



Provincial Advisory Council
on the Status of Women

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

**BUSINESS
PLAN**

2023-2026



Provincial Advisory Council
on the Status of Women
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

As President/CEO for 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 2023-2026 Business Plan covering April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026.

In preparing this three-year plan, careful consideration was given to the strategic directions the Office of Women and Gender Equality (WGE) has identified: **Economic and Social Well-Being**, and **Gender-Based Violence**. Using a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens to guide our work, PACSW is dedicated to reaching our vision of equity, equality, and inclusion of 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 2 Government entity, my signature indicates PACSW council members developed this plan and 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 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 government's awareness, as well as the public's, on matters of concern for women.

PACSW is an arms-length legislated government agency that reports to the Minister Responsible for 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 (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 members, PACSW has a staff complement of three full-time employees. The accessible office space is located at 15 Hallett Crescent, Suite 103, St. John's, NL.

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 IT 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, a branch of Executive Council, other government agencies, boards, and commissions as well as any individual or group that share 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 Lines of Business

Lines of business are defined as those discrete and coherent sets of services that represent what PACSW 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 on matters of concern for women; and (3) administration and operation of the Advisory Council.

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

1.4 Vision

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

1.5 Primary Clients

The primary clients of PACSW include: the Minister Responsible for Women and Gender Equality, the Office of Women and Gender Equality, other Provincial

Government departments and agencies, and the public seeking information on issues relating to the advancement of women and gender.

2.0 Strategic Issues

2.1 Economic and Social Well-Being

It is important that all people have equitable access to necessities like quality healthcare, housing, education, and justice to be fully empowered and thrive in society. Barriers to social and economic services that only affect certain groups are at the root of systemic inequity.

Women’s economic stability is a critical element to broader equity and equality as well as a foundation for social well-being. Addressing systemic barriers that limit their ability to participate fully in the economy will result in a resilient and inclusive economy for the province. It is important to recognize that every sector in society has a role to play in improving women’s social well-being. By boosting the representation of women’s experiences in policy making we can make a positive difference in health and well-being outcomes for women in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Some of the many areas PACSW will focus on to determine the status of women’s economic and social well-being include equitable access to mental health supports, homelessness and affordable housing of women and children, women in male-dominated fields and women in leadership roles, as well as continued access to affordable childcare.

Goal:	By March 31, 2026, the Provincial Advisory Council will have increased knowledge and awareness to Provincial Government and the public on the economic and social well-being of women in the province.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided advice and recommendations to the Provincial Government on women’s economic and social well-being. • Developed resources for Provincial Government and the public on women’s economic and social well-being. • Increased public awareness initiatives on women’s economic and social well-being.

Objective 1:	By March 31, 2024, PACSW will have provided evidence-informed advice to the Provincial Government on increasing women’s economic and social well-being in the province.
Indicator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members met with community organizations to discuss barriers to women’s economic and social well-being. • Authored research on areas impacting women’s economic and social well-being. • Submitted briefing notes to Provincial Government on policies and legislation recommendations on women’s economic and social well-being.
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2025, PACSW will have created educational material for government and the public on women’s economic and social well being in our province.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2026, PACSW will have produced public awareness initiatives on the status of women’s economic and social well-being in our province.

2.2 Gender-Based Violence

Being free from violence is a basic human right and not a privilege yet gender-based violence continues to be systemic issue in our society. 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 Indigenous women and girls, 2SLGTBQIA+, women and girls living with a disability, women living in rural areas, and senior women. 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, 2019). 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.

PACSW has identified gender-based violence as a continued critical priority area for the 2023-2026 planning cycle. Accessible and equitable supports for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, advocating for a more responsive legal and justice systems through sexual assault education and training in all entry points in the criminal justice field, violence and school safety, curriculum on consent, and child and youth exploitation are several focus areas for analysis and public interest.

Goal:	By March 31, 2026, the Provincial Advisory Council will have increased knowledge and awareness to Provincial Government and the public on the impact of gender-based violence on women in the province.
Indicators:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided advice and recommendations to the Provincial Government about gender-based violence issues. • Developed resource materials for Provincial Government and the public on gender-based violence issues. • Produced public awareness initiatives on ending gender-based violence.
Objective 1:	By March 31, 2024, PACSW will have provided evidence-informed advice to the Provincial Government on addressing gender-based violence.
Indicator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council members met with community organizations to discuss impacts of gender-based violence in the province. • Authored research on key issues in gender-based violence. • Submitted briefing notes to Provincial Government on policies and legislation recommendations in gender-based violence.
Objective 2:	By March 31, 2025, PACSW will have created educational resource material for the general public on gender-based violence in our province.
Objective 3:	By March 31, 2026, PACSW will have produced public awareness initiatives on gender-based violence in our province.

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.

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”.

Courtney Clarke (she/her) spends her professional life helping financial institutions prevent fraud, money laundering, elder abuse, drug, and human trafficking at Verafin. A survivor of gender-based violence, Courtney established the Jane Doe

Graduate Award in Anti-Violence Research at Memorial University. Recently finishing her three-year term at Violence Prevention Avalon East, as Chair, Courtney played a key role in successful initiatives such as Unsafe at Home Domestic Abuse Support Network, Stable & Safe Equestrian Counselling, and Navigating Modern Masculinity. Co-Chairing Equal Voice NL, Courtney helps women and gender diverse individuals get elected to all levels of government. Through this role, she also sits on the NL Premier's Roundtable for Gender Equity. In 2022, she helped Equal Voice co-author a study on sexual harassment in Canada's legislative Provincial & Federal Assemblies for the Justice of Canada. An elected Corporate Director of the Newfoundland and Labrador Credit Union (NLCU), Courtney represents the financial interests of 20,000+ members, bringing EDI-AR focused enhancements to the board table. In 2015, Courtney was named one of HSBC's Top 50 Women Leaders of Tomorrow and in 2020, Courtney was the recipient of the 2020 Memorial University Alumni Tribute Award for Outstanding Community Service. In 2022, Courtney was a Delegate at United Nations UNITE 2030 in New York, focusing her work on economic development and intersectionality. In October 2022, Courtney was profiled as one of the Top 100 Most Powerful Women in Canada by the North American Women's Executive Network for Community Impact.

Megan Ford has a background in human rights and social work and has been providing clinical oversight to adult care in both the private and non-profit sectors for the past 10 years. She is a feminist and a lifelong volunteer in the Girl Guide movement, as well as being a member of the Board of Directors for Old School, a non-profit organization aimed to bridge the generational gap between youth and seniors through the arts. Megan was also appointed as a member of the Provincial Advisory Committee on Aging and Seniors

Michelle Greene was born and raised in St. John's, Michelle Greene 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. She currently works as the Executive Director of Iris Kirby House Inc.

Jacqueline (Jackie) Compton-Hobbs lives in Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL and is employed with Government of Newfoundland and Labrador with the Department of Justice and Public Safety. Jackie chairs the local Happy Valley-Goose Bay Housing & Homelessness Coalition and is an active member for over 10 years advocating to end Homelessness. Presently she is in her 7th year as a Town Councillor 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.

Trina Simms is a Senior Crown Attorney in Western Newfoundland and has worked in criminal law practice since 2003, which has allowed her the opportunity to gain significant experience in the prosecution of sexual offences and intimate partner violence. She has a BA in political science and sociology from Memorial University, as well as certificates in criminology and Newfoundland studies, an LLB from the University of New Brunswick, and an LLM from York University. In her work, Trina frequently interacts with people involved in sexual offences and family violence, and appreciates the many challenges involved in navigating the criminal justice system. While she recognizes that there have been positive changes in legislation, she would like to see these changes materialize effectively within criminal practice, knowing that this will take time and positive advocacy. She believes that the Council will be instrumental in effecting positive change and is grateful and enthusiastic for the opportunity to participate.

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 and 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 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 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.



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