

Strategic Plan

2025-2026

Jobs, Growth and
Rural Development





MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As the Minister responsible for the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development, I am pleased to present the department's strategic plan for the period October 29, 2025 to March 31, 2026. As a category one public body, the departmental strategic plan was prepared in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, Provincial Government strategic directions, and other applicable guidelines.

Due to recent Provincial Government restructuring, I am tabling this strategic plan to reflect the department's key priorities and goals for the period from October 29, 2025 to March 31, 2026. This strategic plan provides an important framework for the department to follow as it endeavors to reach its goals while creating a stronger, more inclusive workforce. The plan helps to support a productive, knowledge-based, and competitive economy, which enables economic development, business growth, innovation, entrepreneurship, and economic diversification for everyone living in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The department will continue working with partners, including employers, employees, newcomers, and community groups to achieve the plan's objectives. I welcome the opportunity to work with departmental staff, and other contributors, as we pursue the implementation of this strategic plan.

My signature below attests to my accountability for the preparation of this plan and achievement of the specific goals, objectives, and performance indicators.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A.M. Paddock".

Hon. A.M. (Lin) Paddock
Minister of Jobs and Growth
Minister of Rural Development
Minister of Immigration
Minister of Francophone Affairs

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Department Overview	3
Organizational Structure	5
Geographic Overview.....	8
Staff and Expenditures.....	8
Mandate	10
Lines of Business	10
Primary Clients.....	12
Vision	12
Strategic Issues, Goals, Objectives and Performance Indicators.....	13
Strategic Issue 1	14
Strategic Issue 2	16
Strategic Issue 3	19
Annex A: Strategic Directions.....	22
Annex B: Public Entities.....	24

Introduction

In accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, the strategic plan for the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development identifies three key priority areas, which will be addressed over the period October 29, 2025 to March 31, 2026 to help meet the economic needs of the province (see Annex A: Strategic Directions for more details on the department's strategic directions). Goals, objectives, and performance indicators have been developed to address three key strategic issues.

These goals aim to:

- Enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities.
- Drive business and economic growth, and strengthen regional and rural economies through targeted investment, innovation, and capacity-building initiatives.
- Attract skilled newcomers to the province to support labour market demands, population growth, and inclusive communities.

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

Department Overview

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development works to unleash the full potential of Newfoundland and Labrador's talent pool through innovative workforce development strategies, population growth initiatives, and immigration programs. Additionally, the department drives business and sectoral growth and diversification, investment attraction, and rural economic development through a collaborative, regional approach. This includes creating a climate that is conducive to economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness on the global stage. This is achieved through a range

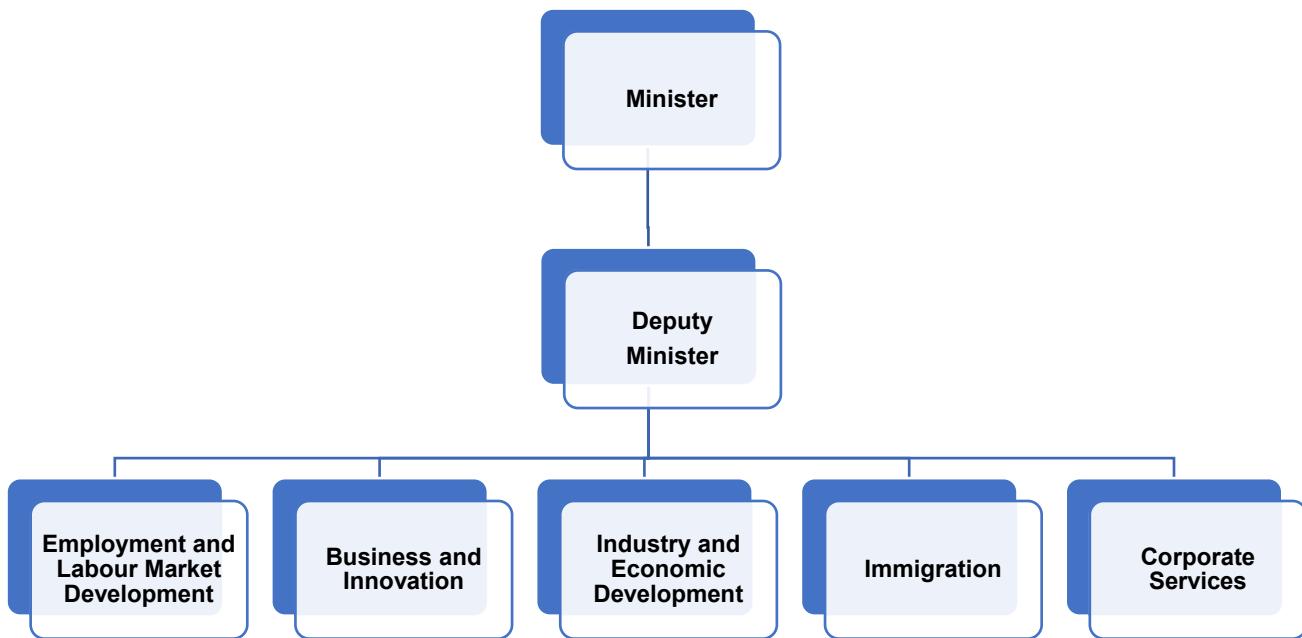
of services and supports including:

- Helping employers access and retain skilled workers.
- Offering career development and planning services as well as employment and training supports, and information about the labour market.
- Providing information, networking opportunities, counselling services, and financial grants and loans to businesses, industry associations, co-operatives, social enterprises, communities, and community organizations.
- Promoting Newfoundland and Labrador as a premier North American destination for investment and attracting new foreign direct investment.
- Supporting efforts by business in the province to grow exports and diversify trade markets.
- Assisting the province's technology and innovation ecosystem through direct collaboration with start-ups, academic institutions, and business accelerators and incubators.
- Increasing the recruitment and retention of newcomers, including delivering provincial immigration programs¹.
- Promoting diversity and multiculturalism.
- Taking steps to prevent racism in all its forms.

The Innovation and Business Investment Corporation, and Newfoundland Hardwoods Limited also report directly to the Minister (See Annex B: Public Entities for details).

¹ Newcomers refers to economic immigrants, refugees, and other newcomers to Canada intending to or in the process of permanently settling in Newfoundland and Labrador, as well as international students, international graduates, migrant workers, and asylum seekers.

Organizational Structure



Employment and Labour Market Development

The Employment and Labour Market Development Branch helps individuals prepare for, find, and keep meaningful work while supporting employers in meeting labour supply needs. Through a network of 19 Employment Centres across the province, the branch provides career counseling, job search assistance, pre-employment readiness, training and skills development, wage subsidies, and other supports. Services are delivered in person and virtually to a diverse client base, including those who require additional employment and training supports. The branch also administers labour market programs designed to connect people with sustainable employment and oversees policy development related to employment and training services.

Business and Innovation

The Business and Innovation Branch negotiates, assesses, and monitors funding proposals and agreements for large-scale and special projects, providing business and financial advisory support throughout their development and implementation. This includes evaluating applications for programs such as the Investment Attraction Fund,

Job Accelerator and Growth Program, as well as for significant projects led by other government departments. The branch delivers operational support to the Innovation and Business Investment Corporation, including accounting, payment, and collection services, and participates as a limited partner in venture capital funds in support of government funding commitments for technology startup companies in the province. The branch additionally promotes Newfoundland and Labrador as a premier destination for foreign direct investment and pursues key opportunities to attract new investment. Through implementation of the Business Growth Program and Business Investment Program, the branch supports efforts by provincial businesses to increase productivity, adopt new technologies, minimize market expansion risks, increase exports, and diversify trade, conduct business development, and engage in commercial research and development (R&D). The branch also implements the Harvester Enterprise Loan Program and Rental Housing Development Loan Program, and other business support programs as needed.

Industry and Economic Development

The Industry and Economic Development Branch is responsible for regional economic development as well as sector growth and diversification for the provincial economy. With regard to regional economic development, the branch, through its regional offices across the province, leads provincial planning and program delivery, and provides capacity building, facilitation, and advisory services to commercial and non-commercial clients, as well as financial support for commercial and non-commercial clients. It engages communities, businesses, co-operatives, social enterprises, industry associations, and other interest holders to advance regional development, and manages the Regional Development Fund and Business Navigator service, which helps entrepreneurs and business owners to successfully complete provincial regulatory, permitting, and related processes. To support economic diversification and growth, the branch identifies opportunities in established and emerging technology sectors to foster new business growth, development of the technology ecosystem and regional diversification. In doing so, it engages in and supports sectoral research and provides financial and non-financial support to post-secondary institutions, industry associations,

and other non-commercial clients to strengthen partnerships and interest holder engagement. The branch supports non-commercial R&D through the Research and Innovation Fund, manages the Green Transition Fund and Innovation and Business Development Fund, and works with the federal government and service providers to expand both broadband and cellular connectivity in the province.

Immigration

The Immigration Branch supports population growth and workforce development in Newfoundland and Labrador by promoting the province as a destination for work and remote employment, helping employers with recruitment, retention, and human resource planning, and providing labour market information and policy advice. It nominates eligible newcomers for permanent residency to fill critical gaps in the labour market, engages with employers and community partners, and offers free support to recruit internationally for positions that cannot be filled locally. The branch is also focused on retention of newcomers and long-time residents. The branch also delivers multiculturalism awareness activities, supports efforts to eliminate racism, and provides services to help newcomers settle and stay. In addition, it works with regulatory bodies to ensure fair, transparent, and timely registration processes for skilled workers from other provinces and internationally educated professionals, reducing barriers to licensure and aligning practices with national labour mobility and credential recognition standards.

Corporate Services

The Corporate Services Branch is responsible for the department's financial, information, and human resource management. Additionally, it coordinates all corporate policy requirements including legislative reviews, planning and accountability functions, and quality assurance and evaluation functions. The branch also provides advice on privacy matters and provides support for access to information requests.

Geographic Overview

The department is headquartered in the Confederation Building in St. John's with offices in Carbonear, Channel-Port aux Basques, Charlottetown, Clarenville, Corner Brook, Deer Lake, Ferryland, Forteau, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador City, Marystow, Placentia, Port Saunders, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, and Stephenville.

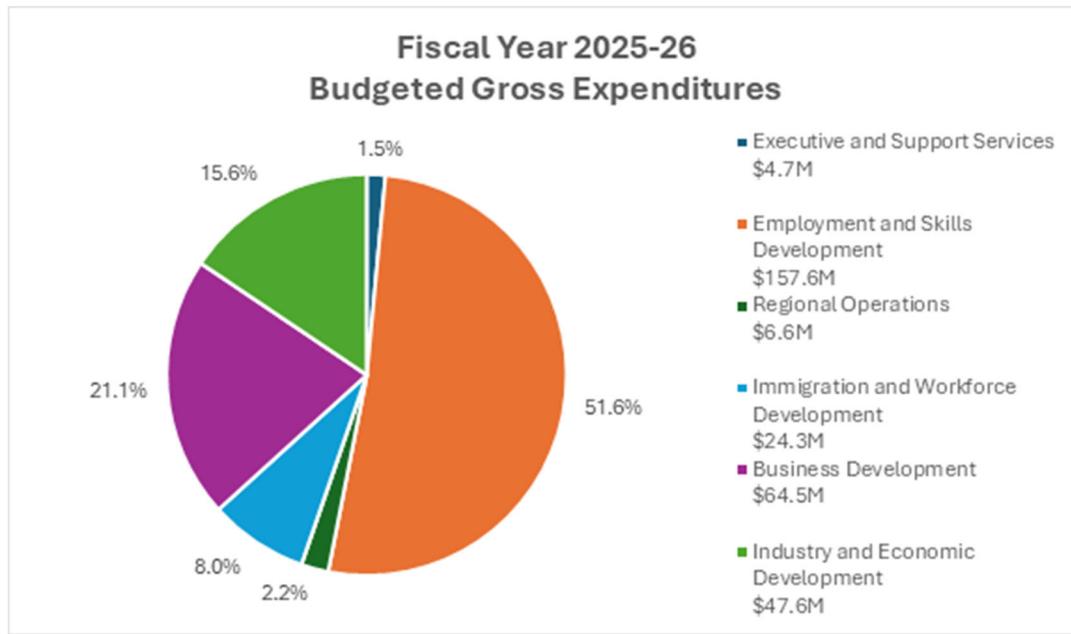
The department also operates 19 Employment Centres located in 18 communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador including Carbonear, Channel-Port aux Basques, Clarenville, Corner Brook, Dunville, Gander, Grand Falls-Windsor, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Lewisporte, Marystow, Mount Pearl, Port Saunders, Springdale, St. Alban's, St. Anthony, St. John's (two Centres), Stephenville, and Wabush.

Staff and Expenditures

As of October 29, 2025, the department's staff complement consists of 393 employees. The table below provides staff complement and budget by division.

Division	# of Employees	Budget
Executive and Support Services	28	\$4,729,100
Employment and Skills Development	16	\$157,612,600
Regional Operations	186	\$6,611,400
Immigration and Workforce Development	60	\$24,346,100
Business and Innovation	39	\$64,463,100
Industry and Economic Development	64	\$47,620,800

Based on the Estimates released for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development has budgeted gross expenditures of \$305.4 million. The following diagram shows the major expenditure categories:



The largest gross expenditure budgeted in the department for the 2025-2026 fiscal year is \$157.6 million, which focuses on providing employment and skills developments under the Labour Market Transfer Agreements; and other employment and training programs. The second largest gross expenditure budgeted is \$64.5 million for Business and Innovation; followed by \$47.6 million for Industry and Economic Development; and \$24.3 million for Immigration and Workforce Development. Regional Service Delivery accounts for \$6.6 million; and Executive and Support Services accounts for the remaining \$4.7 million.

Mandate

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development has a mandate to:

- Unleash the full potential of Newfoundland and Labrador's talent pool through innovative workforce development strategies, population growth initiatives, and immigration programs.
- Support business and trade development, drive investment attraction and sectoral growth and diversification, as well as Newfoundland and Labrador's technology and innovation ecosystem, to promote economic growth and development, enhance competitiveness, and position the province as a top choice for investment and job creation.
- Foster rural and regional economic development through a collaborative, regional approach that provides financial and non-financial supports to commercial and non-commercial clients.

Lines of Business

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development provides a range of programs and services to help build a stronger economic foundation. Programs and services are grouped in the following areas:

- **Employment Supports and Career Services** – employment and career services to assist individuals to compete for, attain, and retain employment, including career counseling, wage subsidies, job searches, pre-employment readiness, as well as training and skills development offered through a network of 19 Employment Centres.
- **Population Growth and Workforce Development** – promoting the province as a workforce and remote work destination, 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. This work includes advancing labour mobility and attracting talent from other parts of Canada to meet provincial workforce needs.

- **Business Growth and Regional Economic Development** – delivering programs and services and facilitating investments to support sustainable business and export growth, trade diversification, investment attraction, and regional economic development. This includes: providing information, networking opportunities, counselling and business development services; promoting economic, investment and trade opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador, providing financial supports to businesses, co-operatives, social enterprises, and community organizations; building rural and regional economic development capacity; and advancing commercial R&D and new technologies.
- **Support for Innovation and Sector Diversification** – adopting a collaborative and strategic approach to sector growth and diversification by facilitating multi-sectoral interest holder engagement, supporting supply chain and product development, technology adoption, and research initiatives to promote sector-focused innovation, commercialization, productivity, and competitiveness. The department supports the technology innovation ecosystem through investments and other supports for start-ups, business accelerators, post-secondary institutions and incubators, and leads provincial efforts to increase digital and mobile connectivity throughout the province.
- **Immigration** – nominating eligible newcomers who hold jobs or job offers in Newfoundland and Labrador for permanent residency, engaging with employers and community interest holders, providing employers with free support to recruit internationally to fill vacancies that are unable to be filled locally, delivering multiculturalism awareness activities, supporting efforts to eliminate racism in all forms, and providing recruitment and retention supports.
- **Fair Registration** – supporting transparent, timely, and fair registration processes for skilled workers from other Canadian provinces and other internationally educated

professionals seeking to work in regulated occupations in the province. This includes working with regulatory bodies to improve registration practices, reduce barriers to licensure, and ensure alignment with national labour mobility and credential recognition standards.

Primary Clients

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development serves several broad groups of clients:

- Employees and individuals under-represented in the workforce
- Employers and employer associations
- Small and medium enterprises
- Post-secondary institutions
- Technology incubators
- Venture capital firms
- Immigrants, expatriates and newcomers
- Community organizations
- Sector groups and industry associations
- Governments and government agencies

Vision

A thriving, competitive Newfoundland and Labrador powered by a growing, skilled, and inclusive workforce, innovative and diverse businesses, and vibrant regional and rural communities.

For more information about the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development, please visit www.gov.nl.ca/jgrd.

Strategic Issues, Goals, Objectives, and Performance 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 five-month timeframe (October 29, 2025 - March 31, 2026).

For each of the goals and objectives, performance indicators are provided. All of these elements assist the department and the public in monitoring and evaluating progress. Three strategic issues have been identified for the department in this planning cycle:

1. The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities.
2. The need to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through targeted investment, capacity building and innovation initiatives.
3. The need to attract skilled newcomers to the province to support labour market demands, population growth, and inclusive communities.

Strategic Issue 1

The need to enhance the effectiveness of employment and training programs to respond to shifting labour market demands and emergent economic opportunities.

A productive, knowledge-based economy requires a workforce that is trained, ready, and available for current jobs as well as adaptive to future labour market opportunities. The Provincial Government supports a multifaceted approach to ensuring that people residing in Newfoundland and Labrador can avail of employment opportunities in a changing economy and that local businesses and industry have access to the skilled workers they need to remain competitive.

According to the Survey of Employers on Workers' Skills in 2021, 52.2 per cent of businesses in Newfoundland and Labrador reported having employees who lacked the skills necessary to perform their job at the required level.² Addressing this skills gap is critical in preparing people in the province for the more than 81,000 job openings forecasted between 2021 and 2030.

To prepare individuals with the education, skills and work opportunities necessary for participation in the job market, the Provincial Government will partner with industry, labour, education institutions, and other community partners to offer employment and training programming. Employment and training programs must continue to meet the needs of individuals and employers even as technology advances and market conditions change. Therefore, it is crucial to critically review employment and training programs regularly to identify ways to optimize program delivery and ensure that interest holder needs are being met effectively.

² [Determinants of skill gaps in the workplace and recruitment difficulties in Canada](#). Statistics Canada, November 4, 2022.

The following goal, objective, and performance indicators identify the desired results the department plans to achieve over the planning cycle to support the continuous enhancement of employment and training programs.

Issue 1

Enhancing the effectiveness of employment and training programs

Goal/Objective: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have enhanced the effectiveness of the employment and training programs offered to individuals and organizations in the province.

Performance Indicators:

1. Improved program delivery and client support by conducting at least one comprehensive review of employment and training programs.
2. Began implementation of recommendations, as appropriate, from the review of the employment and training program to enhance program delivery and supports for clients.

Strategic Issue 2

The need to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through targeted investment, capacity building and innovation initiatives.

Fostering conditions that enable economic growth, the development of existing and new sectors, increased and diversified export and trade opportunities, the attraction of new investment, and the promotion of business development in provincial industries is imperative to supporting the prosperity of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is especially true for rural and regional economies located throughout the province that are experiencing market changes and challenges. A thriving economy allows residents to have local access to gainful and sustainable employment opportunities, the goods and services they need for their own well-being and helps businesses to innovate, expand, and enter new markets.

Newfoundland and Labrador possesses an abundance of undeveloped, underdeveloped, and developed economic resources that are located throughout the province; as seen by the varied opportunities across our Fishery, Aquaculture, Mining, Forestry, Agriculture, and Tourism sectors, and the continued expansion of our oil and gas, and mining industries. When properly supported, these resources can bolster the economic foundation of their local area as well as bolster the overall economic foundation of the province. Newfoundland and Labrador is also home to several emergent, rapidly-growing sectors such as renewable energy and clean fuel, ocean technology, healthtech and biotech, aerospace and defence, and advanced manufacturing.

Coordinated, targeted investment and innovation initiatives will strengthen industry connections, support sectors throughout the province, and position Newfoundland and Labrador to diversify, grow, and build a resilient and prosperous economy.

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development supports economic development initiatives led by communities, industry organizations, social enterprises and co-operatives, not-for-profit groups, and other interest holders to maximize social and economic impacts throughout the province. Additionally, the department undertakes initiatives to position Newfoundland and Labrador as a premier destination for investment and leading jurisdiction for research, development and innovation, and proactively pursues direct investment opportunities and works with companies looking to expand into the province. Further, the department strategically invests in companies, sectors, and projects aimed at supporting innovation and technology advancement, works to enhance cellular and connectivity including high-speed internet access to communities across the province, and supports local companies in commercializing their products and expanding into a greater number of national and international markets.

The following goal, objective, and performance indicators identify the desired results the department plans to achieve in this planning cycle to support business and economic growth and rural development through targeted investment and innovation initiatives.

Issue 2

Driving Business Growth and Rural Development through Targeted Initiatives

Goal/Objective: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have commenced and advanced initiatives to drive business and economic growth and diversification and strengthen rural and regional economies through investment and innovation.

Performance Indicators:

1. Enhanced sector diversification and investment attraction activities to promote economic opportunities within the province.
2. Supported non-commercial entities in driving rural and regional economic development and capacity-building across the province.

3. Supported companies in commercializing and diversifying across local, national, and international markets.
4. Supported programming and services to foster growth and economic development.
5. Supported business growth and technology ecosystem development through programming that stimulates innovation and technology advancement.
6. Advanced, supported, and monitored connectivity projects.

Strategic Issue 3

The need to attract skilled newcomers to the province to support labour market needs, population growth, and inclusive communities.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is strategically attracting skilled newcomers to the province from across Canada and abroad to address critical labour market needs. In 2024, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 5,755 new permanent residents, 80.0 per cent (4,610) of whom arrived through economic immigration programs. The work of the 2025-2026 Strategic Plan will continue this progress.

Immigration remains an important opportunity for Newfoundland and Labrador's economic, social, and cultural growth. As the population of Canada continues to age and the fertility rate remains at record lows, immigration will be the main driver of population and labour force growth. The need for immigration in Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly pronounced as the province's proportion of population aged 65 or older grew the most of any province between 2016 and 2021.³

An aging population is contributing to labour supply shortages. Immigration has been and will continue to be an important mechanism in supporting employers experiencing labour supply shortages. Over half of recent immigrants to Canada were admitted because of their potential to economically contribute to labour market needs or create new economic opportunities.⁴

Attracting younger professionals helps to increase the number of families with children which will help sustain the future population. Newcomers that immigrate to Canada tend

³ [The Daily — In the midst of high job vacancies and historically low unemployment, Canada faces record retirements from an aging labour force: number of seniors aged 65 and older grows six times faster than children 0-14](#). Statistics Canada, April 27, 2022

⁴ [The Daily — Immigrants make up the largest share of the population in over 150 years and continue to shape who we are as Canadians](#). Statistics Canada, October 26, 2022

to be younger than the national population with 64.2 per cent of them being between 25 and 64 years of age and another 28.0 per cent being 24 years of age or younger.³ Currently more than three in ten Canadian children have at least one parent born abroad.³ Ensuring that more newcomers choose Newfoundland and Labrador as their home province would positively contribute to population renewal, economic growth, and enhanced diversity. Retention of more newcomers is also vital.

Attracting newcomers to the province is only the beginning step in a longer process. The purpose of welcoming newcomers is to give them a sense of belonging to the community so that they feel welcome to build their future in Newfoundland and Labrador and decide to do so. Family, friends, jobs, housing, and lifestyle are some of the key factors that newcomers consider when selecting their new home.³ Ensuring that opportunities exist for newcomers to obtain meaningful employment in the province and have access to appropriate supports can positively influence the odds of newcomer retention in the short term and therefore improve newcomer attraction in the long term.

The following goal, objective, and performance indicators identify the desired results the department plans to achieve in the planning cycle to support the attraction of newcomers to our province.

Issue 3

Attracting skilled newcomers to the province

Goal/Objective: By March 31, 2026, the Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development will have worked to bolster the attraction of new skilled professionals to the province.

Performance Indicators:

1. Conduct at least 10 in-person and virtual recruitment sessions.

2. Enter a minimum of one Memorandum of Understanding with foreign governments, entities, or agencies on labour transfer to support ongoing labour needs in the province.

Annex A: Strategic Directions

Strategic directions are the articulation of a desired physical, social, or economic outcome that would normally require action or involvement of more than one government entity. They are a way for government to communicate its high-level priorities to the public.

The Department of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development's strategic directions are as follows:

- Unleash the full potential of Newfoundland and Labrador's talent pool through innovative workforce development strategies, population growth initiatives, and immigration programs.
- Create a climate that is conducive to economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness.
- Ensure that employment and training opportunities are aligned with labour needs to help unemployed and underemployed Newfoundlanders and Labradorians gain the skills they need for available jobs.
- Drive business growth and rural economic development and diversification through a collaborative, regional approach.
- Position Newfoundland and Labrador as a globally competitive North American destination for investment.
- Support the expansion of province's technology and innovation ecosystem.
- Focus immigration on critical areas of labour shortage while ensuring recruited professionals settle in the province successfully.

- Promote an equitable and inclusive society, where individuals are embraced for their rich diversity, experiences, and perspectives. Foster an environment where everyone feels welcome, valued, and heard; where diversity is celebrated; and where opportunities are available to all. Support initiatives that ensure safety, security, and access to resources so every resident can thrive.

Annex B: Public Entities

The Innovation and Business Investment Corporation and Newfoundland Hardwoods Limited are the two public entities that report to the Minister of Jobs, Growth and Rural Development. Both entities are classified as Category 3 entities under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**.

