

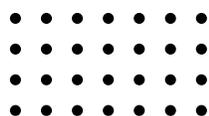


Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador



2024 - 2025

**Annual
Performance
Report**





Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador

Message from the Advocate



I am pleased to present the **2024-2025 Annual Performance Report** for the Office of the Seniors' Advocate (OSA). This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements outlined in the **Transparency and Accountability Act** for a Category Three entity. This report highlights the progress made toward achieving the objectives outlined in Year Two of our **Activity Plan 2023-2026**. It provides updates on the performance indicators associated with our core lines of business: Systemic Advocacy, Research and Reviews, and Education and Public Awareness.

As you will see, 2024-2025 was a productive and significant year for the Office. We continued to prioritize hearing directly from seniors throughout the province to ensure their lived experiences informed our advocacy. We visited over 20 communities and welcomed over 350 participants at our town hall sessions. We also engaged with hundreds of seniors through outreach events, direct conversations, and correspondence and responded to 675 requests for advocacy action.

On December 10, 2024, we were especially pleased to release a new report entitled **Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report**. This report is the first of its kind and provided information and data pertaining to seniors in six key areas. This inaugural report enables the OSA to compare the wellbeing of NL seniors to seniors in other provinces and nationally. Over the next 3 to 5 years, the OSA will be positioned to provide trend analysis on the wellbeing of NL seniors. Additional publications included the **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024**, quarterly newsletters, and numerous policy submissions to the provincial government. Each of these aimed to share seniors' perspectives with decision-makers, while also presenting our research and recommendations on how programs and services could be structured or improved to better meet the needs of seniors in NL.

While we are proud of what has been achieved, we recognize that many challenges remain. The OSA Team remains steadfast in our mandate, and we will continue working to elevate the voices of seniors and advocate for the supports and services they need and deserve.

Susan

Susan Walsh
Seniors' Advocate NL



Table of Contents

→	Overview	01
→	Personnel	01
→	Vision	02
→	Mandate	02
→	Values	03
→	Primary Clients	03
→	Lines of Business	05
→	Highlights and Partnerships	08
→	Report on Performance	19
→	Opportunities and Challenges	33
→	Financial Information	34

Overview



The OSA was created through the **Seniors' Advocate Act** (the **Act**) which came into force on July 2, 2017. The purpose of the OSA is outlined in the **Act**, as well as the powers and duties of the Seniors' Advocate.

The OSA is an independent statutory office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each year, the Seniors' Advocate must report to the House of Assembly on the exercise and performance of her/his powers and duties under the **Act**. For more details, please visit www.seniorsadvocate.nl.ca

Personnel

The Seniors' Advocate is appointed for a term of six years with the possibility of reappointment for a second term of six years. The Advocate is an officer of the House of Assembly and reports directly to the Legislature through the Speaker of the House.

The OSA has three permanent staff: two Systemic Advocacy Consultants and one Administrative Officer. These staff are members of the Public Service of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Vision

Seniors aging well and living their best lives in age-friendly communities: healthy, engaged, connected, supported, and fulfilled. Financially secure seniors with options to choose where they live (geographically and the type of living arrangement) and access to the programs and services they need.

Mandate

The OSA is established to identify, analyze and address systemic issues impacting seniors. Systemic issues are those which are found within an overall system, rather than a specific or individual concern.

The OSA identifies and addresses systemic issues and makes recommendations for improvements to seniors' services and programs provided to seniors living in Newfoundland and Labrador. The OSA has the authority to conduct interviews, surveys, consultations and make recommendations for improvements to seniors' services and programs. All recommendations are monitored for progress and the results are reported publicly on an annual basis. All incomplete recommendations will continue to be monitored and reported on.

While the OSA does not have legislative authority for individual advocacy, it receives hundreds of requests for advocacy. Through engagement and public awareness, research, reviews and systemic advocacy, the OSA ensures that the collective voices of seniors are heard.

Section 3 of the **Seniors' Advocate Act** outlines that the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is established to:

- identify, review and analyze systemic issues;
- work collaboratively with seniors' organizations, service providers and others to identify and address systemic issues; and
- make recommendations to government and government agencies respecting changes to improve services to and for seniors.

Values

The OSA believes strongly in its role as an independent voice for seniors in this province. Every effort is taken to ensure that the integrity and core values of this Office are reflected in its service to the public and in its internal activities.

Value	Action Statement
Fairness	Powers and duties will be applied in an open, unbiased manner. There will be no conflict of interest or undue influence during any stage of the review process. Every effort will be made to provide timely, accurate and fair recommendations.
Respect	Every individual in contact with this Office will be treated with respect. Differing opinions will be valued in an open, collaborative spirit.
Diversity	Every person is unique and the seniors' population, as a group, are not alike. Differences in experiences and opinions will be welcomed and used to build an open, accepting and strong service to the public.
Empowerment	This Office will support and encourage seniors to use their voices. Seniors will know that their issues are important and that they have a role in making positive changes.

Primary Clients

The **Seniors' Advocate Act** defines a senior as an individual who is 65 years of age or older (24.6 per cent of the province's population), or less than 65 years of age and receives seniors' services.¹ Seniors' services are defined in the legislation as programs, services or systems of support, prescribed in the regulations, that are related to health care, personal care, housing, transportation or finances that are used by or associated with seniors.

¹ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Population Projections, Department of Finance, accessed September 24, 2025, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/pop-projections/>.

Given the definition of seniors in the **Act**, the OSA is also responsible to advocate for people under 65 years of age. In practice, the OSA typically serves people 50 years of age and older, which is 47.2 per cent of the province's population, according to most recent data.¹

Section 16 of the **Seniors' Advocate Act**, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate may:

- (a) receive and review matters related to seniors;
- (b) initiate and participate in reviews related to seniors;
- (c) conduct research related to seniors, including interviews and surveys;
- (d) consult with seniors, service providers and the public;
- (e) request information, other than personal health information within the meaning of the **Personal Health Information Act** and personal information within the meaning of the **Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act, 2015**;
- (f) make recommendations to government, government agencies, service providers and community groups respecting legislation, policies, programs, and services impacting seniors; and
- (g) inform the public about the Office of the Seniors' Advocate and promote awareness of systemic issues related to seniors.



¹ Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Population Projections, Department of Finance, accessed September 24, 2025, <https://www.gov.nl.ca/fin/economics/pop-projections/>.

Lines of Business

→ SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

Systemic issues impact large numbers of people. These systemic issues are brought to the attention of the OSA through input from individuals, organizations, and service providers, as well as research and media reports. The OSA collates all issues under subcategories of ten distinct areas: aging well at home, elder abuse, finances, health care, housing, legal issues, long term care homes, personal care homes, transportation, and personal care.

The OSA can use a variety of methods to advocate including, meeting with officials to discuss the matter, writing to seek resolution of a matter, working with government and/or community to address the issue, making recommendations, or completing a systemic review and/or releasing a report.

Systemic reviews may include research, consultations, and information requests. Conclusions drawn from reviews may form the basis of recommendations to government, government agencies, service providers and community groups respecting legislation, policies, programs, and services impacting seniors. The Advocate will closely monitor all recommendations to assess how they are implemented.

The OSA cannot advocate for individual seniors' issues; however, concerns are addressed through providing information to seniors and/or their families to enable them to access the appropriate program, service or resource. Nevertheless, the OSA maintains a record of all individual concerns to inform its system advocacy function.



→ RESEARCH AND REVIEWS

The value of research is its ability to inform action, provide evidence, and contribute to developing knowledge. Research can be broad and include literature reviews, conversations, engagement and consultative processes, and models of best practices. As well, research informs the development of recommendations and annual reports as part of our monitoring processes. Regular discussions with the other provincial Seniors' Advocates (presently established in British Columbia and New Brunswick) informs our research and knowledge and provides opportunities to speak as one voice and raise issues important to all Canadian seniors.

Seniors bring forward their concerns for the consideration of the Seniors' Advocate. When concerns are systemic, the OSA's thorough research practices ensure that strong recommendations are made. The **Act** provides the authority to complete reviews, request information and release reports with recommendations

→ ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Seniors' Advocate listens to seniors and encourages seniors to use their voices; the OSA makes sure that the collective voices of seniors are heard. All information gathered by the OSA informs public policy on many levels including: municipal, regional, provincial and national. While the powers and duties of the Seniors' Advocate are provincial in scope, there are occasions for national and international input and to inform national policy via consultations, committee membership and partnerships with national Seniors' Advocates.



The Advocate has committed to ongoing provincial outreach to gather information and to share what we learn with seniors and policymakers. The OSA endeavors to connect with as many people as possible through its website, emails, quarterly newsletter, social media and the publication of reports, which may not necessarily be the subject of a report made to the House of Assembly under our **Act**. Regular meetings with community organizations and groups provide opportunities to promote education and awareness on topics of importance to seniors.



Highlights and Partnerships

During the reporting period of April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, the OSA engaged in many activities including systemic advocacy, education, outreach and public engagements. Highlights of this period include:



REQUESTS FOR ADVOCACY ACTION

675

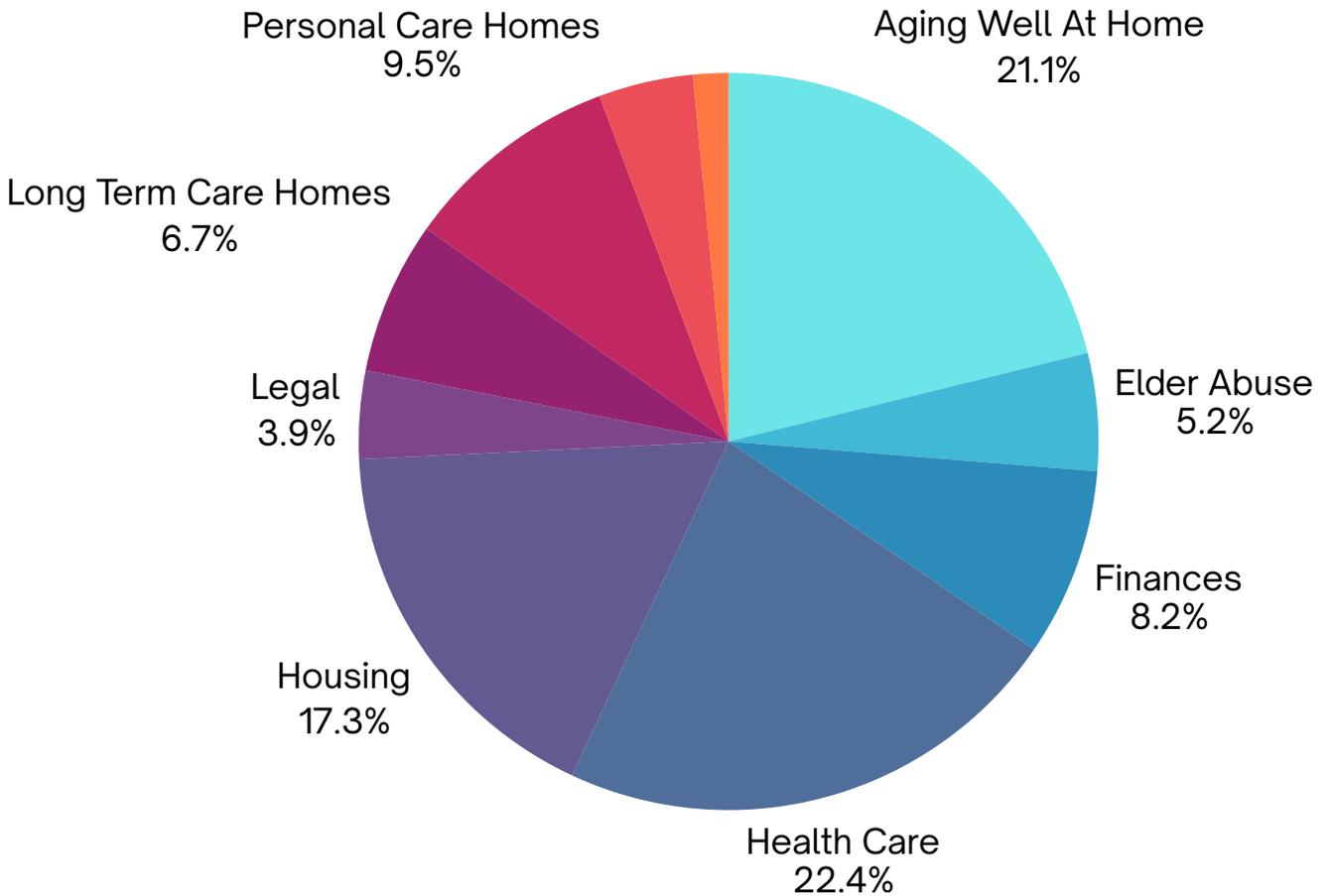
Individual issues are tracked to detect trends that identify systemic issues. This year, the OSA updated its intake system to categorize requests into ten distinct areas:

- Aging Well at Home
- Elder Abuse
- Finances
- Health Care
- Housing
- Legal Issues
- Long Term Care Homes
- Personal Care Homes
- Transportation
- Personal Care

This new framework allowed for a more detailed understanding and organization of the types of concerns received from seniors, their family members, caregivers, and service providers. The chart below highlights examples of concerns associated with each category.

Intake Areas	Examples of Areas of Concerns
Aging Well at Home	Home support, home maintenance, technology, etc.
Elder Abuse	Adult Protection concerns, elder abuse, etc.
Finances	Cost of living, income/pensions, legal, labour force participation, etc.
Health Care	Emergency rooms, mental health, auditory care, prescription drugs, acute care, access to family physicians, oral health, etc.
Housing	Access to affordable housing, homelessness, accessibility, landlord/tenant issues, etc.
Legal Issues	Court related matters, advance health care directives, wills, etc.
Long Term Care Homes	Workforce, governance, quality of life, quality of care, etc.
Personal Care Homes	Workforce, governance, quality of life, quality of care, etc.
Transportation	Public transit, vehicle insurance, registration and licence, etc.
Personal Care	Support for caregivers, accessibility, legal, etc.

The 675 requests for advocacy action from seniors, family members/caregivers and/or service providers are organized as follows:



- Health Care continues to be the most frequently raised concern, accounting for 22.4 per cent of requests, followed closely by Aging Well at Home at 21.1 per cent and Housing 17.3 per cent. Personal Care Homes (9.5 per cent) and Finances (8.2 per cent) were also significant areas of concern. It is important to note that the chart reflects only the primary concern identified at intake, and many individual issues are interconnected across multiple areas.
- While financial concerns appear lower in this distribution, the systemic issue of the high cost of living remains a consistent priority for seniors, highlighted through engagement sessions, surveys, and community consultations and confirmed through OSA research. Financial constraints also intersect with, and intensify, many other issues such as home care, transportation, and housing, whereas those with higher incomes may experience fewer challenges in these areas.



REPORTS

Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024



November 2024

Third annual **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024** report

Read here:

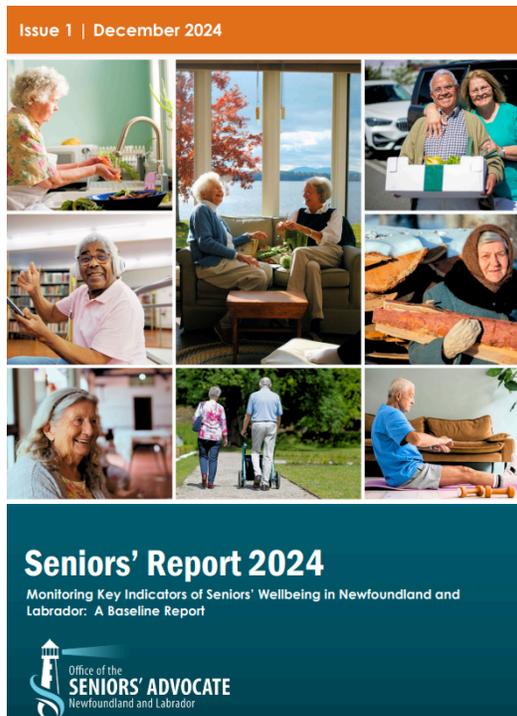
<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/StatusReportOnRecommendations2023-24.pdf>

Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report.

On December 10, the OSA released its first-ever report on seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador, covering Wellbeing, Health, Income, Housing, Transportation, Safety and Protection. The report highlights ongoing challenges in the social determinants of health, confirming many seniors continue to struggle.

The OSA will publish this report annually to monitor over time whether seniors' wellbeing is improving or declining.

Read here: <https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/pdfs/SeniorsReport2024.pdf>

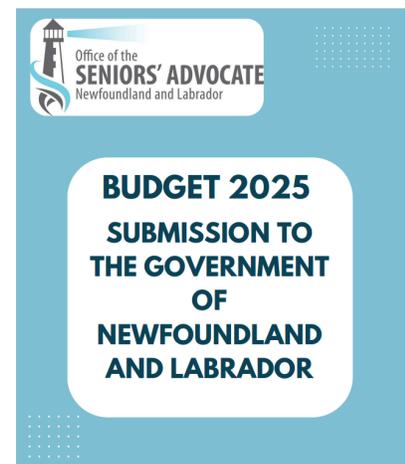
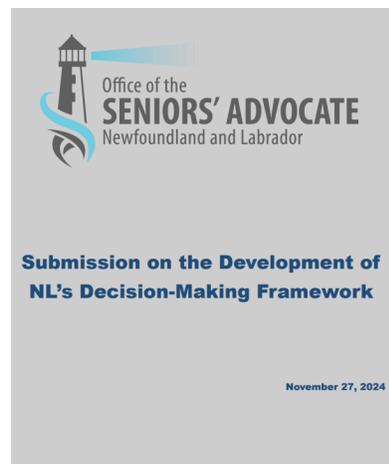
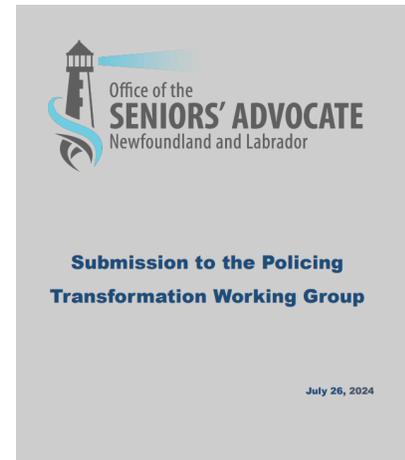
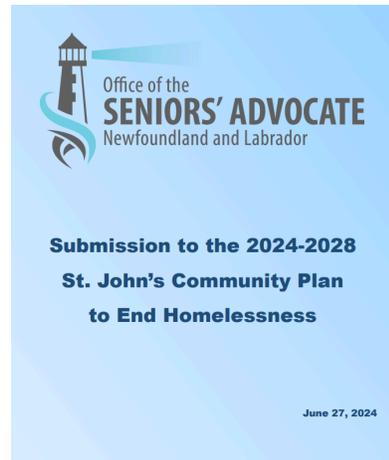




SUBMISSIONS

To ensure the perspective of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador were included in government and community programs as well as policy development, the OSA compiled the following policy, recommendations and advocacy submissions:

- 2024-2028 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness
- Department of Justice and Public Safety Policing Transformation Working Group
- Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development Decision-Making Framework
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2025



NEWS RELEASES

Aligned with the advocacy and public awareness mandate, the OSA issued nine news releases:

- Launch of Social Media Campaign to address ageism
- Recognition of Seniors' Month
- Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- Recognition of International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors' Day
- Statement regarding Government's/NLHS' plan to convert single occupancy rooms to double occupancy rooms at Corner Brook long term care facility
- Recognition of Remembrance Day
- Release of **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024**
- Seniors' Advocate joins with other Seniors' Advocates in Canada to urge the Federal Government to include seniors in the contemplated \$250 rebate
- Release of the **Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report.**

→ ADVOCACY ACTIONS

The OSA employs a variety of methods to advocate for systemic improvements to programs and services for seniors and to provide education on issues impacting seniors. These actions are reported in our quarterly newsletter, in presentations and via our email distribution list so that seniors can see the advocacy of the OSA and the response of those entities with authority to make the required change. Actions in 2024-25 included:

- **Future of Aging Summit Panel:** The Seniors' Advocate was invited to speak at the Future of Aging Summit in Toronto on "Why Old Adults Need Advocates". She was joined by advocates for seniors from New Zealand and Kenya.
- **Ageism Social Media Campaign:** From May 23–June 14, 2024, the OSA ran a campaign to challenge ageism, inviting seniors to share stories and photos of their contributions in their communities. The campaign celebrated active, engaged seniors throughout NL and was a huge success, with 37 submissions from seniors and 196 social media shares by people of all ages, ensuring broad visibility of the great things seniors in NL are doing.
- **Seniors' Financial Struggles:** A 2023 survey of 1,000+ seniors found 33% could not meet basic needs, with rural residents and women most affected. Nearly half with incomes under \$60,000 faced financial insecurity. A pictogram released by the OSA in May 2024, illustrated these struggles.
- **Housing Insecurity and Homelessness:** The OSA heard rising concerns from seniors at risk of or experiencing homelessness due to high costs and long waitlists. On June 14, 2024, the OSA contributed to the St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness, highlighting seniors' unique needs.
- **Policing Transformation Working Group:** The OSA submitted feedback on seniors' policing experiences, noting scams, abuse, reduced rural policing presence, and limited senior-specific training. Recommendations included better education, awareness, and community policing.
- **High Cost of Ambulance Services:** Seniors reported ambulance fees deter needed calls. The OSA raised concerns with health officials, sharing research and comparisons to other provinces. The Department of Health and Community Services committed to reviewing the issue.

- **Driver's Medical Form Changes:** Despite a 2023 directive to bill MCP, some seniors were still charged some or all of the costs for driver's medical exams. The OSA's intervention prompted government to restore the reimbursement contact line, and seniors were advised to report inappropriate charges.



- **Doubling of Rooms in Long Term Care (LTC):** Upon reviewing a decision by NL Health Services to convert 15 single LTC rooms in Corner Brook to double occupancy, the OSA wrote the Minister of Health and Community Services outlining the research and data which informed the OSA's recommendation to revert this decision citing privacy, dignity, and quality of care concerns. The decision was reversed, and the rooms remain single.
- **Inclusion of Seniors in the Working Canadians Rebate:** On December 5, 2024, the OSA joined with provincial Seniors' Advocates nationally in urging federal ministers to include seniors in the proposed rebate, noting NL seniors have Canada's lowest median income. The issue has drawn provincial and national interest in ensuring any benefit proceeds with seniors in mind.
- **Indexing the NL Seniors' Benefit:** The OSA recommended indexing the NL Seniors' Benefit to inflation. The Minister of Finance committed to implementing this in the next budget cycle.
- **Pneumococcal Vaccine Costs:** The OSA received information from seniors that they were being charged for the pneumonia vaccine. The OSA sought clarification and confirmed the vaccine was free for seniors only through public health centers, yet most seniors in NL secure their vaccinations at pharmacies. The OSA shared this information with seniors and advocated with the Department of Health and Community Services for clearer public communication and equitable access.



- **Emergency Protection Orders Expanded to Include Seniors:** Following numerous concerns from seniors and/or their families, the OSA partnered with community organizations in recommending amendments to the **Family Violence Protection Act** to enable seniors to apply for Emergency Protection Orders against abusive family or care relationship members. The Department of Justice and Public Safety accepted this and the legislation was amended.
- **The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) Roundtable:** The OSA participated in a national discussion on seniors' challenges with TV, internet, mobile, and phone services, sharing input from research and community feedback.
- **Free Shingles Vaccine Advocacy:** Since 2019, the OSA has called for free shingles vaccines for seniors, with a focus on low-income and immunocompromised individuals. On March 12, 2025, the Department of Health and Community Services issued a news release announcing effective June 1, 2025, it will begin offering the shingles vaccine to residents aged 65 to 70 and immunocompromised residents over age 70.
- **Decision-Making Framework:** Government is updating legislation affecting decision-making rights, a process with major implications for seniors. The OSA flagged limited public awareness, collaborated with accessibility advocates to educate seniors, and successfully pushed for a delay until after further consultations with seniors and senior serving organizations in spring 2025.





ENGAGEMENT AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Advocate and staff completed 22 community engagement sessions and met with over 650 seniors to hear their concerns. These community sessions were held throughout the province in the Eastern, Western, the Northern Peninsula and Labrador regions, enabling the OSA to gain an understanding of regional and provincial issues impacting seniors.

The OSA engaged in public awareness through presentations, panels and information booths to the following groups/events:

- Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission Virtual Roundtable
- Future of Aging Summit
- Memorial University's Faculty of Nursing
- NL 50+ Federation Convention
- Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors
- Random Age Friendly Communities Seniors' Information Fair
- Seniors and Science – Johnson Geo Centre
- Seniors Day 2024 – City of St. John's
- Seniors Day Expo – Town of Conception Bay South
- Seniors on the Go – Memorial University Botanical Gardens
- SeniorsNL AGM 2024
- The Canadian Association of Retired Persons AGM
- The Department of Education (Education Accord): Older Adults and Learning Across the Lifespan
- The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador – Department of Justice
- RTOERO Conference
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Public Service Pensioners Association (NLPSPA)



The Advocate participated in 29 media interviews to inform the public of issues impacting NL seniors and advocate for required policy, programs and services.

The OSA engaged with several community organizations and agencies, including:

- 211
- 50+ Federation
- Aging Research Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Bridges to Hope
- Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP)
- Canadian Centre for Caregiving Excellence
- Canadian Coalition Against Ageism
- Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI)
- Centre for Innovation and Research in Aging
- Citizens for Change in Long Term Care NL Advocacy Group
- Community Sheds
- Connections for Seniors
- Dr. Jillian Alston, MD FRCPC MScCH, Geriatrician, University of Toronto, St. Michael's Hospital
- Dr. Tessa Ringer, MD, CCFP(EM), Medical Director, Myrna Daniels Seniors Emergency Medicine Centre, Emergency Physician, Toronto General Hospital & Toronto Western Hospital Assistant Professor, University of Toronto, Department of Family & Community Medicine
- End Homelessness St. John's
- Help Age Canada: Community-Based Seniors' Services (CBSS) Sector Summit
- Huntington Society of Canada – Newfoundland Chapter
- National Institute on Ageing
- Newfoundland & Labrador Public Service Pensioners Association
- Newfoundland and Labrador Alzheimer's Society
- Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE)
- Newfoundland and Labrador Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (NLNPEA)
- Public Legal Information Association of Newfoundland and Labrador (PLIAN)
- Random Age Friendly
- Red Leaf Centre
- Registered Nurses' Union of Newfoundland and Labrador (RNUNL)
- Residents of Main Brook
- Seniors' Advisory Committee: City of St. John's
- SeniorsNL
- St. Anthony Basin Resources Inc. (SABRI)
- Stella's Circle
- The Gathering Place
- The Newfoundland and Labrador Coalition of Seniors', Pensioners' and Retirees' Associations (NL Seniors' Coalition)
- United Way



The OSA engaged in over 20 meetings with ministers, executives, government officials and MHAs to share insights, raise issues of concern to seniors, and explore opportunities for improvements.

In addition, the OSA met on several occasions with the Seniors' Advocates from both British Columbia and New Brunswick, fostering interprovincial dialogue and the exchange of best practices to strengthen advocacy efforts and improve outcomes for older adults.



CONTINUOUS LEARNING



The OSA remained committed to staying well-informed and educated on issues related to seniors and participated in 18 learning opportunities:

- Access, Privacy, Security, and Information Management Conference
- Ageing Populations
- Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry Conference
- Canadian Association on Gerontology Conference
- Canadian Dental Care Plan
- Canadian Geriatric Society Conference
- Cyber Security Awareness Training
- Designing the Future: Scaling Innovative Housing Options for Older Adults
- Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Information Sessions
- Enabling Aging in Place Webinar Series
- Family Care Teams
- Launch of Social Media Campaign to Address Ageism
- Let's Talk About Supported Decision-Making
- NL Vital Signs – Community Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research – The Research and Knowledge Exchange on Aging: Building a Continuum of Care for Healthy Aging in the City of St. John's: How Can We Improve Food Security for Older Adults?
- Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Applied Health Research – The Research and Knowledge Exchange on Aging: Through the Looking Glass: The Impact of COVID-19 Isolation on Long-Term Care Facility Residents – A Visitor's Perspective
- Social Prescribing
- Symposium on the Right to Decide



Report on Performance



Issue 1: Systemic Advocacy

Systemic advocacy means addressing issues that impact large numbers of seniors. For the next 30 years, the province's population will continue to age which will force a societal paradigm shift, compelling policymakers to consider the needs of older adults. The OSA will continue to focus on systemic advocacy to ensure policies, services and programs meet the demand as dictated by seniors.

Objective:

By March 31, 2025, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to advocate on behalf of seniors to address systemic issues and strengthen seniors' services in NL.

Issue 1: Systemic Advocacy

Indicators

Accomplishments

Enhance procedures and protocols to identify and monitor systemic seniors' issues

All individual issues and requests for advocacy are collected in the HPE Records Management System. Reports generated from the database then enable the OSA to identify trends that confirm systemic issues.

The OSA made enhancements to the electronic records management system, to improve our capability to capture and report on systemic issues. This year, the OSA updated its intake system to categorize requests into ten new areas. This new framework allowed for a more detailed understanding and organization of the types of advocacy requests and concerns received from seniors, their family members, caregivers, and service providers. Staff regularly monitored the efficiency and relevance of the data collected and/or reported to ensure data was accurate and relevant.

The OSA implemented and continues to utilize a method to track issues and concerns received during public community sessions and meetings with community agencies.

Receive and review matters related to seniors

In addition to numerous contacts and collaborations with community organizations on issues impacting seniors, the OSA received 675 requests for advocacy action. The OSA had 22 public community sessions with over 650 seniors where issues and concerns were identified as well as potential solutions. All information received/gathered was documented, analyzed and utilized to inform the OSA's systemic advocacy role.

Consult with seniors, service providers, community organizations and the public

The OSA consulted with service providers and community groups through meetings to ascertain their perspective.

The OSA presented at/attended over 40 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, presentation to university students, professionals and professional associations.

The OSA participated in over 70 meetings, which included community organizations, government officials and committees.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Release report with recommendations</p>	<p>Released the Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report.</p> <p>To ensure the perspective of seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador was included in government and community programs as well as policy development, the OSA compiled the following policy, recommendations and advocacy submissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2024-2028 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness • Department of Justice and Public Safety Policing Transformation Working Group • Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development Decision-Making Framework • Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2025
<p>Complete status reports on recommendations</p>	<p>On November 20, 2024, the OSA released the Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024 report.</p>
<p>Utilize a variety of methods to advance improved seniors services</p>	<p>The OSA engaged with various government departments outlining, and/or following up on, systemic issues negatively impacting seniors, offering solutions, and seeking resolution. Some of this work included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter to Federal Ministers of Finance and Labour and Seniors urging them to expand the Working Canadians Rebate to include low-income seniors, highlighting affordability challenges and the disproportionate impact of excluding non-working older adults. • Letter to the Minister of Health and Community Services and NL Health Services requesting a meeting to discuss recent Alternate Level of Care initiatives, including the addition of double-occupancy long term care beds and the development of an interim ALC Centre, highlighting concerns about the impact on patients, families, and staff. • Letter to the Department of Health and Community Services, grounded in research, strongly opposing the conversion of single occupancy long term care rooms on the West coast to double occupancy, urging government to advance Health Accord recommendations, community supports, and the pending long term care review instead of regressive measures that undermine seniors' dignity and care. • Correspondence with the Minister of Health and Community Services seeking the public release of the Newfoundland and Labrador Long Term Care and Personal Care Home Review. • Letter to the Department of Health and Community Services, requesting a copy of the above report.

Indicators	Accomplishments
Inform the public	<p>The OSA presented at over 20 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, presentation to university students, professionals, and professional associations. These events were an opportunity to educate the attendees on the OSA's mandate, to share information on the systemic issues the OSA was addressing and advise of systemic issues that had been successfully resolved as a result of our advocacy.</p> <p>Nine news releases were issued on matters related to seniors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of Social Media Campaign to address ageism • Recognition of Seniors' Month • Recognition of World Elder Abuse Awareness Day • Recognition of International Day of Older Persons and National Seniors' Day • Statement regarding Government's/NLHS' plan to convert single occupancy rooms to double occupancy rooms at Corner Brook long term care facility • Recognition of Remembrance Day • Release of Status Report on Recommendations 2023-2024 • Seniors' Advocate joins with other Seniors' Advocates in Canada to urge the Federal Government to include seniors in the contemplated \$250 rebate • Release of the Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report. <p>The OSA released its quarterly newsletters.</p> <p>The OSA maintained an email distribution list that grew to more than 900 people. This email list includes people (primarily seniors) who attended any of the OSA's public events, including community engagement sessions or information booths, and voluntarily signed up to receive correspondence from the OSA. This distribution list is used to circulate information about the OSA, including reports released, newsletters, etc. as well as any information that seniors would benefit from hearing about, including government initiatives, grants, new programs/services.</p> <p>The Seniors' Advocate conducted 31 media interviews to ensure the public was aware of issues seniors were facing and potential solutions.</p> <p>The OSA remained active on social media platforms such as Facebook and X. The OSA developed and posted 177 tweets/Facebook posts.</p>

Discussion of Results

Over the past year, our community outreach has increased. The OSA held 22 public community sessions, heard from over 650 seniors, participated in over 70 meetings with community organizations, government officials, and committees, and presented at more than 20 events, including seniors' day events, university presentations, and professional associations. These engagements, along with consultations with service providers and community organizations, allowed the OSA to document, analyze, and utilize information to strengthen our systemic advocacy role.

Our research and reporting work also advanced significantly this year. We released the **Seniors' Report 2024: Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report** and the **Status Report on Recommendations 2023–2024**, while also providing submissions to inform and advocate for seniors needs in the St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness, and the Government of NL's Policing Transformation Working Group, Decision-Making Framework, and Budget 2025.

Informing and engaging the public remained a cornerstone of our mandate. The OSA completed 31 media interviews, issued nine news releases, released quarterly newsletters, and launched a social media campaign to address ageism. We marked key dates such as Seniors' Month, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, International Day of Older Persons, National Seniors' Day, and Remembrance Day. Our public presence was further supported through our growing email distribution list, now with over 900 subscribers, and active engagement on Facebook and X, where we posted 177 updates and continue to expand our reach.

Requests for advocacy action, while still significant (675), decreased by 9.8 per cent, indicating that the public is becoming more aware that the mandate of the OSA is to address systemic issues.

Together, these actions ensured that seniors' voices were heard, systemic issues were identified and acted upon, and the public remained informed about both the challenges facing seniors and the progress being made to address them.



Issue 2: Research and Reviews

The OSA conducts research and completes systemic reviews to inform positions of the OSA and to support recommendations made to government, government agencies, service providers, and community groups. Regardless of how the research is used, the information gleaned will be utilized and the learnings made available to the public. When research leads to recommendations to enhance seniors' programs and services, the public will be informed of all reviews, findings and any actions resulting.

Objective:

By March 31, 2025, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to conduct research and initiate required reviews and inform strong recommendations for improved seniors' services.



Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Collect and analyze demographic information</p>	<p>In 2024, the OSA received a one-time budget increase to hire a temporary Program and Policy Development Specialist to advance the work required for the Seniors' Report 2024. This position was established to provide dedicated capacity for in-depth data review and analysis.</p> <p>In 2024, the OSA welcomed a Master's student in Applied Psychology to complete a placement with the OSA, contributing research and analysis to support ongoing advocacy and reporting.</p> <p>Separate from the Seniors' Report 2024, the OSA undertook research on cost of living, which included developing an infographic and incorporating new data into the news release on the Working Canadians Rebate.</p>
<p>Analyze health seniors-related data</p>	<p>Drawing on the findings from the What We Heard Report (2023), along with data obtained from relevant government departments and national research sources, the OSA conducted a comprehensive analysis of six key areas of seniors' wellbeing and released the Seniors' Report 2024, including individual health and health care. This work provided the Office with a strong evidence base, ensuring that the report captured and reflected the realities, challenges, and priorities of seniors throughout the province.</p> <p>Some key findings were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2022, 47 per cent of NL seniors perceived their health as very good or excellent. Despite this, there has been some erosion in subjective measures of health over the last several years, including increased alcohol and smoking behaviour. • Newfoundland and Labrador has a lower rate of seniors who are connected with a regular health care provider than the national average and all other provinces. 19,395 seniors were waitlisted for a healthcare provider (2021–23); 61 per cent were still waiting in March 2024. • Access to timely surgical care also lags. In 2023, NL met national benchmarks for hip, knee, and cataract surgeries 48 per cent, 37 per cent, and 43 per cent of the time, compared to national averages of 66 per cent, 59 per cent, and 70 per cent. • Within long term care, concerns about the quality of care remain. As well, restraint use and the potentially inappropriate use of antipsychotics continue to be well above the national average. Twenty-nine per cent of seniors in NL are prescribed antipsychotic drugs, exceeding the 25 per cent national average.

Indicators	Accomplishments
<p>Analyze financial seniors-related data</p>	<p>Drawing on the findings from the What We Heard Report (2023), along with data obtained from relevant government departments and national research sources, the OSA conducted a comprehensive analysis of six key areas of seniors' wellbeing and released the Seniors' Report 2024, one of which included finances. This work provided the OSA with a strong evidence base, ensuring that the report captured and reflected the realities, challenges, and priorities of seniors throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.</p> <p>Analysis of financial data revealed significant pressures on seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors in this province have the lowest median income in Canada and the highest uptake of the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), highlighting widespread reliance on income supports. Housing affordability is a pressing concern, with 12.9 per cent of senior homeowners living alone, and 31.6 per cent of senior renters living alone, identified as being in core housing need, unable to afford suitable and adequate housing in their communities. Transportation costs also contribute to financial strain, as 82 per cent of seniors hold a valid driver's license but face sharply rising expenses; since 2018, the cost of gasoline has increased by 26 per cent and vehicle insurance by 15 per cent. <p>On May 27, 2024, the OSA released The Source: Seniors' Own Words on Financial Struggles, a pictogram highlighting these financial challenges based on a survey the OSA conducted in 2023, which received responses from over 1,000 seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador. This revealed that 33 per cent of seniors struggle to meet basic financial needs, including food, utilities, and social activities. Lower-income seniors, particularly those earning under \$60,000, and rural seniors and females were most affected. Higher-income seniors prioritized health care access, while lower-income seniors focused on cost-of-living challenges.</p>
<p>Conduct research</p>	<p>All systemic issues require significant research including literature reviews, jurisdictional scans, consultations, surveys, focus groups and interviews.</p> <p>The Seniors' Report 2024 was developed following analysis of data collected in office, along with additional provincial and national sources. The OSA undertook extensive research into six key areas of impact on seniors' wellbeing. This included detailed data analysis, and the collection of information on issues such as income supports, housing affordability, and the rising cost of transportation. This report will be produced annually, enabling the OSA to monitor changes and identify trends over time.</p>

Indicators

Accomplishments

Consult with seniors, service providers, community organizations and the public.

The OSA consulted with service providers and community groups on issues of concern to seniors. These consultations were often a result of concerns the OSA heard, as part of our information gathering, and an opportunity for service providers and community groups to share what they were seeing in their respective agencies. Through 22 community consultations and 71 meetings, the OSA consulted with seniors, service providers and community organizations throughout the province.

Inform the public

The Seniors' Advocate conducted 31 media interviews to ensure the public is aware of issues seniors are facing and potential solutions.

The OSA released its quarterly newsletters.

Nine news releases were issued on matters related to seniors.

Released the **Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report**.

Through the release of the **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-24**, the OSA informed the public on the status of all recommendations made by the Office. The report also includes governments response to our formal public recommendations.

The OSA publicly released all submissions including:

- 2024-2028 St. John's Community Plan to End Homelessness
- Department of Justice and Public Safety Policing Transformation Working Group
- Department of Children, Seniors, and Social Development Decision-Making Framework
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador on Budget 2025

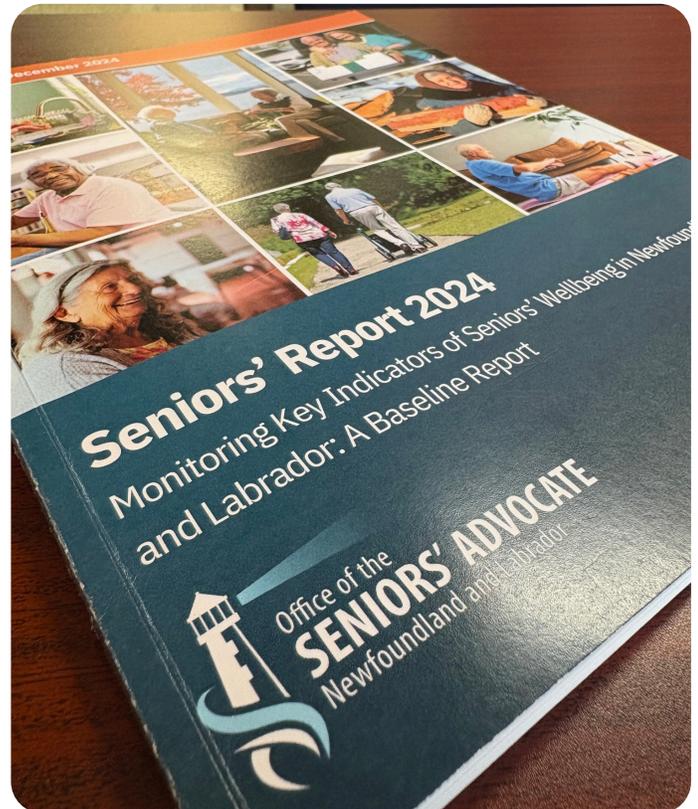


Discussion of Results

Collecting, analyzing, and tracking trends in seniors' health and well-being continues to be a priority for the OSA. Human resources challenges have historically limited this work. However, on August 19, 2024, the OSA secured one time partial funding to hire a temporary Program and Policy Development Specialist to advance the work required for the **Seniors' Report 2024** and other data released. This position provided dedicated capacity for in-depth data research and analysis across six key areas of seniors' well-being.

All systemic issues identified by the OSA are supported by extensive research, including literature reviews, jurisdictional scans, consultations, surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The **Seniors' Report 2024** was informed by this evidence and will be produced annually, enabling the OSA to monitor changes over time, identify trends, and inform recommendations. Consultation with seniors, service providers, and community organizations continued throughout the year, with over 22 community consultations and 71 meetings providing valuable insight.

The OSA also focused on informing the public, completing 31 media interviews, releasing quarterly newsletters and news releases, and publishing the **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-24**. These reports ensured seniors and the public were aware of the issues affecting seniors and the progress of the OSA's recommendations.

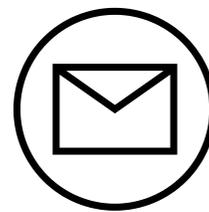
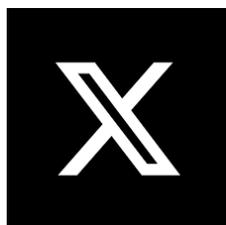


Issue 3: Engagement and Public Awareness

The OSA will continue to engage seniors, families, stakeholders, and community organizations to identify and discuss systemic issues and solutions. The OSA will take a leadership role in educating the public on matters of importance to seniors and supporting community organizations in their challenges to meet the varied needs of seniors. The OSA will continue to promote public awareness of the systemic issues impacting seniors as well as findings and/or recommendations of systemic reviews undertaken by the OSA.

Objective:

By March 31, 2025, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to increase opportunities to engage and inform seniors, educate the public and support seniors' community organizations on issues impacting seniors.



Indicators	Accomplishments
Engage seniors, seniors' organizations, community organizations, municipalities, governments and others.	<p>The OSA connected with 50+ clubs throughout the province, with 19 clubs hosting town halls. Sixteen of the 19 town halls were open to all community members. The OSA also met with seniors through other existing community senior groups and hosted two community sessions open to the public.</p> <p>The OSA attended, and had a booth at, six seniors' expos/conventions, where we displayed information about our office, provided promotional merchandise, and met with seniors. The OSA participated in over 70 meetings. Meetings with provincial government ministers, provincial deputy ministers, and as requested Members of the House of Assembly, involved providing information on matters of importance to seniors and advocating for required programs and services.</p>
Collaborate with and support seniors' community organizations	<p>The OSA had over 30 meetings with community organizations.</p> <p>The OSA coordinated sessions with over 10 community organizations to raise awareness on government's work on the Decision-Making framework - The Right to Decide. The OSA collaborated with an expert and advocate for accessibility to educate organizations working with seniors on how decision-making legislation and frameworks are relevant to seniors with dementias and disabilities, thereby promoting awareness of seniors in the province through these senior serving organizations.</p> <p>Continuing on from work which began during 2023, the OSA and community partners collaborated to address abuse by family members or caregivers in seniors' homes. Their work led to an expansion of the Family Violence Protection Act, allowing seniors to apply for Emergency Protection Orders to have abusive individuals removed. The amendments received Royal Assent on December 4, 2024, with further community education planned to raise awareness of this new protection.</p> <p>The OSA attended six community seniors' expos/conventions to create awareness of the Office and our role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seniors' On The Go, hosted by MUN Botanical Gardens • NL 50 + Federation AGM • Seniors' Expo, hosted by the town of Conception Bay South • Seniors' Day, hosted by the City of St. John's • Random Age Friendly Communities Seniors' Information Fair • Seniors and Science hosted by the Johnson Geo Centre <p>The Seniors' Advocate presented at the 50+ Federation Convention. The convention enabled the Advocate to provide an update to over 350 seniors on the work of the OSA and discuss issues of importance to seniors.</p>

Issue 3: Engagement and Public Awareness

Indicators	Accomplishments
Develop and distribute promotional materials	The Office expanded its inventory of promotional material, which are provided at public events. All promotional material contained contact information for the Office and a benefit to seniors (i.e. magnifying bookmarks). Hundreds of promotional material items were handed out at consultations, community booths, and other events.
Participate in media interviews and public presentations on matters of importance to seniors	The Advocate completed 31 media interviews to ensure the public was aware of issues seniors were facing and potential solutions. The OSA presented at 42 events, which included public community sessions, seniors' day events, presentation to the MUN Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Nursing.
Issue news releases, reports, newsletters and information of public interest	The OSA released nine news releases, four newsletters, a new report the Seniors' Report 2024 Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report , the Status Report on Recommendations 2023-24 , four submissions, and the Annual Performance Report 2023-24 . The OSA also issued emails through our distribution list which contained information of public interest, as well as posted on X and Facebook.



Discussion of Results

The OSA maintains a strong working relationship with community organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. Through these partnerships we have raised awareness of, and called for action on, multiple seniors' systemic issues.

The OSA continues to create opportunities to promote its activities and inform the public. Ongoing media interviews have been instrumental for informing the public, as well as the release of our reports and quarterly newsletters. The OSA engaged with nineteen 50+ clubs, hosted two community sessions open to the public and participated in 71 meetings. The OSA continued to collaborate with and support community organizations, holding more than 30 meetings and participating on two community committees.

The Advocate conducted 31 media interviews to provide the position of seniors and the OSA on matters impacting seniors and thereby ensuring the public is aware of these issues and any potential solutions. The Advocate also presented at 42 events, including public community sessions, seniors' day events, and various other presentations. The OSA issued nine news releases, four newsletters, **the Seniors' Report 2024: Monitoring Key Indicators of Seniors' Wellbeing in NL: A Baseline Report**, the **Status Report on Recommendations 2023-24**, four submissions, and the **Annual Performance Report 2023-24**. Information of public interest was also shared through the OSA's email distribution list and social media platforms, ensuring that seniors and the broader public are aware of ongoing issues and supports.

The OSA remains committed to supporting seniors' community organizations. We participate in senior events in the community, typically with a booth set up, where we are available to hear from seniors and answer questions. Promotional items are always in high demand. Having the booth allows for engagement with a high number of seniors, many of whom are interested in hearing about our office and our work for seniors.



Opportunities and Challenges

The most significant and concerning challenge for the OSA is achieving the powers and duties as set out in the **Seniors' Advocate Act (Act)** with the limited staffing resources. The **Act** states that the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is established to:

- (a) identify, review and analyze systemic issues related to seniors;
- (b) work collaboratively with seniors' organizations, service providers and others to identify and address systemic issues related to seniors; and
- (c) make recommendations to government and government agencies respecting changes to improve seniors' services.

With just two Systemic Advocacy Consultants and the Advocate, the challenge to meet the mandate and address the systemic issues facing approximately 134,324 people 65 years and older (24.6 per cent of the overall population) and 257,288 people 50 years and older (47.2 per cent of the overall population) in the province is extremely challenging. The requirements currently set out in the **Act** are expansive, but the OSA is limited by the human resources to complete the systemic advocacy role.

Another significant challenge for the OSA is that many seniors' or their family members are seeking individual advocacy and/or that a matter be investigated. Often these requests relate to how a senior has been treated in the health and social care systems. The OSA's legislated authority is limited to systemic advocacy. The OSA cannot investigate these matters, therefore, we are unable to access the specific details of incidents, gather evidence including interviewing personnel, etc. This often leaves seniors, and their families frustrated with nowhere to turn. However, the OSA remains hopeful that government will advance on the recommendations in the **Review of Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly**, which it commissioned, and amend the **Seniors' Advocate Act** to provide the OSA "full investigatory powers for both systemic and individual advocacy".²

² Royal Newfoundland and Labrador House of Assembly. 2023. Final Report: Review of Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly. October 5. <https://www.rsonl.ca/files/Final-Report-Review-of-Statutory-Offices-of-the-House-of-Assembly-FULL-REPORT-20231005.pdf>

Financial Information

Expenditure and revenue figures included in this document are based on information provided in the Report on Program Expenditures and Revenues of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for Year Ended 31 March 2025.

	Actual	Estimates	
		Amended	Original
	\$	\$	\$
OFFICE OF THE SENIORS' ADVOCATE			
<i>CURRENT</i>			
7.1.01. OFFICE OF THE SENIORS' ADVOCATE			
01. Salaries	515,078	530,500	530,500
Operating Accounts			
Employee Benefits	3,359	5,700	5,700
Transportation and Communications	28,646	49,200	61,900
Supplies	3,598	5,000	5,000
Professional Services	1,395	9,000	9,000
Purchased Services	43,956	44,200	44,000
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	16,345	16,500	4,000
02. Operating Accounts	97,299	129,600	129,600
Total: Office of the Seniors' Advocate	612,377	660,100	660,100

Contact Us

Phone

(709) 729-6603
Toll-Free: 1-833-729-6603



Email

seniorsadvocate@seniorsadvocatenl.ca



Website

<https://www.seniorsadvocatenl.ca/>



Facebook

Seniors Advocate NL



X

@SrsAdvocateNL



Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador



Office of the
SENIORS' ADVOCATE
Newfoundland and Labrador