



Commissioner of Lobbyists

Annual Report 2023-24

Message from the Commissioner

In keeping with the requirements of a Category 3 Entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, I am pleased to present the 2023-24 Annual Report for the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists. This report demonstrates the work of the Office for the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, which is the first year of the 2023-26 Activity Plan.

As the Commissioner of Lobbyists, I am accountable for the preparation of this Annual Report and the results reported within. My signature below affirms my commitment to openness and accurate reporting.



Hilary Wicks Morrow
Commissioner of Lobbyists

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Overview

The Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists (the Office) is located at 120 Conception Bay Highway, Suite 114, Villa Nova Plaza, in Conception Bay South. Administrative support is shared among the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary Public Complaints Commission (RNCPCC), the Criminal Code Mental Disorder Review Board (CCMDRB) and the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists and is provided by a manager (RNCPCC) and a secretary (RNCPCC and CCMDRB).

An online registry of lobbyists exists and there is no fee to access this information. The online registry can be found at <https://cado.eservices.gov.nl.ca/CADOInternet/Lobbyist/Menu.aspx>

During fiscal year 2023-24, there were 43 new lobbyist registrations. Of these, 23 were consultant lobbyists and 20 were organizations with in-house lobbyists.

A consultant lobbyist is one who for remuneration or other gain, reward or benefit, undertakes to lobby on behalf of a client. A consultant lobbyist is not an employee of the client or organization.

An in-house lobbyist is defined by paragraph 6(1)(b) of the **Lobbyist Registration Act** (the Act) which states that an "in-house lobbyist means a person who is employed by an organization:(i) 20% of whose duties as an employee, as assessed in a 3 month period, are to lobby on behalf of that organization; or (ii) a part of whose duties as an employee is to lobby on behalf of that organization if the employee's duties to lobby together with the duties of other employees to lobby would constitute 20% of time at work of one full-time employee, assessed in a 3 month period, were those duties to lobby to be performed by only one employee."

Mandate

The Mandate of the Office is contained in the Act. The Commissioner of Lobbyists (the Commissioner) is responsible for investigating alleged violations of the Act or the Code of Conduct, denying or cancelling a lobbyist's registration where the Act or Code has been breached, and ordering, upon application, that some or all registration information be kept confidential. The Commissioner may also recommend changes to the Code of Conduct.

Primary Clients

The Office serves the citizens of Newfoundland and Labrador by providing an accessible Registry of Lobbyists and a mechanism to ensure that lobbyists act within the confines of the **Lobbyists Registration Act** and the **Lobbyists' Code of Conduct**.

The office also serves individual and corporate lobbyists by providing information and direction to ensure compliance with the Act and the Code.

Vision

An environment where lobbying of Government entities can take place in an open and transparent manner.

Who We Are

Services are provided by the Commissioner of Lobbyists
Tel: (709) 834-6159 and email commissioneroflobbyists@gov.nl.ca

Highlights and Partnerships

Registrants

The Registry of Lobbyists is maintained by the Director of Commercial Registrations, Digital Government and Service NL (DGSNL). This office is located at 59 Elizabeth Avenue, St. John's, and the Registry of Lobbyists is accessible at:
<https://cado.eservices.gov.nl.ca/CADOInternet/Lobbyist/Menu.aspx>.

Historical Total: There were 43 new lobbyist registrations between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024. Of these, 23 were by consultant lobbyists and 20 by organizations with in-house lobbyists. There have been 639 lobbyist registrations since the Act came into force in 2005: 310 by consultant lobbyists and 329 by organizations with in-house lobbyists.

Active Registrations: 321 registrations are active and ongoing – 168 by consultant lobbyists and 153 by organizations with in-house lobbyists.

The Commissioner often receives inquiries regarding what constitutes lobbying activities. Lobbying is a legitimate activity in Newfoundland and Labrador and is held to the strictest of guidelines to ensure accountability and full disclosure.

Report on Performance

Issue 1: Investigating Alleged Violations of the Act or Code of Conduct

The Commissioner is responsible for investigating alleged violations of the Act or the Code of Conduct. Subsection 27(1) of the Act states: “where the commissioner believes, on reasonable grounds, that a provision of this Act or of the Code of Conduct has been violated, he or she may investigate that violation and where the commissioner believes there is sufficient reason to proceed, may conduct an inquiry into that violation.

Objective: By March 31, 2024, the Commissioner of Lobbyists will have addressed all alleged violations of the **Lobbyist Registration Act** or Code of Conduct.

Indicators	Actual Results
All alleged violations investigated	There were no alleged violations of the Lobbyist Registration Act or Code of Conduct and thus no investigations were required.
Reports prepared for each alleged violation	There were no alleged violations of the Lobbyist Registration Act or Code of Conduct and thus no investigations were required.

Issue 2: Confidentiality Orders

Pursuant to Subsection 18(1) of the **Lobbyist Registration Act**, a lobbyist may request the Commissioner to issue a confidentiality order. This is conducted when the lobbyist feels that the disclosure of some or all of the information contained in the registration may seriously prejudice his or her economic or financial interest or enterprise.

In smaller jurisdictions like Newfoundland and Labrador, it is common for the Commissioner to receive no formal requests for Confidentiality Orders. However, this does not diminish the important function the office serves.

Objective: By March 31, 2024, the Commissioner of Lobbyists will have addressed all requests for Confidentiality Orders.

Indicators	Actual Results
Investigations conducted for each request	There were no requests for confidentiality orders and thus no investigations were required.
Decisions rendered for each request	There were no requests for confidentiality orders and thus no investigations were required.

Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

The Commissioner position remained vacant for part of the 2023- 24 year. On October 20th, 2023, the new Commissioner was appointed to the role. The role of the Commissioner is an important one to ensure that transparency and accountability remain key elements in lobbying activities occurring in the province. The new Commissioner looks forward to furthering the objectives of the Office and ensuring that the lobbying of Government entities takes place in an open manner.

Ensuring that the public is informed about the mandate and authority of the Office continues to be an ongoing challenge. The Office relies on the public to report alleged non-compliance with the Lobbyist Registration Act and/or the Code of Conduct, which will only happen if individuals know their rights and responsibilities under the Act. The public has an opportunity to become part of the process and contribute to ensuring that transparency and accountability remain key elements in any lobbying activity. The Commissioner will continue to seek opportunities for public engagement through interviews with local media across all platforms.

The Commissioner has connected with a group of commissioners and registrars in similar roles across the country through the Lobbyists Registrars and Commissioners Network and looks forward to further opportunities to engage with and learn from this network in the future.

Financial Report

The budget of the Office is contained within the Policy and Administrative Support (Professional Services) budget of the Department of Justice and Public Safety and, as a result, the Office is not required to provide a separate audited statement. While the Office does not appear as a separate line in the Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, the approximate budget is provided below:

Approximate Budget Office of the Commissioner of Lobbyists	
Salaries	\$25,000.00
Operating Costs	\$20,000.00
Total	\$45,000.00

To Reach Us

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