



Office of the  
**SENIORS' ADVOCATE**  
Newfoundland and Labrador

# **Activity Plan**

## **2018 - 2020**

## MESSAGE FROM THE SENIORS' ADVOCATE



I am pleased to present the first Activity Plan for the Office of the Seniors' Advocate covering 2018 - 2020. This Office is a Statutory Office of the House of Assembly of Newfoundland and Labrador. It has been designated as a Category 3 entity as per the **Transparency and Accountability Act**. As such, this Office is required to prepare an Activity Plan that sets clear direction for its activities for the next two years.

This Plan is written in consideration of the Legislative authority of this Office under the **Seniors' Advocate Act**. As the Seniors' Advocate for Newfoundland and Labrador I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and achievement of the objectives.

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate was created in 2017 with a very clear mandate to address systemic issues impacting the seniors of this province. It is my responsibility to seek input from seniors and to determine where they believe gaps exist in legislation, policies, programs and services. Once gaps are identified as systemic my Office can complete comprehensive reviews and make recommendations for positive change.

This Activity Plan outlines our priorities and performance measures we will achieve over the next two years. As this is the Office's first Activity Plan, it provides a foundation for future activities as we shape and measure our performance for this inaugural year.

I am truly honoured and humbled to have been appointed as Newfoundland and Labrador's first Seniors' Advocate. And while I have a challenging mandate, the work of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is so very important because it impacts us all directly or indirectly; at present or in the future.

*Suzanne Brake  
Seniors' Advocate*

Suzanne Brake, PhD  
Seniors' Advocate

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## OVERVIEW

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate was created through the **Seniors' Advocate Act** which was proclaimed on December 14, 2016. The Act and Regulations came into force on July 5, 2017. Authority and duties for the Office are outlined in the Act.

Dr. Suzanne Brake was appointed as Newfoundland and Labrador's first Seniors' Advocate on November 7, 2017. Dr. Brake's first term is for six years. Each year the Seniors' Advocate must report to the House of Assembly through the Speaker of the House of Assembly on the exercise and performance of her powers and duties under the Act.

The Office has four staff: the Advocate, two Systemic Advocacy Consultants and an Administrative Officer. The Advocate is an independent Officer of the House of Assembly and reports directly to the Legislature through the Speaker. The other staff members are part of the Public Service of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The House of Assembly Management Commission approved the Office's budget of \$500,000 for fiscal year 2018-2019:

Salaries	\$ 386,400
Employee Benefits	5,700
Transportation and Communications	48,900
Supplies	5,500
Professional Services	9,000
Purchased Services	44,000
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	1,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>

Whenever possible, documents produced by this Office follow clear language guidelines by using plain text and setting up pages with a left-side alignment. Documents also follow Canadian National Institute for the Blind's accessibility guidelines.

In this Activity Plan, bold fonts are used rather than italics or underlining. As well, the font is a san-serif style in a minimum 12-point size.

## **MANDATE**

The mandate of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate is to address systemic issues impacting seniors. Systemic issues are problems in an overall system rather than a specific or individual concern.

The Office will:

- 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.

In carrying out the powers and duties of the Office 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.

## **LINES OF BUSINESS**

### **Systemic Advocacy**

Systemic issues impact large numbers of people. The Office of the Seniors' Advocate can identify, analyze and review systemic matters related to seniors. These systemic issues are brought to the attention of the Office through input from individuals, organizations, service providers, research and media reports. The issues fall under five broad categories: health care, personal care, housing, transportation or finances.

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.

### **Collaboration**

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate works with seniors' organizations, public or private service providers (as per the regulations in the Act) that fund or deliver seniors' services, and others to identify and address systemic seniors' issues.

This Office does not address individual seniors' issues. If the Seniors' Advocate becomes aware of an individual senior's matter, the Advocate may refer that senior to the Office of the Citizens' Representative.

Seniors who need information on programs or services are referred to SeniorsNL which can help seniors anywhere in the province. SeniorsNL records the details from all calls on its electronic tracking system. This information is also available to the Office to help with its systemic monitoring.

### **Public Awareness**

The Seniors' Advocate listens to seniors and voices their concerns. The Office of the Seniors' Advocate works to make sure the public is aware of its duties and powers. Members of the public are invited to contact the Office for information about the **Seniors' Advocate Act** and the operation of the Office.

The Advocate has committed to ongoing outreach throughout the province to gather data and share information with the public, especially seniors. Where it is in the public interest, or in the interest of a person, department or government agency, the Advocate may publish reports as related to the Advocate's powers and duties. These reports may or may not be the subject of a report made to the House of Assembly under this Act.

## VALUES

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate 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
Independence	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 all 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 primary clients of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate are seniors. The systemic needs of older adults is the main concern of this Office. The **Seniors' Advocate Act** defines a "senior" as an individual who is 65 years of age or older, or less than 65 years

of age and receives seniors' services. "Seniors' services" are the 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. "Service providers" means the public or private persons or bodies prescribed in the regulations who fund or deliver, in whole or in part, seniors' services.

## **VISION**

Through the voices of seniors, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will promote positive changes to the systemic issues impacting seniors, programs and services.

## **ISSUES**

In carrying out its mandate the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will focus on:

### **ISSUE 1: OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT**

The mandate of the Seniors' Advocate is to monitor the systemic issues which most concern seniors. This Office uses a collaborative, partnership model to engage seniors and stakeholders. The Advocate has committed to ongoing outreach; travelling throughout the province to meet and talk with seniors and stakeholders.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2019 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have undertaken measures to work collaboratively with seniors and others.

#### **Indicators:**

- Identified and engaged seniors' organizations, community organizations, municipalities, governments and others.
- Engaged SeniorsNL and the Office of the Citizen's Representative.
- Developed and implemented an annual provincial outreach plan.
- Extended offers to meet with, or offer presentations, to groups or stakeholders.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have undertaken measures to work collaboratively with seniors and others.



## **ISSUE 2: PUBLIC AWARENESS**

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate will inform the public of its duties and powers and the operation of the Office. As well, the Office will promote awareness of systemic issues impacting seniors.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2019 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have undertaken measures to promote increased awareness of its role, powers and duties.

### **Indicators:**

- Developed a Website.
- Developed and distributed Information Cards.
- Participated in media interviews.
- Produced news releases.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to promote increased awareness of its role, powers and duties.

## **ISSUE 3: TRACKING AND TRENDING**

This Office uses a collaborative, partnership model for data collection and the monitoring of systemic issues impacting seniors.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2019, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have identified and monitored systemic seniors' issues.

### **Indicators:**

- Established protocols to identify and monitor systemic seniors' issues.
- Developed an electronic records management system.
- Received and reviewed matters related to seniors.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2020, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to identify and monitor systemic seniors' issues.

#### **ISSUE 4: REVIEWS**

The Office of the Seniors' Advocate was established to identify, review and analyze the systemic issues related to seniors. The Office will make recommendations to service providers to bring about positive changes to improve seniors' services. The public will be informed about reviews and actions resulting from the reviews.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2019, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have undertaken systemic review(s) where necessary.

**Indicators:**

- Identified areas where a systemic review is warranted.
- Conducted research.
- Consulted with seniors, service providers and the public.
- Made recommendations and informed the public.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2020, the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have continued to implement systemic review(s) where necessary.

#### **ISSUE 5: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILING**

The population of this province is aging. This change should bring about a shift in how aging and the aging process are viewed. For policy-makers and service providers this also means that programs, policies and services must adapt. Demographic profiling will outline socioeconomic factors pertaining to seniors.

**Objective 1:** By March 31, 2019 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have initiated a demographic profile of NL seniors.

**Indicators:**

- Collected demographic information in a range of areas including personal care, health care, housing, transportation and finances.
- Analyzed demographic information as provided.

**Objective 2:** By March 31, 2020 the Office of the Seniors' Advocate will have developed a demographic profile of NL seniors.

## CONCLUSION

The establishment of the Office of the Seniors' Advocate was the result of strong support from the public. As outlined in the **Seniors' Advocate Act**, this Office has a concise yet inclusive mandate to address systemic issues impacting the seniors of this province. While each older adult is unique, within the senior population there are some shared traits and needs.

This Office is fully committed to its mandate and the tasks outlined in this Activity Plan. The next two years will be challenging but achievable and will result in positive change for the seniors of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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