

**Provincial Advisory Council on  
Aging and Seniors**

**Activity Plan**

**April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2026**

**Please Note:**

This document was prepared in consultation with the Disability Policy Office to maximize accessibility and follows:

- Government of Newfoundland Labrador's **Accessible Communications Policy** in which clear/plain language, accessible formatting and taglines are used to ensure content is readable and understood.
- **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 or larger fonts are used for emphasis.

**Available in Alternate Format**

Please contact:

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors  
Seniors and Aging Division  
Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development  
6th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6

Telephone: (709)729-1382 or Toll-Free 1-888-494-2266  
Email: PACAS@gov.nl.ca

# Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	1
1.0 Message from the Chair .....	2
2.0 Overview .....	3
3.0 Mandate .....	4
4.0 Primary Clients .....	4
5.0 Vision.....	5
6.0 Issues, Objectives and Indicators: 2023 - 2026 .....	5
6.1. Issue: Ageism.....	5
6.2. Issue: Food Insecurity .....	6
6.3. Issue: Care in the Community.....	7

# 1.0 Message from the Chair

In accordance with the requirements for a category 3 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2023-2026 Activity Plan for the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (the Council). This plan covers the period from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026.

This Activity Plan was developed to support the strategic directions of the Provincial Government and Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development. It was also informed by reports of Health Accord NL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Seniors' Advocate, the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors Forum (FPT Seniors Forum) and insights gathered through the public engagement process to inform a new Social and Economic Well-Being Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador.

Healthy aging is important to all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians across the lifespan, from before birth through to end of life. While seniors and older adults face challenges and opportunities today, it is important to take a lifespan approach to aging so that individuals, families, the health care system and other systems are better prepared for the seniors of tomorrow. This Activity Plan represents the Council's continued commitment to advising and assisting the Provincial Government in supporting the physical, social, and economic well-being of older adults by placing a focus on the social determinants of health.

This Activity Plan outlines the activities for which the Council will be accountable for the next three years. As Chairperson, I am accountable for this plan and achievement of its results.

Sincerely,



Pamela Anstey, Chairperson  
Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors

## 2.0 Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors (the Council) was announced in 2004 as one of three initiatives to facilitate the provincial response to the needs of an aging population. In 2005, the Council was established to provide advice to the Minister Responsible for Seniors (the Minister), currently the Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development (CSSD), on issues related to older persons and the aging process.

The Public Service Commission (PSC), through the Independent Appointments Commission (IAC), solicits candidates for vacancies with consideration given to geography, culture, gender, background, experience and skills.

Council members represent a diverse cross-section of individuals, many of whom have experience working in areas of critical importance to seniors, including health care, long-term care, mental health and financial well-being. As a result, the Council benefits from a membership with a broad base of knowledge in areas of importance to seniors, and those who support them.

It is important that the Council represent the diversity of our population in order to represent the needs of seniors throughout the Province. The following diversity categories are considered in the recruitment and deliberations of members of the Council:

- regional diversity;
- gender diversity and sexual orientation;
- Indigenous identity;
- persons with disabilities; and
- cultural diversity.

The Council consists of up to 13 members. Members are appointed for terms of up to three years and can serve not more than two terms. Meetings are generally scheduled three times per year (winter, spring, and fall), or at the call of the Chair. Council members serve as volunteers and receive no remuneration other than reimbursement by CSSD for expenses to attend meetings. The Seniors and Aging Division of CSSD provides secretariat and administrative support to the Council.

As of April 1, 2023, the following individuals comprised the Council (four positions were vacant):

- Pamela Anstey, Chair (St. John's)
- Noreen Careen (Labrador City)
- Joshua Carey (Corner Brook)

- Marie Brennan Downey (Stephenville Crossing)
- Dr. William Eaton, MD, FCFP, (PC) (St. John's)
- Megan Ford (St. John's)
- Helen Handrigan (St. John's)
- Roseanne Leonard (Paradise)
- Judy Pardy (Cartwright)

### **3.0 Mandate**

The mandate of the Council is to advise and inform the minister on issues, concerns, and requirements of seniors and those who support them. This includes ensuring that the Provincial Government considers the perspective of older adults when developing both current and future legislation, policies, programs and services. The Council also provides a strong, collective voice for older adults in the development of a wide range of programs to support the independence and well-being of an aging population.

The Council aims to:

- Challenge ageism;
- Promote the value and worth of people as they age;
- Foster an environment of understanding within the Provincial Government and the community with regard to aging and demographic change;
- Identify areas of opportunity within the Provincial Government to develop and/or adapt legislation, policies, programs and services to better support an aging population;
- Support the work of the Seniors' Advocate; and
- Inform the Provincial Government on the potential impacts of legislation, policies, programs, and services on people as they age.

More information on the Council is available here:

<https://www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/seniors/focus/provincialadvisory/>

### **4.0 Primary Clients**

The Council serves seniors, older adults and those who support them through the provision of advice to the Minister on issues related to older persons and the aging process.

## 5.0 Vision

The Council's vision is a province where individuals are supported to age well in the right place, across the lifespan, in age-friendly communities.

## 6.0 Issues, Objectives and Indicators: 2023 - 2026

The Council supports the Provincial Government's priorities of improved health and well-being outcomes for individuals, families, groups and communities, as well as improved and equitable access to economic, cultural and social opportunities for those who experience barriers to inclusion. These priorities include enhancing supports to age in place, and building a positive image of aging. The concept of aging in place means having the necessary health and social supports and services in place to allow individuals to live safely and independently in their own homes or communities for as long as they wish and are able.

The goal of promoting age-friendly communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador program continues to guide the Council's 2023-26 Activity Plan. To this end, this plan focuses the concepts of aging well in the right place, advance care planning and health equity. As we continue to emerge from the global COVID-19 Pandemic, its ongoing effects on Newfoundland and Labrador's senior and older adult population will continue to influence many activities and policy goals of the Council.

Based on the priorities noted above, the following have been identified as core issues for the Council.

### 6.1. Issue: Ageism

The **World Health Organization** refers to ageism as the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) directed towards people on the basis of their age.

Ageist stereotypes negatively impact the physical and mental health of older adults. People such as caregivers, family members, friends or employers can hold ageist stereotypes, or they can be internalized by individuals leading them to act in ways that endorse these stereotypes.

Ageism does not only affect seniors and older adults. The **World Health Organization** outlines negative impacts of ageism for individuals across the lifespan.

For older people, ageism is associated with a shorter lifespan, poorer physical and mental health, slower recovery from disability, and cognitive decline. In addition, ageism reduces the quality of life, increases social isolation and loneliness (both of which are associated with serious health problems), restricts the ability to express sexuality and may increase the risk of violence and abuse.

For younger people, ageism manifests across many areas, such as employment, health, housing and politics, where younger people's voices are often denied or dismissed. Experiencing discrimination at a young age can have long-lasting consequences on well-being, self-esteem and sense of belonging. In addition, it exposes young people to more disadvantages throughout their lives, making them more likely to encounter inequalities later in life.

Ageism has far-reaching impacts on all aspects of our health and takes a heavy economic toll on individuals and society.

### **Objective 1**

- By March 31, 2024, the Council will have enhanced promotion of intergenerational programs and activities, and increased effort at reducing the prevalence of ageism in NL.
  - **Indicators:**
    1. Provided input into the development of a guide to intergenerational activities.
    2. Provided input into a public awareness campaign on ageism and age-friendly communities.

### **Objective 2**

- By March 31, 2025, the Council will have provided advice to the minister on development and promotion of an age-friendly business model for NL.

### **Objective 3**

- By March 31, 2026, the Council will have contributed to the review of the Respect Aging education program and provided advice on how to promote positive images of aging.

## **6.2. Issue: Food Insecurity**

The University of Toronto's interdisciplinary PROOF Food Insecurity Policy Research program defines household food insecurity as the "inadequate or insecure access to



food due to financial constraints” and describes it as a serious public health problem in Canada. PROOF’s **Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2021** report shows the prevalence of household food insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador at 17.9 per cent.

The province’s Seniors’ Advocate’s report, **What We Heard: Engagement with Seniors, Family Members and/or Caregivers, and Service Providers**, supports the notion that food insecurity is a significant issue that continues to affect seniors. Forty per cent of seniors responding to a survey administered as part of the Seniors’ Advocate’s engagement process reported not being able to afford food or eating healthy. This is also in line with the reported experiences of provincial food help lines, which continue to report unprecedented calls for assistance (even higher than during the COVID-19 pandemic) from an increasing numbers of seniors.

### **Objective 1**

- By March 31, 2024, the Council will have presented a profile of seniors’ food insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador, including available resources and gaps, to the minister.
  - **Indicator:**
    1. Created a provincial profile of seniors’ food insecurity, including available resources and gaps.

### **Objective 2**

- By March 31, 2025, the Council will have provided advice to the minister on seniors’ food insecurity.

### **Objective 3**

- By March 31, 2026, the Council will have advised the minister on progress made on the solutions identified in 2025.

## **6.3. Issue: Care in the Community**

Council supports the Provincial Government’s efforts to support the development and maintenance of age-friendly communities. In May 2022, the Council held an engagement session with community sector stakeholders to discuss ways to better promote and support age-friendly communities in NL. This engagement identified the important role that municipalities play in this endeavor, as they are responsible for the design and delivery of many of the programs and services in the communities where people live. It was also recognized that municipalities need education and support to

apply a senior and older adult lens to identifying, and facilitating planning for, age-friendly initiatives.

As people age, the level of support they require to remain in or near their own homes change. It is important that people are empowered to make decisions about their own care in advanced age and that our support systems are adequate to meet the needs of people as they age throughout the lifespan.

Section eight of Health Accord NL's final report speaks to the health of older adults and provides direction to enable and empower older adults to transition seamlessly through age and health-related changes with dignity and autonomy. Among its four calls to action is a specific call to "implement and support an integrated continuum of care to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of care delivery, improve health and social outcomes for older adults and older adults with disabilities, and support older adults to age in place with dignity and autonomy".

#### **Objective 1**

- By March 31, 2024, the Council will have promoted age-friendly communities to municipalities.
  - Indicators:
    1. Presented to MunicipalitiesNL's annual conference.

#### **Objective 2**

- By March 31, 2025, the Council will have supported the review and updating of advance care planning materials.

#### **Objective 3**

- By March 31, 2026, the Council will have facilitated a workshop on gaps and solutions in home care.

Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors  
c/o Seniors and Aging Division

Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development  
6th Floor, West Block, Confederation Building  
P.O. Box 8700  
St. John's, NL A1B 4J6  
Telephone: (709)729-4291 or Toll Free 1-888-494-2266  
Email: PACAS@gov.nl.ca