

Immigration, Skills and Labour

Strategic Plan

2020 - 2023



Message from the Minister



In accordance with my responsibilities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I present a strategic plan for the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour covering the period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2023. The department is a category one public body and this strategic plan was prepared in accordance with the applicable guidelines as well as the Provincial Government's strategic directions.

In the fall of 2019, the department published the action plan on workforce development. This plan, combined with the Immigration Action Plan, provide an important framework for the new strategic plan as the department seeks to strengthen the province's workforce and support a productive, knowledge-based economy.

The department will continue to work with stakeholders including apprentices, employers, employees, unions, and prospective immigrants and newcomers in order to achieve this outcome over the next three years. I welcome the opportunity to work with departmental staff, and other partners as we pursue implementation of this new strategic plan. My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and achievement of the specific goals and objectives.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'G' followed by a long horizontal line that loops back under the 'G'.

Honourable Gerry Byrne
Minister of Immigration, Skills and Labour

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Introduction

In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the strategic plan for the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour identifies three key priority areas, also described as strategic issues, which will be addressed over the next three years to help meet the social and economic needs of the province. This plan addresses three key issues in the areas of attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers, workforce development and innovation and flexibility in the apprenticeship system. To address these strategic issues, three-year goals, along with corresponding annual objectives have been developed. These goals aim to:

- Attract and retain more immigrants and newcomers to support sustainable communities and economic growth;
- Strengthen the provincial workforce to respond to labour market demands; and
- Provide a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Using specified indicators, an Annual Report will be tabled in the House of Assembly each year. This performance report will provide a summary of the progress in achieving the goals and objectives set out in this plan, and will outline performance indicators for the years ahead.

Overview of the Department

The Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour (ISL) works to ensure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians obtain the skills they need to find and keep gainful employment in our province and that businesses operating in our province can find the workforce talent needed to grow.

This includes creating a climate that is conducive to economic growth, competitiveness, and prosperity. This is achieved through a range of services and supports including:

- increasing the recruitment and retention of immigrants and newcomers;
- promoting diversity and multiculturalism;
- helping employers access and retain skilled workers;
- working with employers, employees, and unions to foster a positive employment relations climate;
- providing programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification;
- offering career development and planning services as well as employment and training supports, and information about the labour market; and
- delivering income support and other financial supports.

Mandate

The mandate for the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour is to:

- work collaboratively with employers and communities to increase immigration;
- help individuals to obtain the skilled trades, employment, financial and social supports needed to achieve the greatest benefit from current and future economic opportunities in the province; and
- encourage effective relationships between employers and employees through the administration and enforcement of applicable legislation.

Lines of Business

The department provides a range of programs and services to build a stronger economic foundation, which includes: encouraging attachment to the labour force; helping to meet the province's labour market needs; supporting individuals when they require assistance; and working with employers, employees and unions to create positive employment relations. Supports and services are grouped in the following areas:

- **Immigration** – nomination of eligible immigrants for permanent residency, engaging with employers and community stakeholders, delivering multiculturalism awareness activities, and providing recruitment and retention supports.
- **Employment, Skills and Careers** – career counseling, wage subsidies, apprenticeship and skilled trades certification supports, job searches, pre-employment readiness, as well as training and skills development.
- **Workforce Development** – supporting employers with recruitment, retention, and human resource planning; providing workforce policy support; as well as supplying individuals with labour market information and trend analysis on labour market opportunities.

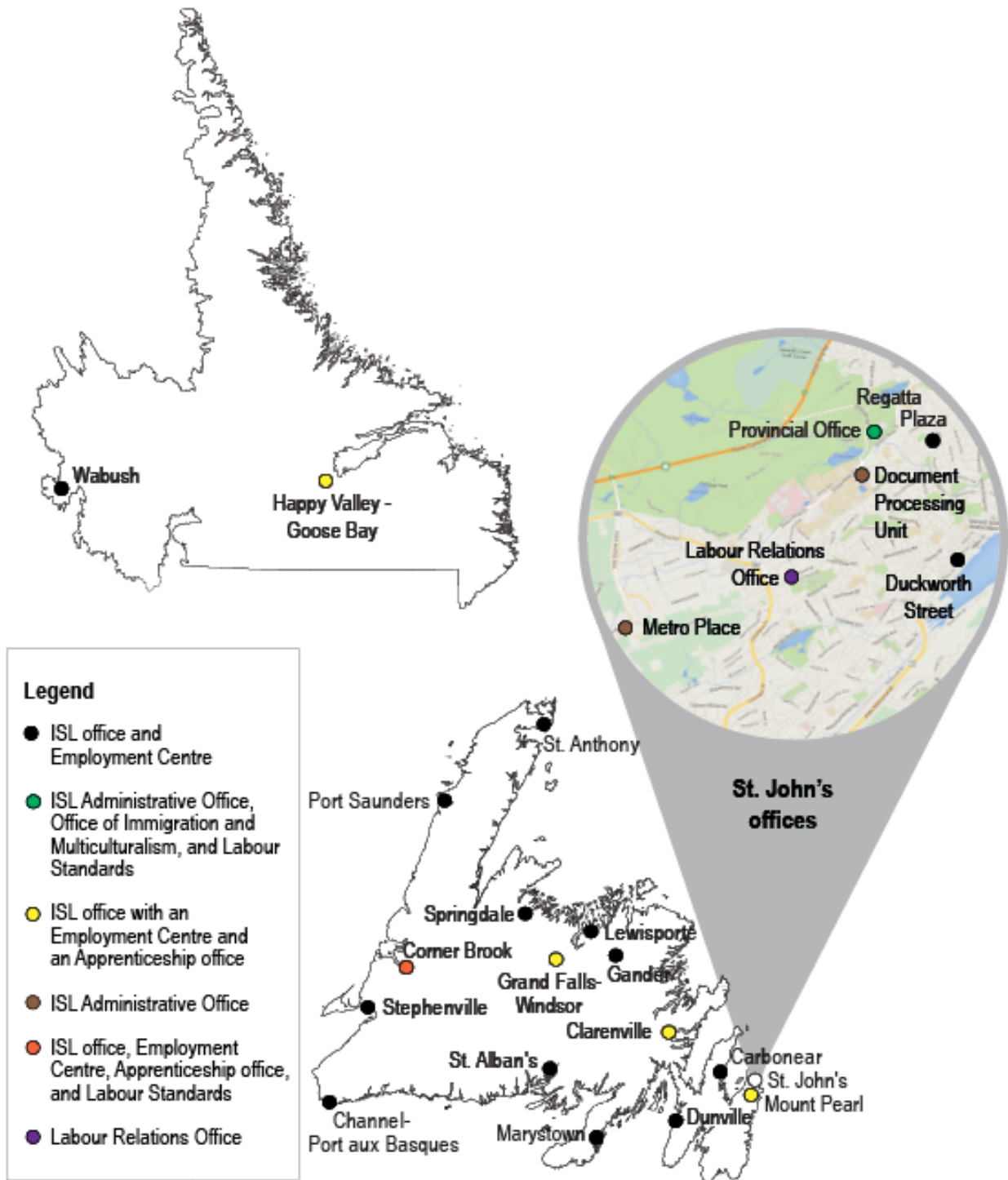
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- **Labour Relations** – facilitating the settlement of collective agreements, providing dispute resolution services, appointing arbitrators, and providing workplace training.
- **Labour Standards** – ensuring compliance with minimum terms and conditions of employment.
- **Income Assistance and Basic Benefits** – providing monthly benefits, earning supplements, and one-time benefits.

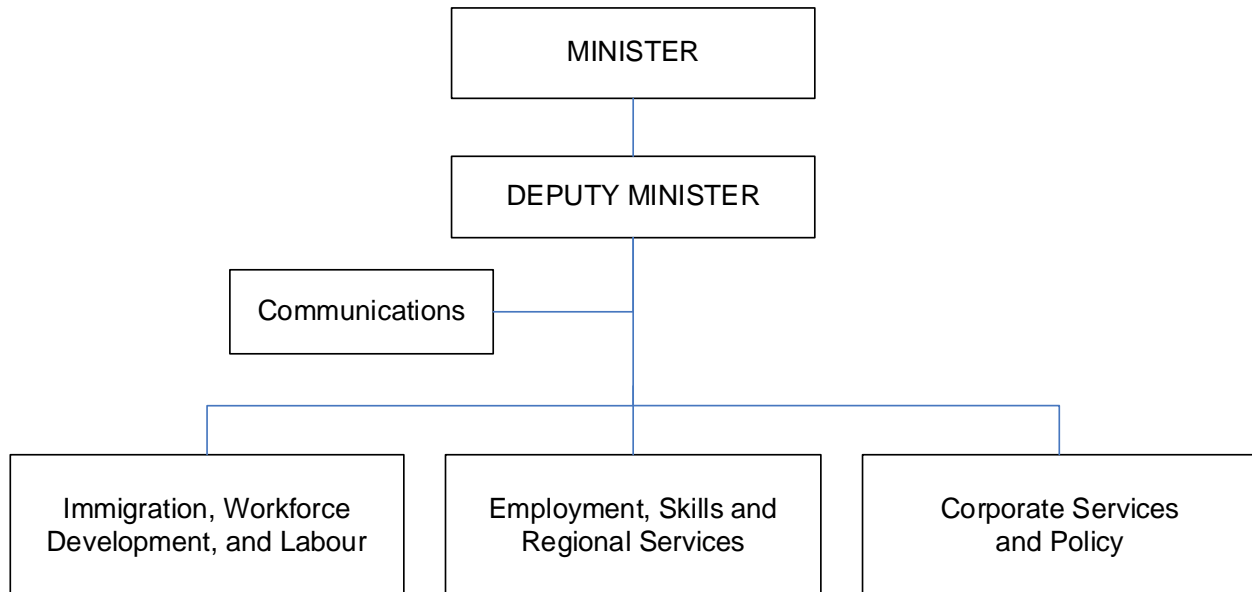
Additional information on the department's vision and values can be viewed on the departmental website at the following location: [About the Department](#).

As of November 2020 the department's staff complement consists of 662 positions, of which 536 are permanent and 126 are temporary. Seventy-eight percent of the staff complement are females and 22 percent are males. Forty-six percent of employees are located at seven sites in the St. John's Census Metropolitan Area. The remaining 54 percent are located in other offices throughout the province.

The following map illustrates the 18 communities where the offices of the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour are located:



The organizational structure of the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour includes three branches:



Immigration, Workforce Development and Labour

This branch ensures that immigration, workforce, and labour-related policies, programs, services and initiatives are strategically aligned to develop and deploy a highly trained and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands in the province. The branch administers immigration programs, provides newcomer settlement supports and offers labour supports to promote positive employment relationships in the province. This includes administering minimum terms and conditions of employment, and providing workplace dispute resolution.

Employment, Skills and Regional Services

This branch administers and delivers client-focused, labour market-related programs designed to assist people in securing training and finding sustainable employment, and in helping employers meet labour supply challenges. The branch is also responsible for programs and supports for apprenticeship and trades certification. The branch works with

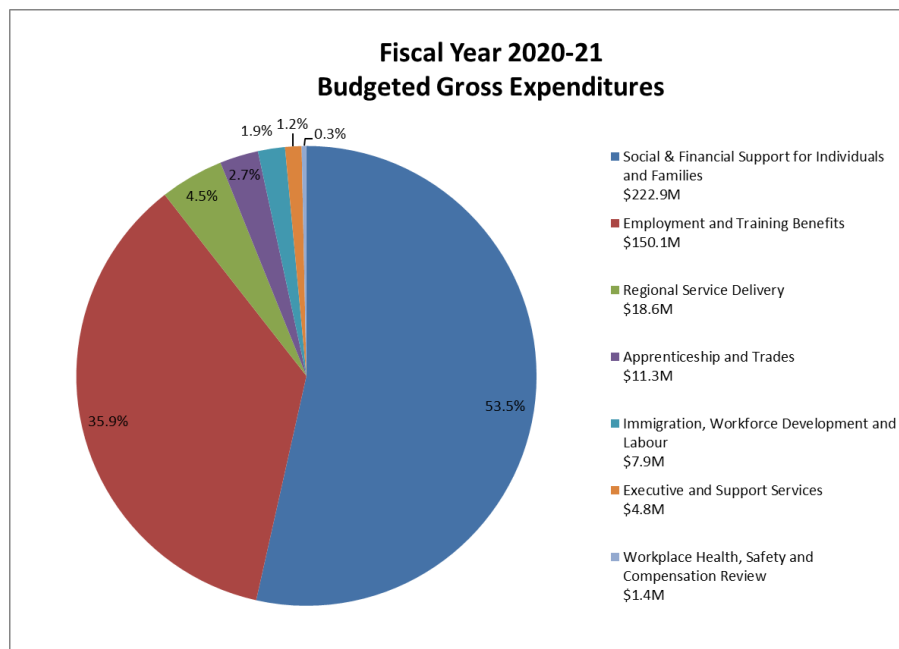
a large and varied client base, including individuals who may need employment and income supports. Clients receive services by telephone or in-person at one of the 19 Employment Centres across the province. The branch also has responsibility for policy development as it relates to employment and income support programs and services.

Corporate Services and Policy

This branch is responsible for the department's financial, information, and human resource management. The branch coordinates all corporate policy requirements including legislative reviews; planning and accountability functions; quality assurance and evaluation functions; and policy support for the workers' compensation system, including support to WorkplaceNL and the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division. The branch also provides advice on privacy matters and leads access to information requests.

Expenditures

For 2020-21 the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour has budgeted gross expenditures of \$417.0 million. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



The largest gross expenditures budgeted in the Department for the 2020-21 fiscal year are in support of Income and Social Development, which account for \$373.0 million, with \$222.9 million for income support for individuals and families and \$150.1 million focused on providing employment and training benefits under the Labour Market Development Agreement, the Workforce Development Agreement, as well as other employment and training programs. Regional Service Delivery accounts for approximately \$18.6 million, Apprenticeship and Trades is \$11.3 million, Immigration, Workforce Development and Labour at \$7.9 million, Executive and Support Services is \$4.8 million and Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division accounts for the remaining \$1.4 million.

Strategic Issues, Goals, Objectives and Indicators

Strategic issues represent the most significant internal or external changes that a department must realize to achieve its mandate. The goals identified for each issue reflect the results expected in a three-year time frame (2020-21 to 2022-23), while the objectives provide an annual focus. Performance indicators are provided for the three-year goals and the first year's objectives (2020-21). All of these elements assist the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress. After considering the mandate, financial resources and key priorities of the Minister, the following three issues have been identified as strategic for the department over the next three years:

1. The need to attract and retain more immigrants and newcomers to support sustainable communities and economic growth;
2. The need for a strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities; and
3. The need for a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Strategic Issue 1:

The need to attract and retain more immigrants and newcomers to support sustainable communities and economic growth.

Immigration continues to represent an important opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's economic, social and cultural growth. Over 80 per cent of Canada's population growth comes from immigration, mostly in the economic category. In Atlantic Canada immigration is the main driver of population stability and growth. In Newfoundland and Labrador immigration is an important contributor to population growth by stabilizing net population decreases related to more deaths than births. Immigrants also have a younger age profile than the total province which helps to increase the number of families with children and further sustain the future population.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is increasing efforts to attract and retain immigrants and newcomers. In March 2020, the Provincial Government established a new goal of increasing immigration to 2,500 permanent residents annually by 2022.

Welcoming immigrants is just the beginning of a journey that is only complete when new residents realize a sense of belonging to the community and decide to seek their future in the province. Newcomers who settle in Newfoundland and Labrador are more likely to remain in the province in the long-term if they are joined by family members. Five-year retention rate data released from Statistics Canada concluded that Newfoundland and Labrador's family class retention rate was approximately 75 per cent, meaning three in four individuals joining their family members in the province remained here five years later, compared to the 50 per cent overall immigration retention rate. Long-term retention is dependent on an immigrant's lived experience with their neighbours and wider community. Questions such as the availability of social and recreational activities, opportunities for spousal employment and social engagement, how family members such as children or grandparents are welcomed to the community, availability of culture-

specific foods and ingredients, local community openness to learn from immigrants and vice versa, all contribute to the goal of successful retention.

The following goal and objectives identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years, to support the attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers to our province.

Issue 1
Attracting and retaining immigrants and newcomers to the province.
<p>Goal 1: By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour will have worked to advance the attraction and retention of immigrants and newcomers to the province.</p> <p>Three-Year Performance Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased the number of immigrants and newcomers coming to the province.2. Improved immigration outcomes and services for immigrants and newcomers.3. Enhanced supports for employers to employ immigrants and newcomers.
<p>Objective 1 (2020-21)</p> <p>By March 31, 2021 the Department will have commenced initiatives to attract and retain immigrants and newcomers.</p> <p>Annual Performance Indicators:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continued to implement Immigration Action Plan initiatives.2. Provided sector-specific immigration supports to employers to satisfy labour requirements.3. Promoted a greater understanding of diversity and multiculturalism.
<p>Objective 2 (2021-22)</p> <p>By March 31, 2022 the Department will have continued initiatives to attract and retain immigrants and newcomers.</p>
<p>Objective 3 (2022-23)</p> <p>By March 31, 2023 the Department will have furthered initiatives to attract and retain immigrants and newcomers.</p>

Strategic Issue 2:

The need for a strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

A productive, knowledge-based economy requires a workforce that is trained and ready for current jobs as well as adaptive to future labour market opportunities. The Provincial Government supports the development of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to ensure businesses and industry have access to the skilled workers they need to remain competitive and create jobs in a changing economy.

With over 62,000 job openings forecasted for the next decade (2019-28), the Provincial Government acknowledges that taking advantage of these opportunities will require individuals who have a strong foundation of education, skills, and experience. This requires collaboration among partners (government, industry, labour, and education) to provide sustainable employment opportunities that are matched with a skilled workforce. The pursuit of economic diversification and associated private sector growth will also identify new job opportunities. Increasing the skilled labour supply also requires that the Provincial Government support organizations that work with underrepresented groups, including women, persons with disabilities, immigrants, youth, Indigenous peoples and older workers. This will enable these groups to fully participate in the provincial economy and in so doing, create local and regional economic benefits.

The following goal and objectives identify desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years, to strengthen the workforce in response to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

Issue 2

A strengthened workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

Goal 2: By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour will have worked to strengthen the provincial workforce to respond to emerging labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Helped equip the provincial labour force to respond to labour market demands and economic diversification opportunities.
2. Supported private industry sector growth in key priority sectors.
3. Provided opportunities for individuals with employment barriers to transition into the workforce.

Objective 1 (2020-21)

By March 31, 2021 the department will have undertaken initiatives to strengthen the provincial workforce.

Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Commenced year-two initiatives in the action plan on workforce development.
2. Supported industry and community-led initiatives through the Workforce Innovation Centre.
3. Worked to connect individuals with employment barriers to the workforce.

Objective 2 (2021-22)

By March 31, 2022 the department will have continued initiatives to strengthen the provincial workforce.

Objective 3 (2022-23)

By March 31, 2023 the department will have furthered initiatives to strengthen the provincial workforce.

Strategic Issue 3:

The need for a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Apprenticeship is a proven workforce training strategy to develop new talent in highly-skilled occupations, combining paid on-the-job learning with related technical instruction in the classroom. As technology advances, tradespeople are required to adapt or risk having their skills become obsolete. At the same time, the province must keep pace to ensure that the apprenticeship system is easy to join, navigate and complete.

The demand for highly skilled tradespeople in Newfoundland and Labrador mirrors the cyclical nature of economic activity in the province. That is why innovative and flexible training methods of service and program delivery are continually being developed, to ensure a high quality education that meets industry needs during both times of economic expansion and contraction.

Further, the province must support the mobility of workers through National and Atlantic harmonization initiatives ensuring Newfoundland and Labrador skilled trades workers can take advantage of opportunities across Canada and abroad, when attaching to the labour market.

The following goals and objectives identify desired results the department plans to achieve over the next three years, to provide a more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Issue 3

A more innovative and flexible provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Goal 3: By March 31, 2023 the Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour will have worked to advance the innovation and flexibility of the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Three-Year Performance Indicators:

1. Worked to further Atlantic and National apprenticeship harmonization initiatives.
2. Enhanced program delivery in the provincial apprenticeship system.
3. Improved access to online services.

Objective 1 (2020-21)

By March 31, 2021 the Department will have commenced initiatives to advance innovation and flexibility in the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Annual Performance Indicators:

1. Implemented further apprenticeship Atlantic and National harmonization initiatives in high demand occupations.
2. Partnered with training providers to assess ongoing and emerging need for online skilled trades training.
3. Continued to develop and prepare for implementation of the new online Apprenticeship Management System in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Objective 2 (2021-22)

By March 31, 2022 the Department will have continued initiatives to advance innovation and flexibility in the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Objective 3 (2022-23)

By March 31, 2023 the Department will have furthered initiatives to advance innovation and flexibility in the provincial system for skilled trades training and certification.

Annex: Public Entities

The following public entities report through the Minister and prepare separate performance-based plans:

- Income and Employment Support Appeal Board;
- Labour Relations Board;
- Provincial Apprenticeship and Certification Board;
- Standing Fish Price-Setting Panel;
- Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Review Division; and
- WorkplaceNL.

