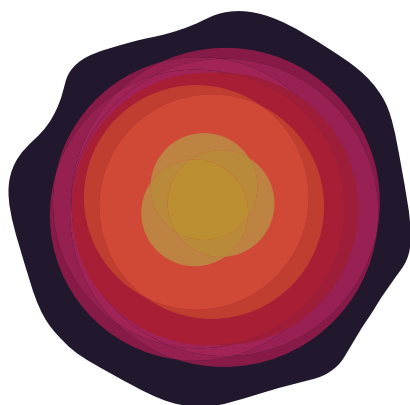


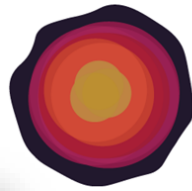


Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

ACTIVITY
PLAN

2026-2029



Provincial Advisory Council
on the Status of Women
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

As President/CEO of the Provincial Advisory Council on the Status of Women Newfoundland and Labrador (PACSW), and on behalf of its council members, I am pleased to present our Activity Plan for April 1, 2026-March 31, 2029.

In preparing this three-year plan, careful consideration was given to the priorities the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has identified: **Lower Taxes, Better Healthcare, and Safer Communities**. Using a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to guide our work, PACSW is dedicated to reaching our vision of equity, equality, and inclusion for women in Newfoundland and Labrador. The progress and achievements of this plan will be provided in each Annual Report.

In accordance with PACSW's responsibilities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act** as a Category 3 government entity, my signature indicates PACSW council members developed this plan and are therefore accountable for the achievement of the identified goals and objectives contained herein.

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

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1.0 Overview

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

PACSW is an arms-length legislated government agency that reports to the Minister of Women and Gender Equality. The 11 council members follow the Independent Appointments Commission (IAC) process and are appointed for three-year terms by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council (see Appendix A), with eligibility for re-appointment once their terms end. The President/CEO position is a salaried position requiring an open job 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 equity and equality issues from a regional or provincial perspective. Appointments aim to reflect the representation of women with diverse backgrounds and experience living in our communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

To help support the work of the council, PACSW has three employees. The accessible office space is located at 15 Hallett Crescent, Suite 103, St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. PACSW's budget is allocated on an annual basis from the Provincial Government of Newfoundland and Labrador through the Office of Women and Gender Equality. Salaries, rent, council member meetings, and Information Technology services and support continue to account for the largest expenditures of the core operating budget.

In order to achieve its mandate PACSW has established valuable working relationships with regional women's centres, local and provincial community non-profit organizations, the Office for Women and Gender Equality, and other government agencies, boards, and commissions, as well as any other community agency that shares an agenda to improve the progress of women's equity and equality.

Further information about PACSW can be found at: www.pacsw.ca

1.2 Mandate

PACSW's mandate is taken from Section 3 of the Status of Women Advisory Council Act, which states "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.

1.3 Vision

PACSW's vision is a Newfoundland and Labrador where all women experience full equity, equality and inclusion in every aspect of life.

1.4 Primary Clients

The primary clients of PACSW include: the Minister of Women and Gender Equality, the Office of Women and Gender Equality, other government departments and agencies, and the public, seeking information on issues relating to the advancement of women and gender equality and equity.

2.0 Strategic Issues

2.1 Economic Resilience

When societies remove barriers and offer equal opportunities for all genders it unlocks economic productivity and has beneficial impacts for a thriving economy. The ability to make economic decisions, control economic resources, build financial resilience through access to education and reach a person's potential in the formal labour market helps to support and achieve true gender equity. It reduces poverty, deepens social cohesion, and enhances well-being for current and future generations of women and gender-diverse people in Newfoundland and Labrador. The World Bank has declared gender equality as "smart economics", recognizing it

builds resiliency to economic shocks like pandemics, financial crises, inflation, and unemployment.

Objective 1:	By March 31, 2027, PACSW will engage stakeholders and partners to identify key issues impacting women’s economic resilience and produce evidence-based insights informing our recommendations to government.
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2028, PACSW will deliver advice and recommendations to the Provincial Government to inform policies and initiatives supporting women’s economic resilience.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2029, PACSW will disseminate research and information on women’s economic resilience to government and the public increasing awareness and supporting informed decision-making.

2.2 Social Safety

Social safety is intrinsically linked to economic resilience and can play a crucial role in positively transforming the economy. Having quality healthcare, affordable housing and freedom from poverty, is essential to achieving one’s full human potential. The health and social safety of women and gender diverse persons is negatively affected by the disproportionate levels of gender-based violence, including intimate partner and sexual violence, preventing women from fully participating in society. Addressing the systemic nature of violence with early education interventions on topics such as healthy relationships, consent, and digital safety can shift the social norms, attitudes and behaviours that underpin gendered violence.

Objective 1:	By March 31, 2027, PACSW will engage stakeholders and partners to identify key issues impacting women’s social safety and produce evidence-based insights informing our recommendations to government.
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2028, PACSW will deliver advice and recommendations to the Provincial Government to inform policies and initiatives supporting women’s social safety.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2029, PACSW will disseminate research and information on women’s social safety to government and the public increasing awareness and supporting informed decision-making.

Appendix A:

Council Member Biographies

Paula Sheppard, President/CEO, 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.

Courtney Clarke (she/her) (she/her) Courtney Clarke is a community-focused leader whose work sits at the intersection of gender equity, violence prevention, governance, and economic development. She has spent more than a decade advancing equity in politics and the violence prevention sector and is currently the Executive Director of the St. John's Status of Women Council and Women's Centre. As National Director of Programs with Equal Voice Canada and through freelance initiatives, she has supported women and gender-diverse candidates across the country through multi- and non-partisan initiatives that equip women, members of BIPOC communities, and individuals without access to traditional political networks to run for office.

Courtney is a three-time elected Director of Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union (NLCU), where she chairs the Governance Committee. She has also held leadership roles as Chair of Equal Voice NL and Violence Prevention Avalon East and remains committed to strengthening organizations and building more inclusive communities through board service, mentorship, and advocacy.

Megan Gullage is a strategic leader with extensive experience in community-based mental health services, housing strategies, inclusion, and peer support development. She brings a strong systems-level perspective, informed by her work across program design, workforce development, and organizational growth within the nonprofit sector. Megan has contributed to the development and implementation of innovative service models, with particular expertise in peer

support frameworks and youth engagement strategies. She has played a key role in shaping programs from concept through to execution, including establishing onboarding structures, defining roles, and supporting the development of emerging peer workforces. In her advisory capacity, Megan brings a balanced approach that integrates operational insight with strategic oversight. She is known for her ability to assess gaps, identify practical solutions, and support initiatives that are both scalable and responsive to community needs. Her leadership is grounded in collaboration, accountability, and a commitment to inclusive, person-centered systems.

Megan also draws on her lived experience with mental health challenges, which informs her contributions to reducing stigma and strengthening the relevance and accessibility of services. She is committed to advancing approaches that prioritize dignity, empowerment, and meaningful community connection.

Michelle Greene was born and raised in St. John's. She is a registered social worker who completed her bachelor's and master's degrees in social work at Memorial University. Michelle is passionate about helping others attain good mental health. She teaches nationally and internationally with the Mental Health Commission of Canada and was a member of the Canadian Forces National Speaker's Bureau from 2009 to 2015. Michelle has spent her 33-year career working with people in the not-for-profit sector empowering those who have experienced trauma, loss, and vulnerabilities.

Jacqueline (Jackie) Compton-Hobbs lives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay and is employed with Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Department of Justice and Public Safety. Jackie chairs the local Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing and Homelessness Coalition and has been an active member for over 10 years advocating to end Homelessness. Presently, she is the Deputy Mayor with the town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay. Jackie is very active in the community and volunteers on several boards/committees.

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.

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 Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association (NLCPA).

Angie advocates for improved mental health and addictions services, highlighting the critical role of proactive prevention and timely intervention. She has served for five years on the Provincial Mental Health and 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 an M.Ed. (School Psychology / School Counselling) from Memorial University of Newfoundland.

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 bachelor's degree in social work in 2014 from Memorial University and a master's 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 frontline 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.

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