

Provincial Advisory Council  
on the Status of Women

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

BUSINESS  
PLAN

2020-2023

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## Message from the President/CEO

On behalf of the members of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland and Labrador (the Advisory Council), I am pleased to present our 2020-2023 Business Plan.

The Advisory Council prepared the Business Plan in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** provisions for a Category 2 Government entity. As such, the Advisory Council is not only accountable for the preparation of this plan but also for achieving the outlined goals and objectives to advance the equality of women in Newfoundland and Labrador. It reflects the development of our agency's three-year plan commencing 2020. The progress and achievements of this plan will be provided in each Annual Report.

In preparing this plan, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions for the 2020-2023 planning cycle Provincial Government has identified: **A Better Economy, Healthier People, Better Living, A Bright Future, and A More Efficient Public Service.**

As President/CEO, my signature indicates the Advisory Council members developed this plan and that we are accountable for achieving the identified goals and objectives.

Paula Sheppard,  
Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland and Labrador

## 1.0 Overview

The Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women was established in 1980 by the Provincial Government and received legislative standing with the introduction of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*. It was created to advise the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on issues affecting the status of women as well as to raise awareness of women's issues within the general public.

The Advisory Council is an arms-length legislated agency which reports to the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women. The 11 members follow the Independent Appointments Commission (IAC) process and are appointed for three-year terms by the Lieutenant-Governor (see **Appendix A**) with eligibility for re-appointment once their terms end. The President/CEO position is a salaried position requiring an open competition also through the IAC process. Selection criteria include representation from diverse women's populations and sectors, demonstrated leadership in working to advance the status of women and the ability to work on women's equality issues from a community, regional or provincial perspective. Appointments reflect the regional representation of women with diverse backgrounds and experience.

The Advisory Council staff work closely with the Office for the Status of Women, a branch of Executive Council. The Advisory Council also works with women, women's groups, community agencies, industry, and other equality-seeking organizations that share an agenda to advance women's equality.

## 1.1 Mandate

The mandate of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is derived from Section 3 of the *Status of Women Advisory Council Act*, which states that the Advisory Council shall:

- a) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the minister refers to the advisory council for consideration;*
- b) *Advise the minister on those matters relating to the status of women that the advisory council feels appropriate;*
- c) *Bring before the Provincial Government and the public matters of interest and concern to women; and*

*d) Establish the general policies that will govern the organization, administration and operation of the advisory council.*

## **1.2 Budget**

In April 2020, the Advisory Council was allocated \$418,000. Salaries, rent, and council meetings continue to account for the largest expenditure of the core operating budget.

## **1.3 Lines of Business**

Lines of business are defined as those discrete and coherent sets of services that represent what the Advisory Council provides to its external clients.

In keeping with the Advisory Council's legislated mandate, the following lines of business have been identified: (1) advising government on issues affecting the status of women; (2) public awareness and engagement; and (3) administration and operation of the Advisory Council.

In achieving its legislative mandate, the Advisory Council will use a gender-based analysis in our work, and incorporate the perspectives of diverse populations of women, including but not limited to: Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGTBQIA+ community, women with disabilities, and racialized persons.

## **1.4 Primary Clients**

For the purpose of this plan, primary clients are defined as any person, group or organization served by or utilizing the services arising from the lines of business of the Advisory Council.

The primary clients of the Advisory Council include: the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Office for the Status of Women, other Provincial Government departments and agencies, community groups and other equality-seeking women's organizations, and individuals in the general public seeking information or advocacy on issues relating to the advancement of women.

The mandate and goals of the Advisory Council are achieved by working in partnership with the identified primary clients.

**1.5 Vision**

The vision of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women is equality, equity, and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

**2.0 Strategic Issues**

*2.1 Issue One: Women’s Health and Well Being*

In order to be fully empowered and thrive in society, it is important that all people have equitable access to necessities like quality healthcare, housing, education, and justice. Barriers to social and economic services that only affect certain groups are at the root of systemic inequity. In keeping with the strategic direction **Healthier People** identified by the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, a priority area for the Advisory Council in 2020-2023 will centre on women’s health and well-being.

Women’s health and well-being are closely tied to successful economic and social equality. Some of the many indicators the Advisory Council will focus on to determine the status of women’s health and well-being in the province include: equitable access to mental health supports, raising women out of poverty, retention of women and girls in sport, affordable housing, health services including fertility and breast screening policies, gendered responsiveness for women in the prison system, and research on impacts of COVID-19 on women.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>By March 31, 2023, the Advisory Council will have developed research for Provincial Government and the public on women’s health and well-being.</b>
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged with organizations regarding policies and initiatives on issues impacting the women’s health and well-being;</li> <li>• Developed a public awareness framework on issues impacting women’s health and well-being;</li> <li>• Provided advice to the Provincial Government about women’s health and well-being.</li> </ul>
Objective 1:	By March 31, 2021, the Advisory Council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government regarding women’s health and well-being;

Indicator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed with stakeholders and partners issues impacting women’s health and well-being, informing our advice and recommendations to government;</li> <li>• Carried out research for presentation to government and the public on women’s health and well-being;</li> <li>• Provided briefings to various government departments on a variety of aspects of health and well-being for women in the province.</li> </ul>
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2022, the Advisory Council will have engaged with individuals and organizations on advancing women’s health and well-being.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2023, the Advisory Council will have developed and delivered public awareness on issues impacting women’s health and well-being.

*2.2 Issue Two: Women’s Safety*

Gender-based violence continues to be a prevalent human rights violation and a systemic barrier to equality In-line with government’s strategic direction **Better Living**, feeling safe, living with security, and freedom free from violence are rights not privileges. A safe place is one where individuals are not discriminated against and where their economic, social, and cultural rights are guaranteed. Yet many still experience high rates of violence including women, Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGTBQIA+, women living with a disability, and women living in rural areas. Women are also reported to be more likely than men to experience higher rates of intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and intimate partner homicide (Statistics Canada, 2018). Equally important is the recognition that violence is not limited to physical interactions, but can take many forms. Social, psychological, emotional, economic, and cyber spaces all provide opportunities for gender based violence to occur.

The Advisory Council has identified women’s safety as a critical priority area for 2020-2023. Establishment/increase of low barrier environments for women, accessible and equitable supports for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, increased focus on all forms of harassment in the workplace and social culture, and sexual assault education and training in all entry points to the criminal justice field are several of the additional focus areas for analysis and public interest.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>By March 31, 2023, the Advisory Council will have developed research for Provincial Government and the public on women’s safety.</b>
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engaged with organizations regarding policies and initiatives on issues impacting women’s safety;</li> <li>Developed a public awareness framework on issues impacting women’s safety;</li> <li>Provided advice to the Provincial Government about issues that affect women’s safety.</li> </ul>
Objective 1:	By March 31, 2021, the Advisory Council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government regarding impacts on women.
Indicator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discussed with stakeholders and partners issues impacting women’s safety informing our advice and recommendations to government;</li> <li>Carried out research for presentation to government and the public on women’s safety;</li> <li>Provided advice to government departments on aspects of women’s safety in the province.</li> </ul>
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2022, The Advisory Council will have engaged with organizations regarding policies and initiatives on issues impacting women’s safety.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2023, The Advisory Council will have developed and delivered public awareness initiatives on issues impacting women’s safety.

*2.3 Issue Three: Women’s Economic Security and Prosperity*

With thoughtful consideration given to the strategic lens: **A Better Economy**, the Advisory Council has identified women’s economic security and prosperity as an essential focus area for the next three years. The systemic barriers that keep many women financially insecure in our province was amplified during this year’s pandemic. COVID-19 demonstrated with an irrefutable lens the extreme precariousness of women’s economic security. Meeting basic needs such as shelter, food, and essential living expenses became increasingly unmanageable. Attention was finally drawn to part-time, low wage work where a large majority of the workforce are women. It is well documented that unpaid work is gendered, with the majority of unpaid or informal labour categorized as the responsibility of women. National statistics consistently show that women disproportionately shoulder caregiving responsibilities and, compared to men, spend almost double the amount of time performing unpaid domestic labour (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2020).



Enhancing women’s economic safety net means drawing attention and awareness to a universal child care model, accessible and increased caregiver supports, implementation of universal basic income (UBI), employment for women in high growth sectors, increased representation of women in leadership positions including women in elected office, and pay equity and wage methodology review for Early Childhood Educator (ECE), Licence Practical Nurse (LCN) and Personal Care Attendant (PCA) professions.

<b>Goal:</b>	<b>By March 31, 2023, the Advisory Council will have developed research for Provincial Government and the public on women’s economic security and prosperity.</b>
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaged with organizations regarding policies and initiatives on issues impacting women’s economic security;</li> <li>• Developed a public awareness framework on issues impacting women’s economic security;</li> <li>• Provided advice to the Provincial Government about women’s economic security.</li> </ul>
Objective 1:	By March 31, 2021, the Advisory Council will have provided advice to the Provincial Government regarding impacts on women.
Indicator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussed with stakeholders and partners issues impacting women’s economic security informing our advice and recommendations to government;</li> <li>• Carried out research for presentation to government and the public on women’s economic security;</li> <li>• Provided briefings to various government departments on a variety of aspects of the economic security for women in the province.</li> </ul>
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2022, the Advisory Council will have supported the advancement of the economic security of women.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2023, the Advisory Council will have undertaken initiatives to advance women’s economic security.

## **Appendix A:**

## Council Member Biographies

**Paula Sheppard, President/CEO, St. John's.** Paula Sheppard is a diligent supporter and a fierce advocate for women. She has worked closely with colleagues at all levels of government to support women with the unique barriers they face. As CEO of the Newfoundland and Labrador Organization of Women Entrepreneurs, she gained first-hand knowledge and understanding of the critical importance women have to the social and economic success of our province. She is the vice-chair and founding member of the Women's Enterprise Organizations of Canada and a member of Gender Equity Network Canada, a Status of Women Canada project. She was also the co-chair of Atlantic Canada Women in Exporting working group from 2011-2012. Paula holds a Bachelor of Commerce (Co-op), Human Resources and Labour Relations from Memorial University.

**Barbara A. Barker, B.A. (Hons.), LL.B. (University of Saskatchewan)** is a member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation. Barbara works for the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission in the Provincial Director's Office as the Legal Services Solicitor. Amongst other community work, Barbara is a member of the Expert Advisory Panel with the Canadian Femicide Observatory for Justice and Accountability, volunteers with the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre and sits on the board for a newly created feminist not-for-profit, SKS Children's Centre. Barbara is a member of the Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador's Indigenous Education and Action Committee, as well as their Education Committee, and teaches Continuing Legal Education and the Bar Admissions Course.

**Val Barter** was born and raised in Petty Harbour, NL. Over the past twenty years Val has worked in the non-profit sector of Newfoundland and Labrador. Val is a strong feminist, intimate partner violence survivor (IPV), and long-time advocate and supporter for abused women and children & IPV survivors of all genders. Val is dedicated to anti-violence organizations and is currently the Executive Director of Violence Prevention Avalon East, supporting all individuals in our province who have experienced violence and/or are looking for support and guidance in violence

prevention. Val has worked in women's shelters in St. Johns and Labrador, including a 3.5 year term as Executive Director of the Nain Transition House In Nain, Labrador, previous Executive Director of Planned Parenthood NL and 6 years with the St. Johns Status of Women Council as a staff member where she served in a variety of supportive, trauma informed, education and advocacy roles, including a year as the Women's Centre coordinator. "Ever since I can remember I've been very passionate about the rights of all women. When it came to choosing what I wanted to do for the rest of my life I wanted to dedicate my life to assisting other people in recreating their full potential in a violence free society".

**Kelly Hynes Curties** is a lawyer for the Department of Justice and Public Safety. Bilingual, Kelly completed her Bachelor of Arts at Memorial University in French and Sociology, her Law Degree (LL.B.) at Université de Moncton and her Masters in Law (LL.M.) at Osgoode Hall Law School, York University. Kelly is passionate about advancing equality issues. She is currently in her final year as Chair of YWCA St. John's, and has been on their board in various capacities since 2013. Kelly has been actively involved in other community organizations, including the CBA NL, and the CBA National Committee on Equality.

**Erica Samms-Hurley** is a Mi'kmaq woman who earned her BN (2004) from Memorial University-Grenfell Campus and her MN (2014) from Athabasca University. Erica recently began studies at University of Alberta in the PhD of Nursing Program. She has worked in nursing education for over 10 years and is currently a nurse educator at Western Regional School of Nursing- Grenfell Campus. Erica is adjunct professor in the School of Arts and Social Sciences (Humanities) at Grenfell. Since a young age Erica has dedicated her time to volunteering on numerous committees locally, provincially, and nationally, such as Native Women's Association of Canada's Health Advisory Committee, the Canadian Institute of Health Research Institutes Advisory Board for Nutrition, Metabolism and Diabetes, and the Council on Higher Education Subcommittee on Indigenous Education. She has been recognized for her achievements and contributions by the Governor General's Award in Commemoration of the Persons Case and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Award. She is currently the chair of the Grenfell

Indigenous Advisory and Initiatives committee. Erica was elected into the vice-chief position of Qalipu first nation in 2015.

**Vanessa McCarthy, Vice-President**, is a lawyer in private practice with Rebecca Redmond MacLean Law Office PLC Inc. in Gander. She completed her Bachelor of Arts and LLB degrees with the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, where she was involved in numerous organizations committed to equality and women's rights. Vanessa worked and volunteered for many years with the Fredericton Sexual Assault Crisis Centre and later the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre. She is actively involved with the Gander Women's Centre and the Rotary Club of Gander. Vanessa is originally from Grand Falls-Windsor, and has lived in Gander since 2010.

**Elizabeth Evans-Mitchell** was born and raised in Makkovik, Nunatsiavut. Along with friend, Tama Jararuse, Elizabeth was one of the first graduates of J. C. Erhardt Memorial. Elizabeth obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Education from Memorial University which permitted her to follow her passion for teaching in her hometown for the past 30 years as both an educator and more recently, principal. Along with her education degree, she holds a Diploma in Kodaly Music from Acadia. Serving as a community councillor for many years as well as the North Coast VP for Combined Councils of Labrador, community issues and concerns have always been a priority. Elizabeth has volunteered for several committees including, Makkovik Museum Committee, Makkovikimut Trust, AnanauKatiget Timingit and Makkovik Chapel Servants – Acolyte for the Moravian Church.

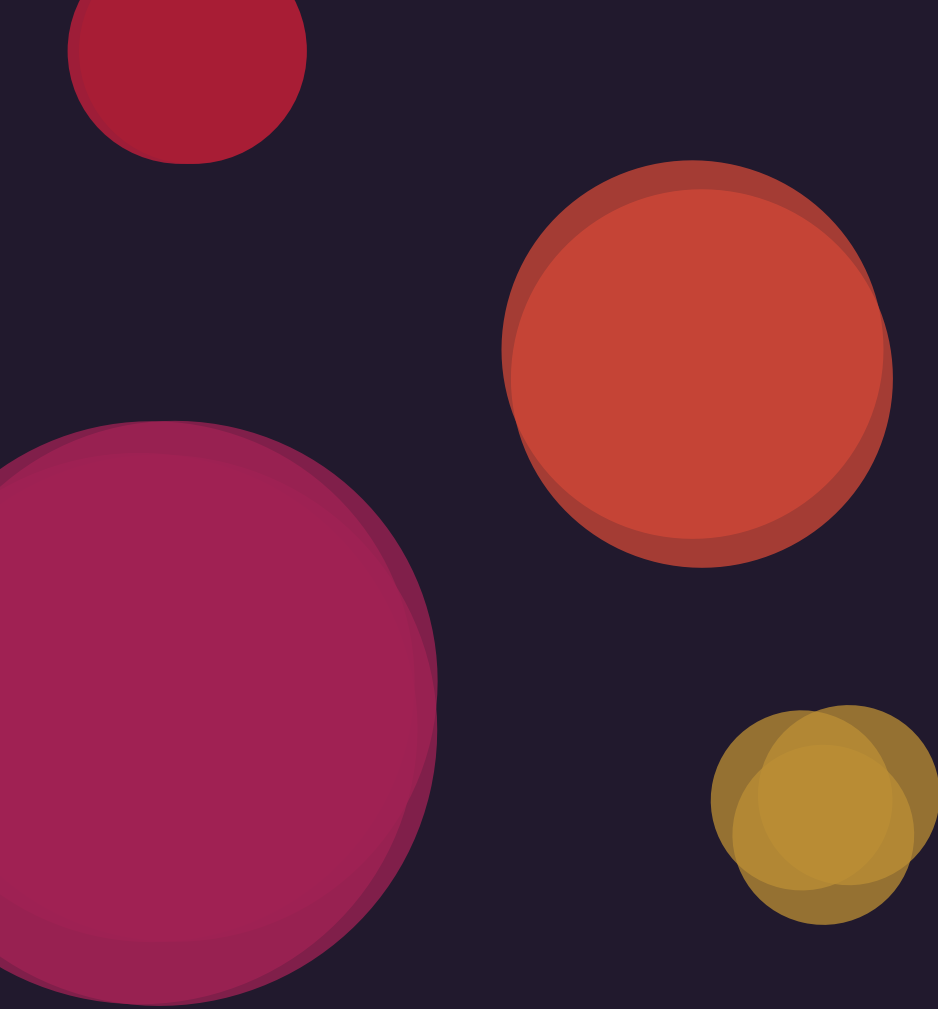
**Angie Wilmott** is a registered psychologist with 25 years of experience as a school psychologist and counsellor within the K-12 education system. She is a committed advocate for a system that enables all students to reach their unique potential, thereby supporting a future of thriving individuals and communities. She demonstrated a strong voice and leadership for the province's school counsellors and psychologists during her term as President of the NL Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association.

Angie advocates for improved mental health & addictions services, highlighting the critical role of proactive prevention and timely intervention. She has served for five years on the Provincial Mental Health & Addictions Advisory Council and is a member of the Towards Recovery: System Redesign Working Group for Children, Youth and Emerging Adults. Angie believes women's issues are family and community issues. Ensuring gender-balanced input is critical in effective decision-making, not only in meeting the needs of a community, but for our 'community' to truly thrive. Angie holds a BA (Hons) in Psychology, a B.Ed. and a M.Ed. (School Psychology / School Counselling) from Memorial University of Newfoundland. She is proud to accept this appointment as a member of the Provincial Council on the Status of Women and looks forward to real change that enables our province to fully benefit from gender balanced systems and decision-making.

**Raelene Vickers.** Without human connection, a strong foundation of empathy, understanding, and love, change cannot occur. Raelene's passion for human connection led her to pursue a Bachelors Degree in Social Work in 2014 from Memorial University and a Masters Degree in Social Work from the University of Toronto in 2018. Raelene describes herself as a fierce feminist who challenges society's expectations, and a passionate advocate for gender and sexual diverse populations. Practicing as a front-line social worker for four years, Raelene has experience working with children in care, foster parents, and women experiencing intimate partner violence. After completing a placement in Patient and Family Engagement at the Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) Raelene has been exploring the use of social work in administrative and policy roles. Recently, Raelene entered the role of Executive Director of Mokami Status of Women Council where she is incorporating strengths based and trauma informed theories into her everyday work.

**Arlene Blanchard-White** is a Business Development Officer with Ulnooweg Development Group mentoring Indigenous entrepreneurs. As a business owner, in 2006 she rode the Way-Out Women (WOW) Ride for Breast Cancer raising the second highest amount in Canada for research. Much of her life has been dedicated to volunteering on various boards such as the St. George's Economic Development Corporation, and Bay St. George Mi'kmaq Cultural Revival Committee while

volunteering with local schools to enhance Indigenous culture and heritage. She has served a three-year term as councillor for Qalipu First Nation where she also sat on the Education Committee as well as a representative to the Women's Policy Office. Arlene is a proud Mi'kmaq who embraces her culture through dance, ceremony and Indigenous values.



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