

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24

Municipal and Provincial Affairs



MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister responsible for Municipal and Provincial Affairs, I am pleased to present the 2023-24 annual performance report as per the requirements of the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a category 1 government entity.

This annual report highlights activities undertaken in support of identified goals and objectives for the period of April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, in keeping with the lines of business of the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs.

The Department continues to work closely with our community partners, the support of whom is key to the achievement of our goals, to ensure communities in the province have a responsive and modern governance and fiscal framework; are provided high quality advice, training, and financial supports for local governance; and are enabled to share services.

During the 2023-24 reporting year, the Department introduced and received royal assent for the new **Towns and Local Service Districts Act** to provide municipalities with increased flexibility and autonomy, as well as empower them to better address current and future challenges. Preparing for this legislation coming into force will continue to be a focus for the Department into the next fiscal year.

I thank our departmental staff for their hard work and commitment to exemplary public service. My signature below indicates my accountability for the reported results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Haggie".

Hon. John Haggie
Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

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Departmental Overview

Organizational Structure

The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs (Department), a category 1 entity under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, supports the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of municipalities, communities, and regions through the delivery of effective programs, services and supports to local governments and stakeholders.

The Department supports the strategic directions of government by helping to build a climate conducive to economic growth and sustainability, positioning communities for long-term success, and working collaboratively across multiple sectors to improve services and outcomes for residents.

Staff and Budget

The Department's gross expenditure budget for 2023-24 was \$163,814,900, with planned related revenue of approximately \$34,489,200 for a net expenditure of \$129,325,700.

As of March 31, 2024, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs had 74 positions (58 permanent, 14 temporary, and 2 contractual), with 60 active employees on staff located in three offices throughout the province.

Region	Positions
Eastern	66
Central	4
Western/Labrador	4

Division	Active Employees	Net Budget
Executive Support	8	\$1,027,200
Strategic Financial Management	10	\$833,100
Policy and Strategic Planning	6	\$457,700
Regional Support	13	\$999,900
Municipal Finance	9	\$683,500
Municipal Finance Program Funds	—	\$39,093,900
Local Governance and Planning	11	\$987,100
Canada Community-Building Fund	3	\$85,243,300
Totals:	60	\$129,325,700

Primary Clients:

The primary clients of the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs include:

- Local governments consisting of 270 municipalities, 175 local service districts (LSDs) and five Inuit Community Governments; and other stakeholders:
 - Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador;
 - Professional Municipal Administrators of Newfoundland and Labrador;
 - Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Professional Planners; and
 - Community residents.

Vision

The vision of the Department is strengthened municipalities through sustainable governance that supports vibrant communities and encourages economic development.

Mandate

The mandate of the Department is to advance the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of municipalities, communities, regions, and the province through the delivery of effective programs, services and supports.

Lines of Business

The Department's lines of business are advanced through five divisions:

Local Governance and Land Use Planning

Supports the vision of viable sustainable communities led by strong local governments, by providing advice and direction on local governance. The Division's Land Use Planning staff helps promote and support the planned growth of sustainable communities.

Municipal Finance

Provides financial assistance and guidance to municipalities with respect to funding programs, borrowing, debt servicing, and financial compliance. The Division also provides financial assistance through special assistance grants which provide financial aid to municipalities and related organizations for emergencies and financial difficulties. Municipal Finance also administers both the Canada Community-Building Fund and the Community Enhancement and Employment Program, the latter of which provides short-term employment for workers in rural areas of the province.

Municipal Support

Responsible for the provision of ongoing support and advice on local government issues. Regional offices serve as the primary contact between the Department and local governments throughout the province.

Policy and Strategic Planning

Coordinates and supports the Department's policy agenda and is primarily responsible for the development of a policy and planning framework to help support a system of local government that efficiently provides services to residents of the province. The Division is also responsible for the Department's accountability and transparency requirements, including responsibility for the Departmental Multi-Year Strategic Plan and Annual Reports, and Departmental program evaluation. Finally, the Division is responsible for the coordination of community collaboration and service-sharing initiatives including stakeholder outreach and consultations.

Strategic Financial Management

This shared-service Division provides the Department, and three other departments and one agency, with financial management and general operations services. The Division is the point of contact for all Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABC) financial reporting through departments. It is also the main Departmental contact for the Department of Finance and Treasury Board Secretariat related to financial functions, budget submissions, public accounts and budget monitoring submitted by departments and ABCs.

Reporting Entities

Under the **Transparency and Accountability Act**, government entities are also required to prepare plans and annual reports. In the case of the Department, this includes the Municipal Assessment Agency.

For more information on the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs, please visit the Department's website at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/mpa/>.

Legislation in Force

Assessment Act, 2006; **Mineral Emblem Act;**
Avian Emblem Act; **Municipal Affairs Act;**
Building Standards Act; **Municipal Authorities Amendment Act, 1991;**
City of Corner Brook Act; **Municipal Elections Act;**
City of Mount Pearl Act; **Municipalities Act, 1999;**
City of St. John's Act; **Provincial Anthem Act;**
City of St. John's Municipal Taxation Act; **Provincial Flag Act;**
Coat of Arms Act; **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012;**
Commemoration Day Act; **Remembrance Day Act;**
Crown Corporations Local Taxation Act; **St. John's Centennial Foundation Act;**
Evacuated Communities Act, 2016; **St. John's Municipal Council Parks Act;**
Family Homes Expropriation Act; **Standard Time Act;**
Floral Emblem Act; **Taxation of Utilities and Cable Television**
Housing Act; **Companies Act; and**
Housing Association Loans Act; **Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000.**
Municipal Conduct Act;

Highlights and Partnerships

Highlights

Towns and Local Service Districts Act

In the fall of 2023, the Department introduced new legislation to govern towns and local service districts throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. The new **Towns and Local Service Districts Act** will replace the **Municipalities Act, 1999**. The **Towns and Local Service Districts Act** incorporates modern and enabling language and will inform drafting of new legislation for the province's cities.

Land Use Planning Appeal Process

In the summer of 2023, the Department announced a roster of adjudicators to hear land use planning appeals. The newly established adjudicator roster required amendment to the **Urban and Rural Planning Act, 2000**. The roster, which is now in effect, provides an innovative approach to improve services to municipalities and residents by increasing capacity to hear appeals.

The roster of adjudicators replaces Regional Appeal Boards and will hear appeals related to land use and development issues that arise from decisions made by a Provincial Government authority or by municipalities throughout the province. The new provisions increase capacity to hear appeals.

Financial Support for Communities

Accessible Communities Grant

These one-time grants were provided in the 2023-24 fiscal year to assist communities undertaking initiatives to improve accessibility in communities for the well-being of residents of all ages, including persons with disabilities. Forty projects were approved providing \$619,250 to municipalities.

Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF)

The Department administered CCBF, which provides communities with stable and flexible funding for infrastructure priorities across a wide range of categories. In 2023-24, 292 projects were approved, valued at \$23.6 million. Examples of projects that were eligible under the fund include municipal infrastructure; drinking water/wastewater infrastructure; community energy systems; recreational, cultural, tourism, and sport infrastructure; capacity building; and disaster mitigation investments.

Community Enhancement Employment Program (CEEP)

The CEEP provides funding to eligible sponsors including towns; Inuit Community Governments; regional municipalities; local service districts; community and economic development organizations; and other non-profit organizations. Individuals can be employed for up to 435 hours to become eligible for employment insurance benefits. For this reporting period, 152 projects were funded, supporting 713 workers.

Special Assistance Grants

Sixty-five grants provided financial aid to support local governments in responding to emergencies related to health and/or of a life safety nature; assistance to municipalities experiencing financial difficulties; general assistance to municipalities beyond the municipal budgetary process; and, special projects or initiatives involving municipalities, local service district committees or other entities.

Municipal Operating Grants

In 2023-24, municipal operating grants were increased by \$3,000,000 for a total of \$28,000,000 in available funds. These grants to municipalities are based on a formula incorporating occupied households and a Remoteness Index. This index measures a municipality's or Inuit Community Government's accessibility to various government and community services within the province. Municipal operating grants are limited to municipalities and Inuit Community Governments with populations less than 11,000.

Partnerships

Community Collaboration and Service Sharing

The Department assessed how local government services can be enhanced within regions by working to identify service and administrative gaps and encouraging community service sharing and collaboration. This encouragement included provision of 11 Community Collaboration Grants totaling \$639,727 in 2023-24.

Departmental officials also facilitated discussions to help advance intercommunity collaboration and assist communities in accessing and navigating provincial funding programs including in the Departments of Justice and Public Safety, Environment and Climate Change, and Transportation and Infrastructure.

Regional Water and Wastewater Operator Program

The Department provided \$81,000 to support the Department of Environment and Climate Change's Regional Water and Wastewater Operator Program. The program is focused on building local capacity and knowledge for the delivery of water services. Under the program, regional operators work with communities to address challenges associated with operating and monitoring modern drinking water and wastewater systems. There are currently three regional water operators working in 56 communities across the province. The Regional Water and Wastewater Operator Program was initiated in 2015 and is delivered by the Eastern, Central, and Western Regional Service Boards.

Report on Performance

This document reports on the strategic goals and annual objectives for the first year of the Department's 2023-26 Strategic Plan. The sections below identify the key issues in the Department's plan, as well as the corresponding goals and results.

Issue 1: Supporting Local Governments through Enhanced Processes and Legislation

The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs is committed to exploring solutions that will meet the needs of current and future local governments and residents. This includes providing local governments with the necessary tools to explore new and innovative ways for municipal service delivery to residents, supporting community capacity building and encouraging economic activity.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have enhanced processes and municipal legislation to support stronger local governance.

2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have modernized municipal legislation and improved service delivery.

Indicators	Results (2023-24)
Introduced new modern, enabling municipal legislation to replace the existing Municipalities Act, 1999 to provide municipalities with increased flexibility and autonomy.	The new Towns and Local Service Districts Act received royal assent on November 16, 2023. In preparation for coming into force, MAPA began amending existing regulations; creating new regulations; providing training to staff internally; developing and delivering

	training for external stakeholders; and creating a new handbook.
Commenced Review of the Municipal Elections Act .	MAPA began review of the Municipal Elections Act during the 2023-24 reporting year.
Drafted new enabling legislation for the cities of Corner Brook and Mount Pearl to replace the existing City of Corner Brook Act and the City of Mount Pearl Act .	MAPA began the drafting process for new cities legislation to replace the City of Corner Brook Act and the City of Mount Pearl Act .
Developed online training for councillors and staff.	Virtual training was provided to 1,597 councillors and staff.
Streamlined the appeal process by the introduction of Appeal Board adjudicators to replace the four existing Boards.	Nine adjudicators were introduced in place of the Regional Appeal Boards on June 7, 2023.

2024-25 Objective

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have introduced new, modern municipal legislation to replace the existing **City of Corner Brook Act**, **City of Mount Pearl Act**, and **City of St. John's Act**; and, introduced amendments to the **Municipal Elections Act**.

2024-25 Indicators:

- Finalized draft legislation for a new **Cities Act**.
- Finalized drafting instructions for amendments to a new **Municipal Elections Act**.

Issue 2: Community Collaboration and Service Sharing

The Department is focusing on expanding regional services, working with local governments to identify service and administrative gaps, and working with communities to encourage service sharing and community collaboration. To ensure successful outcomes, communities will be encouraged to initiate inter-community relationship building, which can lead to increased community cooperation and collaboration. The Department will encourage, incentivize and where possible facilitate community cooperation and collaboration.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have supported improved community collaboration and shared services across municipalities and regions.

2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have worked with municipalities and local service districts to complete community sustainability self-assessments to identify service and capacity gaps; and worked with communities to address those gaps through collaboration and service sharing.

Indicators	Results (2023-24)
Developed program delivery options for the \$500,000 allocated for regional services and enhanced community cooperation for initiatives that help address service gaps and build capacity through a collaborative, shared services approach.	Community Collaboration grants were designed to advance community sustainability and viability through collaboration and service sharing. In the 2023-24 year there were 11 projects approved totaling \$639,727 in released funding.

<p>Developed and distributed a community sustainability self-assessment tool for municipalities and local service districts.</p>	<p>A community sustainability self-assessment tool was initiated, but not completed/distributed in the reporting period due to unanticipated complexities in establishing baseline data on existing capacity in communities.</p> <p>The Department gathered research on best practices regarding community sustainability self-assessment tools from other jurisdictions that are doing similar work, such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.</p> <p>The Department engaged the Department of Finance's Economic and Statistics branch's NL Statistics Agency (NLSA), which provided expert advice on development of the tool.</p>
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2024-25 Objective

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have further identified service and capacity gaps and begun addressing gaps in partnership with communities.

2024-25 Indicators:

- Finalized development of a community sustainability self-assessment tool for distribution to municipalities and local service districts.
- Continued working with other Departments and external stakeholders to identify service and capacity gaps within communities.
- Researched best practices and begin development of a regional service sharing guide/tool kit to assist communities interested in working together.

Issue 3: Regional Service Delivery

Regional Service Boards complement the many services provided by local governments by delivering some services on a regional basis in some areas. The Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will undertake a review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** and Regional Service Board operations to identify potential additional regional services that could be provided to local governments and residents.

Goal

By March 31, 2026, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have reviewed the **Regional Services Boards Act, 2012**, including stakeholder and public consultations, to determine if there is a renewed role for the boards to improve access to services and service delivery.

2023-24 Objective

By March 31, 2024, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have initiated a review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** and determined potential additional regional services.

Indicators	Results (2023-24)
Initiated a review of the Regional Service Boards Act .	<p>The Department undertook analysis of the development of the Regional Service Boards Act as a first step in undertaking a review of the Act.</p> <p>The Department also gathered research on best practices regarding regional service delivery from other jurisdictions that are doing similar work, such as New Brunswick. This work supported</p>

	development of high-level options for additional regional services that could be undertaken by regional service boards.
Conducted consultation with key stakeholders including the five active Regional Service Boards.	<p>The Department initiated discussions with key stakeholders such as MNL, PMA, MMSB and the five active Regional Service Boards.</p> <p>MAPA participated in MMSB's Annual Regional Waste Management Forum as well as other stakeholders' events that discussed regional service sharing such as the MNL Symposium, MNL Regional Meetings and PMA Annual Conference.</p>

2024-25 Objective

By March 31, 2025, the Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs will have completed a review of the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** and determined potential additional regional services and governance structures.

2024-25 Indicators:

- Undertook a governance review of regional service boards.
- Worked with the Communication and Public Engagement Branch to develop an external consultation plan for the **Regional Service Boards Act, 2012** review.
- Completed engagement of government departments, Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, the Association of Professional Municipal Administrators, the Multi-Material Stewardship Board (MMSB), Regional Service Boards and other stakeholders to identify opportunities for regional service sharing and collaboration through Regional Service Boards.

Opportunities and Challenges

The Department continues to observe myriad challenges facing local governments, including the demographic and fiscal ramifications of an aging population, and the infrastructure and social demands of responding and adapting to the effects of adverse weather events associated with climate change. At the same time, the evidence is clear that communities in Newfoundland and Labrador are finding ways to deal with these challenges in creative ways, including collaboration with neighbouring communities.

The Department recognizes that communities must be encouraged to collaborate and be enabled to build capacity beyond what a single small community can accomplish on its own. This requires leadership from all stakeholders. The Department will continue to encourage and support community leaders and communicate the importance of collaboration and service sharing to encourage strong governments at the local level.

As with other orders of government, municipalities are experiencing increased negative social media criticism. Code of conduct legislation came into force in 2022, and the Department commends communities for their ongoing efforts and diligence as they continue to implement codes of conduct.

Financial Information

Department of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

		2023-24 Budget	2023-24 Expenditures
1.1.01 - Minister's Office	A570		
Salaries	M01	216,600	203,721
Employee Benefits	G02	100	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	45,800	17,946
Supplies	G04	700	826
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	1,400	101
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	-	-
Operating Accounts	M02	48,000	18,873
Total		264,600	222,594
1.2.01 - Executive Support	A571		
Salaries	M01	614,800	544,972
Employee Benefits	G02	900	182
Transportation & Communication	G03	18,900	16,141
Supplies	G04	3,900	3,847
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	12,700	4,240
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	500	1,657
Operating Accounts	M02	36,900	26,067
Total		651,700	571,039
1.2.02 - Administrative Support	A572		
Salaries	M01	12,000	17,980
Employee Benefits	G02	27,500	19,539
Transportation & Communication	G03	25,300	9,685
Supplies	G04	17,000	6,227
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	24,900	34,753
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	9,200	6,357
Operating Accounts	M02	103,900	76,561
Related Revenue	M27	(5,000)	-
Net Total		110,900	94,541
1.2.03 - Strategic Financial Management	A57A		
Salaries	M01	817,300	646,151
Employee Benefits	G02	1,400	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	5,500	3,736
Supplies	G04	1,600	1,306
Professional Services	G05	-	-

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Purchased Services	G06	6,800	3,328
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	500	222
Operating Accounts	M02	15,800	8,592
	<i>Gross Total</i>	<i>833,100</i>	<i>654,743</i>
<u>1.2.04 - Policy and Strategic Planning</u>	<u>A57J</u>		
Salaries	M01	440,100	390,556
Employee Benefits	G02	200	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	6,700	6,150
Supplies	G04	300	244
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	-	499
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	200	222
Operating Accounts	M02	7,400	7,115
Grants & Subsidies	M10	10,200	11,046
	<i>Total</i>	<i>457,700</i>	<i>408,717</i>
<u>2.1.01 - Regional Support</u>	<u>A59F</u>		
Salaries	M01	948,100	872,145
Employee Benefits	G02	300	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	40,200	41,367
Supplies	G04	5,100	3,826
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	5,900	3,318
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	300	5,041
Operating Accounts	M02	51,800	53,552
	<i>Net Total</i>	<i>999,900</i>	<i>925,697</i>
<u>2.1.02 - Municipal Finance</u>	<u>A59G</u>		
Salaries	M01	669,100	613,187
Employee Benefits	G02	800	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	8,300	3,889
Supplies	G04	1,200	366
Professional Services	G05	-	-
Purchased Services	G06	3,800	2,316
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	300	86
Operating Accounts	M02	14,400	6,657
	<i>Gross Total</i>	<i>683,500</i>	<i>619,844</i>
<u>2.2.01 - Municipal Debt Servicing</u>	<u>A580</u>		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	5,200	5,350

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2.2.02 - Municipal Debt Servicing - Principal	A58A		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	10,000	39,548
2.2.03 - Municipal Operating Grants	A581		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	25,000,000	23,020,426
2.2.04 - Special Assistance	A582		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	2,014,000	4,162,365
2.2.05 - Community Enhancements	A594		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	4,964,700	3,569,279
2.2.06 - Provincial Gas Tax Sharing Program	A57H		
Grants & Subsidies	M10	7,100,000	7,006,088
2.3.01 - Local Governance and Planning	A59E		
Salaries	M01	843,500	880,371
Employee Benefits	G02	700	132
Transportation & Communication	G03	21,000	15,648
Supplies	G04	2,800	2,426
Professional Services	G05	33,000	48,851
Purchased Services	G06	27,100	36,220
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	-	539
Operating Accounts	M02	84,600	103,816
Grants & Subsidies	M10	88,500	1,000
Related Revenue	M27	(29,500)	(16,980)
<i>Total</i>		987,100	968,207
2.3.02 - Canada Community-Building Fund	A596		
Salaries	M01	336,400	275,554
Employee Benefits	G02	500	-
Transportation & Communication	G03	11,600	7,577
Supplies	G04	2,000	224
Professional Services	G05	44,800	4,250
Purchased Services	G06	6,500	2,041
Property, Furnishings & Equipment	G07	1,500	1,538
Operating Accounts	M02	66,900	15,630
Grants & Subsidies	M10	119,294,700	27,674,179
Related Revenue	M27	(34,454,700)	(34,454,702)
<i>Total</i>		85,243,300	(6,489,339)

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Gross Budget	163,814,900	70,250,781
Revenue	(34,489,200)	(34,471,682)
Net Budget	129,325,700	35,779,099

