

# 2021-2022 **ANNUAL REPORT**



**Labrador Affairs Secretariat**





## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

It is my pleasure to present the Labrador Affairs Secretariat Annual Performance Report covering April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, which has been prepared in accordance with the Transparency and Accountability Act provisions. As the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs, I am accountable for the preparation of this report and the results reported herein.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat is responsible for promoting the economic and social development of Labrador. This is achieved by ensuring Labrador's voice is represented inside government while also representing the Government on provincial, national and northern jurisdictional committees. Labrador-specific programming is implemented to support Labradorians for sport travel, safe winter travel and nutrition and artistic endeavors.

This report illustrates the Secretariat's second year of progress in achieving the goals set forth in the 2020-23 Activity Plan. I would like to acknowledge and thank the staff at Labrador Affairs for their hard work and dedication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Dempster'.

Hon. Lisa Dempster

Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs



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## Departmental Overview

### Organizational Structure

As of March 31, 2022, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat (“Secretariat”) had a total of 11 staff. The Secretariat is located in Happy Valley-Goose Bay at 438-440 Hamilton River Road.

Below is the Secretariat’s full staff complement of 11.

- Deputy Minister
- Director of Labrador Affairs
- Director of Communications
- Secretary to the Deputy Minister
- Four Senior Analysts
- Policy, Planning and Research Analyst
- Clerk Typist III
- Trail Inspector (seasonal)

The Director of Communications is also responsible for providing support to the Intergovernmental Affairs Secretariat and the Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation. The Policy, Planning and Research Analyst is a term position, created as a policy development opportunity. The anticipated end date for this position is September 2022.

### Staff and Budget

As per the Estimates of the Program Expenditure for fiscal year 2020-21, the total net expenditure for the Labrador Affairs Secretariat for fiscal year 2021-22 was \$2,902,300.

## **Vision**

The vision of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is of a strong, sustainable and vibrant Labrador, where all people have the opportunity to prosper and contribute to their communities, regions and the province.

## **Mandate**

The mandate of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat is to advance the social and economic development of Labrador by ensuring the unique perspectives of Labrador are considered in the formation of government policy and in the delivery of provincial government programs and services in Labrador.

## **Lines of Business**

### **Policy, Programs and Planning**

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat is responsible for the development, implementation and administration of provincial policies and programs respecting Labrador issues. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat aims to ensure that provincial policies, programs and services consider Labrador-related issues by providing advice to provincial government departments and agencies and through its participation in provincial horizontal initiatives.

The Secretariat is responsible for the administration of Labrador specific programs and grants that include:

- the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy;
- the Labrador Aboriginal Nutritional and Artistic Assistance Program;
- the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy Program and School Sport Program;
- the Labrador Winter Games; and,
- an operating grant support for the Combined Councils of Labrador.



## **Coordination, Collaboration and Advocacy**

To achieve its mandate to advance the social and economic development of Labrador, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat coordinates, collaborates, and advocates for Labrador-related initiatives. The Secretariat collaborates with Provincial Government departments/entities, federal, territorial and municipal governments, industry organizations and social enterprises.

In addition to programming, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat often takes a prominent role on Labrador-focused committees. The Secretariat liaises with other Northern ministries and assists in the management of intergovernmental relations on Labrador and Northern issues, such as the Northern Development Ministers Forum and the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework. The Secretariat is also consulted on Labrador-related initiatives by other provincial departments and provides advice and support as required.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat works in collaboration with the Public Engagement Division of the Communications and Public Engagement Branch to support stakeholder engagement and consultation in Labrador. The Secretariat is consulted on Labrador-related initiatives by other provincial departments and provides support as required. The Secretariat also works with Labrador stakeholders on issues relevant to the region.

## **Clients / Stakeholders**

The primary clients and stakeholders of the Labrador Affairs Secretariat include:

- Labrador residents, communities and groups, that expect leadership in facilitating economic and social development in Labrador;
- The Provincial Government and its departments/entities which require policy advice and input on Labrador issues;
- Federal, Municipal, and Indigenous Governments and Organizations that seek information and input on Labrador issues; and,
- Clients of the Labrador-specific programs which the Secretariat administers.

## Highlights and Partnerships

### Central Labrador Vulnerable Population

In May 2021, an Action Team was created to address the safety and well-being of those impacted by homelessness and transiently homelessness in central Labrador. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat chairs the Action Team which is comprised of officials from Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation, Department of Health and Community Services, various stakeholders/interest groups, Indigenous partners and the Town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Weekly meetings were held to determine gaps in supports and potential initiatives to mitigate negative impacts related to homelessness and transiently homelessness.

Both the Province and Federal Governments contributed financially towards efforts to support the vulnerable population including \$300,000 cost-shared for a Housing Navigator position at the Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing Hub shelter and a needs assessment exploring future integrated health services, and funding for an Emergency Disaster Response vehicle and garage. Through the Action Team, wrap-around services were implemented at the shelter and a coordinated approach to outreach has begun.

The Secretariat continues to work with community groups and partners to advance supports and solutions to address homelessness in Labrador.

### COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic

Vaccinations for COVID-19 began to roll out during the 2021-22 year. An increase of cases in Happy Valley-Goose Bay during December 2021-January 2022 led to a collaborative approach for additional resources and vaccinations clinics that were held in the central Labrador region January 3-5, 2022. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat was tasked with the planning and coordination of logistics for the clinics. The Secretariat worked with Labrador-Grenfell Health and the Department of Health and Community Services to secure locations and recruit provincial employees to support efforts

including registration desks, traffic control and security. Members of Team Broken Earth, including the Premier and Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs travelled to Happy Valley-Goose Bay to provide support to the vaccination program. Successful clinics were delivered in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Sheshatshiu and the Housing Hub shelter.

### **Labrador Winter Games 2023**

The Labrador Winter Games is an event hosted every three years to highlight and celebrate cultural and friendly competition. Athletes from all areas of Labrador travel to Central Labrador to attend and compete at the Games. In November 2021, the Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs announced the 2023 Board of Directors and funding for the upcoming Games. The Board consists of community and Indigenous representatives and federal, provincial and municipal officials. The Labrador Affairs Secretariat, on behalf of the Province, contributed \$500,000 towards the operating costs of the Games. The Games are scheduled for Happy Valley-Goose Bay from March 12-18, 2023.

### **Arctic and Northern Initiatives**

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat represents the Province on various Arctic and Northern policy initiatives. The Secretariat chairs the Arctic Policy Working Group comprised of various provincial departments/entities that have an active involvement or interest in the Arctic and Canada's North. The mandate of the group is to facilitate the coordination and collaboration between Provincial Government departments and entities on the social and economic development activities related to the Arctic and Canada's North.

Since 2000, the Secretariat has played a lead role in the Northern Development Ministers Forum (NDMF) for the Province. The NDMF was established to advance the commonalities and diversities of Canada's northern jurisdictions. The on-going pandemic and travel restrictions has resulted in the forum being postponed in 2020 and 2021. Manitoba, which is the current host jurisdiction, is planning to reschedule the forum in Fall 2022 in Winnipeg. The Secretariat continues to work with its NDMF

partners on priority projects and other work in advance of a rescheduled forum. For further information on the NDMF please visit <https://www.gov.nl.ca/exec/las/arctic-and-northern-policy/northern-development-ministers-forum-2/>.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat also represents the Province on the working groups for the Government of Canada's Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, the Arctic Council Advisory Committee, and the Northern Transportation Adaption Initiative.

### **Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy**

The purpose of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy is to maintain a safe trail system for remote Labrador communities to access service centres. The communities which do not have year round road access include Hopedale, Makkovik, Postville, Rigolet, Nain, Norman Bay, Black Tickle, and Mud Lake. The Secretariat works with service providers in each community to ensure trails are maintained and provided funding in the amount of \$471,000 annually. The 2021-22 program continued to be impacted by COVID-19 restrictions as well as unfavorable weather and ice conditions.

## **Report on Performance**

### **Issue 1: Socio-Economic Development of Labrador**

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat mandate is to ensure provincial policies, programs and planning reflect the uniqueness of Labrador and the opportunities and challenges faced by Labradorians. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has identified strategic directions for the province for the three-year period from 2020-23. These strategic directions are particularly relevant to the socio-economic development of Labrador: Healthier People, A better Economy, Better Living and A Bright Future.

The Secretariat focused on partnerships and collaborations with many stakeholders to accomplish the mandate. Representing the province, and Labrador specifically, on a number of provincial, federal and territorial northern initiatives provides an opportunity

for LAS to identify, advocating and assuming leadership roles to ensure the needs of Labradorians are highlighted.

## Goal

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will have supported the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and input from a Labrador perspective.

## 2021-22 Objective and Indicators

By March 31, 2022, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and providing information from a Labrador perspective.

Results achieved:

Below highlights the Labrador Affairs Secretariat progress towards supporting the socio-economic development of Labrador.

Indicator 1: Lead Arctic and Northern policy initiatives for the Province

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat has chaired the Arctic Policy Working Group on behalf of Government since 2017. Throughout the 2021-22 year, the Working Group met once virtually to provide an update on progress. Due to the pandemic, northern events such as the Northern Development Ministers Forum have been postponed. Other working groups and committees such as the Arctic and Northern Policy Framework, and the Arctic Council Advisory Committees held virtual meetings and progress reports throughout the year.

Indicator 2: Administer Labrador-specific programs to address the needs of Labradorians

The Secretariat continued to provide funding to support safe groomed winter trails for remote communities in Labrador. The funding is equitably distributed amongst eleven service providers for groomer operator salaries, groomer maintenance, signage and markers along trails and fuel. A total of \$471,000 was allocated in 2021-22 season.

Labrador Affairs expended approximately \$290,000 under the Labrador Sport Travel Subsidy (LSTS) throughout the 2021-22 fiscal year or approximately 55% of the overall budget. The LSTS provided discounted airfare for Labrador youth athletes to travel to the island portion of the province for athletic competitions. In addition, the Secretariat provided \$212,000 to School Sports NL to further support sport travel amongst Labrador students. All sporting events continued to be impacted by COVID-19 which limited uptake of the LSTS.

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat provided funding to the Combined Councils of Labrador (CCL) in the amount of \$100,000. Restrictions from the on-going pandemic resulted in the cancelation of the Annual General Meeting in 2021-22. As municipal elections occurred throughout the province in 2021, the CCL held a virtual election for its incoming Board of Directors in February 2022.

Funding for the Labrador Aboriginal Nutritional and Artistic Assistance Program in the amount of \$50,000 was provided to the three Labrador Indigenous groups to support food security and arts/culture initiatives within their respected organizations. The funding was used to for food banks, transportation of country foods and youth activities.

Indicator 3: Provide advice on all relevant government policies, programs and planning impacting Labrador

The Labrador Affairs Secretariat continued to work collaboratively with colleagues across government to provide input on policies, programs and events such as reviewing Environmental Assessments and Land Use Plans for Labrador, briefing materials; and communication plans.

The Secretariat met virtually with Labrador stakeholders such as the service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy, municipal officials, Indigenous organizations, business organizations, housing and homelessness interest groups and the CCL which allowed Labrador Affairs to further advance Labrador issues.

Indicator 4: Participate on boards/committees and in consultations/meetings to provide input from a Labrador perspective

The pandemic continued to impact the ability to host and participate at in-person meetings and functions. The Secretariat utilized technology and participated virtually in various meetings across the province and Canada covering a variety of topics. Some include: Violence Prevention Labrador; Canada-Newfoundland and Labrador Committee on Oceans Management (CNLCOM); Cooperative Management Boards for the Akami-Uapishk<sup>U</sup>-KakKasuak-Mealy Mountains National Park Reserve; regular meeting with Indigenous leaders; Ministerial Advisory Council on the Fisheries, and the Local River Watch Committee.

Objective:

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support the socio-economic development of Labrador through implementation, collaboration, communication and providing information from a Labrador perspective.

Indicators:

- Continue to lead Arctic and Northern policy initiatives for the Province;
- Administer Labrador-specific programs to address the needs of Labradorians;

- Provide advice on all relevant government policies, programs and planning impacting Labrador; and,
- Participate on boards/committees and in consultations/meetings to provide input from a Labrador perspective.

## **Issue 2: Labrador Relationships**

Strong relationships with stakeholders is vital for Labrador Affairs Secretariat to accomplish its mandate. The information gathered through communication and open dialogue with interest groups and partners helps the Secretariat to further advocate and support the region. Strengthening relationships supports the strategic directions for the province particularly Healthier People, Better Living and A Bright Future.

### **Goal**

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will have increased collaboration with Labrador stakeholders through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

### **2021-22 Objective and Indicators**

By March 31, 2022, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support Labrador relations through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

Results achieved:

Below highlights the Labrador Affairs Secretariat progress towards supporting communication and the Labrador perspective.

Indicator 1: Enhance Labrador Affairs Secretariat presence in all regions of Labrador by engaging Labrador stakeholders



As noted, the Secretariat continued to communicate with Labrador stakeholders throughout 2021-22 virtually and in-person when permitted. Weekly meetings regarding homeless and transiently homeless populations in central Labrador; discussions with the Combined Councils of Labrador and municipalities; relationship building with industry stakeholders and social enterprises occurred throughout the fiscal year.

The Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs was very active in Labrador this past year. Meetings were held with the mayors and councils from a number of municipalities including the Towns of Wabush and Labrador City. Meetings were held with Memorial University, specifically around the School of Arctic and Sub-Arctic Studies and the developments at the Pye Farm; Labrador Winter Games Board of Directors; and, the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Minister also met with federal officials to discuss priorities and collaborations for Labrador.

Indicator 2: Continue to conduct meetings with service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy program

As part of the grooming subsidy, regular meetings with service providers occurred including a pre-season and post-season teleconference. The Trail Inspector travelled to all communities in 2021-22 grooming season and maintained consistent communication with all service providers for ice condition and trail reports. Additional meetings were held with SmartICE on potential partnerships and program service providers on climate change impacts.

Indicator 3: Assist with the coordination of meetings between the Combined Councils of Labrador and provincial government departments

The Secretariat provides an annual operational grant to the Combined Councils of Labrador in the amount of \$100,000. Annual meetings with the CCL Executive and various provincial Ministers normally take place each fall in St. John's and LAS would

assist with the logistics and planning of the meetings. Due to the pandemic and other commitments, the annual meetings between the CCL Board and relevant departments were not able to be scheduled in 2021. The Secretariat continued to communicate with the CCL Board and discuss the planning for next year's meetings.

Indicator 4: Participate in Labrador-related conferences and events such as Expo Labrador, Northern Lights, and Cain's Quest

The Premier and Minister Responsible for Labrador Affairs were committed to provide a keynote address at Expo Labrador 2021, however the event was cancelled due to the pandemic. The Northern Lights Conference and Cain's Quest Snowmobile Endurance Race were postponed to February and March 2023 respectively due to COVID-19.

The Minister and the Secretariat attended other Labrador North Chamber of Commerce activities and events through the 2021-22 year.

Objective:

By March 31, 2023, the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to support Labrador relations through communication, consultation and input from a Labrador perspective.

Indicators:

- Enhance Labrador Affairs Secretariat presence in all regions of Labrador by engaging Labrador stakeholders;
- Continue to conduct meetings with service providers of the Labrador Transportation Grooming Subsidy program;
- Assist with the coordination of meetings between the Combined Councils of Labrador and provincial government departments; and,
- Participate in Labrador-related conferences and events such as Expo Labrador, Northern Lights, and Cain's Quest.

## Opportunities and Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the 2021-22 fiscal year and highlighted the challenges Labrador faces with broadband services, particularly in remote, isolated communities and the importance of connectivity. The world relies on technology for everything from employment and schooling, virtual healthcare, family connections, transportation and commerce such as online shopping. In March 2022, the provincial and federal governments announced \$22,355,503 in funding to bring high-speed internet services to more than 1,000 in rural areas of Labrador.

Transportation remains important to all Labradorians. The completion of hard-surfacing of the Trans-Labrador Highway, Route 510 scheduled for summer 2022 will connect Labrador West to the Labrador Straits. Government is committed to partnering with the Federal Government to explore feasibility and options for a road to the North Coast. A pre-feasibility study will help inform the path forward by considering potential routes, maintenance and operational factors, and socio-economic and cultural considerations. Air and water transportation including an improved airstrip in Nain, wharf upgrades along the north coast and a tunnel connecting Labrador to the island portion of the province is in the public discourse.

Mineral development in Labrador with the Voisey's Bay open pit mining, ongoing operations by Iron Ore Canada and Tacora Resources in Labrador West and exploration by Search Minerals in Southeast Labrador remains steady. Continued support for natural resource development is beneficial for Labrador and the entire province as we move towards a strong, diverse province. The MINEx 2022 symposium is planned for Fall 2022 in Labrador West to explore future opportunities and innovation in the mining industry.

Homelessness and housing, along with mental health and addictions supports remain a priority for Labrador. Through the work on the Action Team, the Secretariat continues to collaborate with partners on supportive and solution-based actions.

Labrador will host two events in 2022-23, the Labrador Winter Games and the Cain's Quest Snowmobile Endurance Race. The Province contributed \$500,000 toward the Games and the Labrador Affairs Secretariat will continue to participate on the Board of Directors. Cain's Quest is a perfect opportunity to highlight Labrador's vast landscape and beauty while encouraging tourism and eco-adventure possibilities.

The Secretariat looks forward to the return of the Northern Lights Conference and other events that provide an opportunity to network and discuss with northern partners across Canada on areas of mutual interests.

## Financial Information

### REPORT ON THE PROGRAM EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES OF THE CONSOLIDATED FUND

#### DEPARTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CONTINUED)

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
<b>OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL</b>			
<b>LABRADOR AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT</b>			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
<b>2.7.01. EXECUTIVE SUPPORT</b>			
01. Salaries	323,731	326,200	326,200
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	116	2,800	2,800
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	27,140	47,400	48,000
<i>Supplies</i>	2,890	2,900	2,300
<i>Purchased Services</i>	1,147	1,300	1,300
02. Operating Accounts	31,293	54,400	54,400
<b>Total: Executive Support</b>	<b>355,024</b>	<b>380,600</b>	<b>380,600</b>
<b>2.7.02 LABRADOR AFFAIRS</b>			
01. Salaries	448,886	600,300	600,300
Operating Accounts:			
<i>Employee Benefits</i>	121	2,100	2,100
<i>Transportation and Communications</i>	20,918	46,300	48,600
<i>Supplies</i>	9,882	10,100	7,800
<i>Purchased Services</i>	6,298	11,900	11,900
02. Operating Accounts	37,219	70,400	70,400
10. Grants and Subsidies	1,472,890	1,851,000	1,851,000
<b>Total: Labrador Affairs</b>	<b>1,958,995</b>	<b>2,521,700</b>	<b>2,521,700</b>
<b>TOTAL: LABRADOR AFFAIRS SECRETARIAT</b>	<b>2,314,019</b>	<b>2,902,300</b>	<b>2,902,300</b>

