchett, Alternate Member
- Jeannette Lundrigan, Alternate Member
- Victoria Morgan, Alternate Member

Members are appointed from the public through a merit-based process administered by the Public Service Commission. The Board receives remuneration and reimbursement of travel expenses in accordance with provincial government guidelines and policies.

The Board is supported by an Executive Secretary who is an employee of the Department of Social Supports and Well-Being (SSWB). This position provides administrative and

program support to enable the Board to deal promptly and effectively with all appeals. The Executive Secretary has no voting privileges. All costs associated with the work of the Board are included in SSWB's budget.

The first formal level of appeal for an Income Support client, or a provincially-funded employment support client, is a request for an Internal Review. These reviews are completed by employees of SSWB and are outside the mandate of the Board. The Department of Health and Community Services completes an Internal Review of decisions made under the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Program (NLPDP).

The second formal level of appeal is a request for an appeal hearing with the Board. Hearings are typically scheduled every three to four weeks. Appeals must be heard within 30 days of receipt of the appellant's application and are generally conducted by teleconference (an in-person hearing is possible upon request).

Information about the Board and appeal process may be obtained from SSWB's website: <https://www.gov.nl.ca/sswb/the-appeal-process/>

Contact Information:

Executive Secretary
Income and Employment Support Appeal Board
Department of Social Supports and Well-Being
Confederation Building
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6
e-mail: IEASBAppeal@gov.nl.ca
Telephone: 709-729-2479
Fax: 709-729-5208

Mandate

The Income and Employment Support Appeal Board hears appeals and makes decisions on behalf of a person who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an Internal Review of a decision relating to the **Income and Employment Support Act**. Where appropriate, appeals are also heard relating to the **Health and Community Services Act** or **Pharmaceutical Services Act**.

Lines of Business

The Board has one line of business, which is to deliver an appeal process as outlined below.

Appeal Board Process

Those who are dissatisfied with the outcome of an Internal Review (the first level of appeal) may then proceed to the second formal level of appeal, which is requesting an appeal hearing with the Board. Applicants must submit an Application for Appeal in writing to the Board within 60 days from the date of the Internal Review decision letter. Appeals must be heard within 30 days of receipt of the appellant's application.

When an Application for Appeal is received, the Board shall:

- Acknowledge the appeal;
- Arrange a date for hearing the appeal within 30 days of receiving an application;
- Notify the appellant verbally of their right to appear and to be represented;
- Give at least seven days' notice of date, time and place of the hearing to the appellant and all relevant officers of SSWB.
- Send copies of prepared documentation pertinent to the appellant's appeal, at least seven days prior to the hearing, to the appellant and the board members.
- Proceed with the hearing as scheduled, unless a postponement is requested by the appellant;

- Deliberate and make a decision;
- Communicate the decision of the Board in writing to the appellant within five days of the conclusion of the hearing; and
- Send copies of decisions to the Board members and relevant officers of SSWB.

An applicant or a recipient who is not satisfied with a decision of the Board may appeal to the General Division of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador, which is the third and final level of appeal.

Values

Members of the Board are committed to accountability, respect, fairness, confidentiality, inclusion and plain language. The action statements below demonstrate how these values are reflected in the conduct of the board members.

Accountability

Each member accepts responsibility for their actions while adhering to legislation.

Respect

Each member listens to, and considers, the ideas and opinions of the appellant and other board members with courtesy and open-mindedness to ensure the hearing is conducted in a productive, healthy environment. Members are committed to making the appeal experience as congenial, satisfying and helpful as possible.

Fairness

Each member treats all persons participating in a hearing equitably and seeks solutions based upon the individual circumstances presented, within the legislation.

Confidentiality

Each member is committed to ensuring sensitive information is shared only with those

who need to know and is treated with care and responsibility to protect an individual's privacy.

Inclusion

Each member supports the active participation of the appellant, representatives and other employees in the hearing procedures.

Plain Language

Each member uses clear and simple language to provide appellants and other employees with information they need pertaining to the appeal process and explanation of decisions.

Primary Clients

The Income and Employment Support Appeal Board serves applicants or recipients of Income Support and provincially-funded employment supports. The Board also serves applicants for coverage under the NLPDP who are dissatisfied with the finding of an Internal Review and make application for appeal.

Vision

The residents of Newfoundland and Labrador are treated in a fair and timely manner to ensure the maximum entitlement allowable under the applicable legislation.

Objectives

The **Income and Employment Support Act**, as it pertains to the appeal process, contains specific timelines surrounding the administrative functions of the Board. The Board has the ability to set its own practices with a commitment to maintaining an effective and timely appeal process. The Board shall continue to maintain service excellence to respond to the changing needs of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The following objective and indicators apply to the 2026-27, 2027-28 and 2028-29 fiscal years and progress will be reported in the relevant annual reports.

Objective: By March 31, 2027, 2028 and 2029, the Board will have demonstrated adherence to legislative timeframes pertaining to the appeal process.

Indicator 1: One hundred per cent of hearings are scheduled within 30 days of receiving an application.

Indicator 2: One hundred per cent of notifications are communicated to the appellant and relevant parties at least seven days prior to a hearing.

Indicator 3: One hundred per cent of decisions are communicated to the relevant parties within five days of the conclusion of the hearing.

Appendix A

Powers of the Board under the **Income and Employment Support Act**

Powers of board

44. (1) On the conclusion of the hearing, the board may confirm, vary or set aside the finding or decision appealed with power to give directions, consistent with this Act and the regulations made under it, or where appropriate, the **Health and Community Services Act** or the **Pharmaceutical Services Act** and the regulations made under it,

(a) respecting the granting, refusal, suspension, discontinuance, reduction, resumption of income support or an amount of income support that the board considers appropriate;

(b) respecting an appellant's eligibility for employment support or the suspension or cancellation of that support, but shall not make an order to provide employment support under the authority of subsection 14 (4);

(c) respecting an underpayment or overpayment;

(d) respecting a matter referred to in section 4.1 of the **Health and Community Services Act**; and

(e) respecting a matter referred to in section 40 of the **Pharmaceutical Services Act**.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the board shall not make an order inconsistent with the rate structure for income support established in the regulations.

(2.1) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the board shall not make an order inconsistent with the benefits list established by the minister under the **Pharmaceutical Services Act**.

(3) A decision of the board shall, in writing, within 5 days of its being decided, be communicated to the appellant and

(a) to the officers of the department who are concerned; or

(b) where the appeal is from an internal review under section 4.2 of the **Health and Community Services Act**, or the **Pharmaceutical Services Act**, to officials of the department administering that Act under the **Executive Council Act**.