# Table of Contents

Message from the Premier ................................................................. 2  
Message from the Minister ............................................................... 3  
Introduction ....................................................................................... 4  
Our Population ................................................................................... 5  
Priority Direction: Recognition of Older Persons............................. 7  
Priority Direction: Celebrating Diversity ........................................... 9  
Priority Direction: Supportive Communities ..................................... 11  
Priority Direction: Financial Well-Being .......................................... 15  
Priority Direction: Health and Well-Being ....................................... 17  
Priority Direction: Employment, Education and Research ............... 23  
Conclusion ......................................................................................... 27  
References ......................................................................................... 28
Message from the Premier

Statistics Canada says that Newfoundland and Labrador will have the highest proportion of seniors in the country by 2026.

Since our government took office in 2003, we have identified healthy aging as a major priority. In 2004, we created a Seniors and Aging Division within the Provincial Government and a 13-member Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors. In 2006, we strengthened our commitment through the creation of an Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors and, in 2007, following an extensive consultation process, we released the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework. This document serves as a status report of our progress to date.

We have accomplished much in recent years, as evidenced in this report. We recognize, however, that we can – and must – do more for this growing segment of society.

In 2014, I was pleased to announce that we were taking another step forward with the creation of the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. This enhanced focus on seniors is designed to continue to build on our successes to date, and to chart a path forward that helps to ensure older adults can remain healthy, active, engaged seniors – living in their own homes and active within their own age-friendly communities.

As we move forward, we will continue to support the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework by investing in its key directions and initiatives. We will also continue to listen to seniors, and their families, to determine what their priorities are, and how we can further address the challenges we face together.

Honourable Paul Davis
Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
Message from the Minister

As Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development, it is my pleasure to present this status report on the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework.

The Provincial Government has made significant progress in addressing the needs of seniors and their families over the past 12 years and those efforts have been enhanced with the introduction of the framework in 2007. Our focus over the years has been on healthy aging and providing improved community-based programs and services that enable older adults to be more active, healthy and engaged within their own age-friendly communities.

And while we recognize there are still challenges to overcome, our approach has been working.

This status report highlights some of our achievements to date, recognizing that we need to build on those successes, enhance our programs and services, and invest wisely in future initiatives that make a real difference to seniors and their families throughout the province.

I take this opportunity to thank members of the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors, the Interdepartmental Working Group on Aging and Seniors (representing 10 departments/agencies and the four regional health authorities), and the staff and executive responsible for the work of the Seniors and Aging Division within the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development. I offer a special thanks to the multiple community partners who work with us – day in and day out – to deliver programs and services to meet the needs of older adults.

We look forward to continuing our emphasis on healthy aging in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, and building a society that recognizes and truly appreciates what older adults have to offer.

Honourable Clyde Jackman
Minister of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development
Introduction

In *Our Blueprint for the Future (2003)*, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador cites “healthy aging” as a provincial priority. One of the initiatives implemented to achieve this goal was the *Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework*. This framework guides development of legislation, policies, programs and services impacting older adults.

The framework was informed by a comprehensive consultative process which included collaboration with more than 1,000 individuals in 17 communities (Baie Verte; Bonavista; Carbonear; Clarenville; Corner Brook; Gander; Grand Falls-Windsor; Happy Valley-Goose Bay; Harbour Breton; L’Anse-au-Clair; Marystown; Mount Pearl; New-Wes-Valley; Rocky Harbour; St. Anthony; St. John’s and Stephenville), a provincial forum, numerous briefs and submissions, and extensive research.

Publicly released in 2007, this framework is based on the principles of dignity, self-fulfillment, social inclusion, independence, safety and security, and fairness. It aims to strengthen Newfoundland and Labrador’s commitment to enhancing its status as an age-friendly province.

The framework outlines 28 goals under the six priority directions of recognition of older persons; celebrating diversity; supportive communities; financial well-being; health and well-being, and employment, education and research.

It offers a long-range vision which continues to be responsive to the needs of today’s seniors while planning for the requirements of tomorrow. The Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development is responsible for leadership and implementation of the framework.

Since 2007 the priority directions, goals and actions have been reviewed by the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors as well as the Interdepartmental Working Group which is composed of representatives of government departments and agencies and the regional health authorities.
Three main factors have been contributing to the aging of the world’s population: increased longevity with people living much longer than previous decades; declining fertility; and, aging “baby boomers”, as the large number of children born after the Second World War enter their senior years.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, migration patterns have also been a significant factor. Historically, this province has experienced a pattern of out-migration of younger adults and, more recently, in-migration of older persons deciding to retire in this province. Together, these trends further increase the number of older persons in our province.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has committed to ensuring that the diversity, strengths and uniqueness of seniors is respected, when developing policies, programs and services for older adults.

According to Statistics Canada the population of Newfoundland and Labrador was 526,977 as of July 1, 2014; 93,456 people were aged 65 years or older (17.8 per cent of the population). Further, it is projected that 26 per cent of the population will be age 65 years or older by 2026. To be more
specific, currently one in two Newfoundlanders and Labradorians is age 44.6 years or older which is the highest median age of all provinces and territories in Canada. In fact, this province has the most rapidly aging population in Canada.

The evolving demographic profile of today’s senior, and the senior of tomorrow, requires changes to policy and priorities. The baby-boom generation has been driving economic growth and activity therefore responding to changing demographics is of great importance, especially in areas of labour/workforce, health care and pensions.¹

In the not-too-distant future, the world will appear very different than today. Trends show that older adults choose to live in their own homes for longer periods, although the financial and physical realities of staying in that home may become more challenging. Seniors are more likely to live in urban areas where more supports are available; however, ease of access to support systems is still a challenge and becomes even more critical as rates of chronic conditions increase. Access and availability of supports continues to be a primary concern for older adults living in rural regions.

The framework demonstrates a commitment and partnership with all sectors of society that includes:

► Governments
► Older persons
► Seniors’ organizations and retiree groups
► Volunteer sector
► Educational sector
► Community organizations
► Business community

This collaborative effort is essential to ensuring an age-friendly Newfoundland and Labrador.

Investing in healthy aging benefits all people of all ages. It is part of an approach that seeks to improve well-being by making strategic investments at different times such as during childhood, adulthood, and older age.

This document provides a summary of initiatives implemented since 2007 that support the six priority directions under the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework.
**PRIORITY DIRECTION:**

**Recognition of Older Persons**

This priority direction will work toward increased societal respect and regard for older persons; age-friendly legislation, policies, programs and services; and greater inclusion of seniors in our society.

If people are happy and living healthy, productive lives, continuing to contribute to their families and their communities, then an aging population becomes an opportunity.

Older adults are valuable resources to their communities as community leaders, historians, volunteers and caregivers. They are also sources of information, knowledge, traditions and spiritual values.

June is **Seniors’ Month** in Newfoundland and Labrador. During this month older adults are particularly celebrated and their accomplishments recognized. A government-issued news release, weekly informational emails for stakeholders, radio ads and daily tweets all highlight the contributions of older persons.

Seniors are also recognized in Newfoundland and Labrador through the **Seniors of Distinction Awards**. Since 2009, an annual...
call for nominations encourages the general public to submit names of seniors who demonstrate excellence in terms of contributions, achievements, and diversity. Every nomination is an example of significant achievement. Successful recipients are announced during Seniors Month and formally honoured at an event held in October to coincide with National Seniors Day and International Day of Older Persons.

The Ageless Public Awareness Campaign supports heightened levels of respect for older persons to ensure greater social inclusion. This campaign promotes positive images of aging using three themes: Involvement is Ageless; Participation is Ageless; and, Ambition is Ageless. Campaign images depict older adults actively engaged in their communities. The campaign includes print and radio advertisements as well as promotional materials. This campaign is currently being refreshed with a view to expanding on the themes and promotional approaches.
PRIORITY DIRECTION: Celebrating Diversity

This priority direction will work toward assuring the diversity of the aging population is seen and valued in provincial policies, programs and services.

Since 2007 a number of initiatives have been implemented to support work that celebrates the diversity of our older population. Members appointed to the Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors represent a diverse cross-section of older adults and bring perspectives based on geography, culture, gender, background, experience and skills. This council advises government on issues related to aging and seniors.

As a group, older adults are just as varied as the rest of the population. Diversity amongst all age groups should be nurtured and valued equally. In June 2008 government launched its Policy on Multiculturalism, designed to celebrate all cultures and recognizes that diversity leads to creativity, innovation and economic growth.

Backgrounds and life experiences influence our values, beliefs, customs and ways of communicating. In turn, these affect views and behaviours. Diversity is celebrated by being inclusive, responsive and respectful of differences including, age, gender, ability, beliefs, culture, religion and income. To embrace a vision of healthy aging is to value the contributions of older people, celebrate diversity, counter ageism and reduce inequities. To encourage and support healthy
aging, people need to be provided with information, incentives, and accessible programs and services that create opportunities to make healthy choices.

Government has demonstrated respect for language and cultural diversity through promotion of the Seniors of Distinction Awards in English, French, Inuktitut and both dialects of Innu-Aimun; and the Adult Protection Act in English, Inuktitut and both dialects of Innu-Aimun. Aboriginal perspectives were also included through membership on steering committees when developing the Adult Protection Act and the Violence Prevention Initiative’s Respect Aging Education and Training program.


The strategy provides a framework for a long-term, sustainable approach to achieving the vision of a fully inclusive province where individuals with disabilities have the same opportunities and choices on an equal basis as others.

Beginning in 2012 government has taken many steps to be inclusive. For example universal design principles which increase accessibility and inclusion throughout society including homes, businesses, neighbourhoods and information, have been applied to affordable and social housing construction. They support the goals of the province’s Social Housing Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. The plan, which was established in 2009, places a high priority on developing affordable housing for persons with disabilities, seniors, and those who require supports to live independently. This new direction for accessible housing construction is in keeping with other efforts to enhance inclusion such as the establishment of the Disability Policy Office and the creation of the Provincial Advisory Council for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities.
Supportive Communities

This priority direction will work toward enhancing the role that communities play to support an aging population. Provincial legislation, policies, programs and services will be used.

Although approximately 80 per cent of Canadians live in cities, in Atlantic Canada, on average, only half of the population lives in an urban area. Canada’s smaller cities and rural regions are projected to experience faster population aging. As younger adults move to urban centres, rural areas will likely have higher numbers of older residents; however, the majority of older adults will continue to live in urban centres.

The aging of rural populations will also be impacted by the majority of immigrants continuing to choose to settle in urban areas. Research shows unique social and environmental challenges impacting health and healthy aging.

The most recent census (2011) found that in this province nearly half of the people aged 65 years or older live on the Avalon Peninsula while the remaining 55 per cent live in communities throughout the rest of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Older adults who wish to age in place in rural communities may face barriers to their independence such as limited housing and transportation options. In addition, seniors in rural and remote areas

“The Town of Clarenville has been onboard with the concept of building an age-friendly community since day one. We were committed to finding a space for the Clarenville Age-Friendly Park which suited the needs of all citizens, and with the location on Hibernia Drive, we have a space that is near to both Clarenville High School and a seniors’ housing complex, and is easily accessible to all residents.”

Frazer Russell, Mayor of Clarenville
often must travel for health services, which creates a range of challenges for themselves and their families. With at least 85 per cent of older Newfoundland and Labrador adults living with at least one chronic disease/condition, ease of access to support systems becomes even more critical.

An uneven population distribution means that legislation, policies, programs and services must consider geographical diversity. Although more supports and services are available to people living in or near larger centres, access can still be a challenge for some seniors, but even more so for seniors living in rural and remote areas.

Initiatives have been implemented to support the development of age-friendly communities that will enable people to live as independently as they want, where they want, as long as they want. Launched in 2010, **Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador** is a provincial grants program providing $200,000 annually for incorporated municipalities, Inuit community governments and reserves, seniors’ organizations and retiree groups. To date more than $1 million has been allocated to 45 communities to assess their age-friendliness; and 95 grants have been provided to seniors’ organizations and retiree groups to implement age-friendly projects.

Transportation challenges continue to be an issue impeding many older adults from being able to age in place as they wish.
In 2011-12 government committed $1.3 million to pilot a three year Age-friendly Transportation Project. The goal of this project was to explore accessible transportation options and increase access to affordable and reliable transportation for older adults and individuals with mobility challenges. This includes transportation to meet activities of daily living including medical appointments, shopping, and socializing.

The groups selected for the pilot include: the Canadian Red Cross Society, St. John’s Transportation Commission (Metrobus), Bay St. George Area Development Association, Town of Springdale, and, the Town of Clarenville. An evaluation of this project will inform future policy directions.

Aging in place means having the health and social supports and services needed to live safely and independently in one’s home or community for as long as a person chooses and is able. Many older adults prefer to age in place in their own home and community. In 2012, Newfoundland and Labrador, in partnership with the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors released a document entitled Thinking About Aging in Place, which acts as a guide for older adults who want to plan for their future. This document can be found at: www.seniors.gc.ca.

When it comes to home ownership, in Newfoundland and Labrador 83 per cent of people over the age of 65 own their home. This is 10 per cent higher than the national average. While this is very positive, a report from the Canadian Association of Accredited Mortgage Professionals noted that 35 per cent of Canadian homeowners 65 years or older now hold a mortgage.

While most seniors in Newfoundland and Labrador own their own homes, some homeowners are concerned about how to continue to maintain their homes and age in place.

One initiative is the Provincial Home Repair Program, which is administered through Newfoundland and Labrador Housing Corporation (NLHC). Between 2007 and 2014 18,300 grants were provided to low-income homeowners; 86 per cent of people assisted under this program are age 55 years and older with 66 per cent age 65 years and older.

In addition, the NLHC Residential Energy Efficiency Program is designed to assist low-income households with income of $32,500 or less per year, in making energy efficient retrofits to their homes. In 2014-15 over 1,200 homeowners were assisted; 83 per cent were aged 55 years and
older and 64 per cent were aged 65 years and older. These retrofits make housing more affordable and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

NLHC has also been instrumental in addressing housing challenges through the creation of affordable housing for seniors. The Partner Managed Housing program directly supports social housing initiatives largely in partnership with non-profit housing groups. Since 2009, $52.3 million (including federal funds) has been allocated through NLHC to this program, which provides 2,198 affordable rental housing units throughout the province – of which 80 per cent are for seniors with an average age of 76 years and average annual income of $15,000.

In addition, since 2006, through the Governments of Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador’s Investment in Affordable Housing Program, 523 housing units, specifically for seniors have been constructed or renovated. It is important to note that all units built since 2011 have been fully accessible. The latest Investment in Affordable Housing Agreement (2014-19) will provide $27.9 million over the next five years to create approximately 481 new affordable housing units, the majority of which will assist seniors.

Government also works with the regional health authorities and the not-for-profit sector to provide support to unpaid caregivers. For example, Government supports the Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador to deliver Caregivers Out of Isolation NL (COI-NL). This program is committed to supporting caregivers of all ages who care for family members and friends of any age. Programs offered by COI-NL include an information line, newsletter, and guide for caregivers. In 2012, government provided additional support to assist COI-NL to partner with the four regional health authorities in hosting 16 information sessions for caregivers. The sessions focused on providing information about services and community resources, and practical advice to help address stress and self-care.

“Caregivers Out of Isolation recognizes and celebrates the work of caregivers, and helps ensure that they are connected to programs and services that assist them in their role and, most especially, to help support their own health and well-being. It is an intergenerational program which recognizes that people who care for a loved one or friend are of any age – and the person they care for can be of any age.”

Kelly Heisz, Executive Director, Seniors Resource Centre of Newfoundland and Labrador
Financial Well-Being

This priority direction aims to improve the financial well-being of seniors through policies, programs, and services. It identifies opportunities; improves knowledge about government services and programs; and encourages financial and retirement planning.

Population aging is occurring in almost all countries of the world, rich and poor, with good health inextricably linked to higher levels of income and education. Most recent data from Statistics Canada (2011) reports that Newfoundland and Labrador’s average income for people aged 65 years or older was $26,800 compared to $32,500 for Canada. Consideration must be given to the reality that while women in Newfoundland and Labrador make up 54 per cent of the population aged 65 years or more, they live an average of 3.1 years longer than men, and their average income is $15,000 less than their male counterparts.

Eligibility for the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) is an indicator of low income and sometimes used to gauge financial well-being. In April 2015, it was reported that of those Newfoundland and Labrador residents who received the Old Age Security; 51 per cent (48,666) also received the GIS. This is the highest rate in Canada followed by New Brunswick at 43 per cent.
Since 2007 government has worked toward improving the financial well-being of low-income seniors through policies, programs, and services. One major initiative is the **Newfoundland and Labrador Low-Income Seniors Benefit** which is a refundable tax credit for eligible seniors aged 65 years and older. In 2015 approximately 45,000 households are eligible for up to $1,059. No application is required; however, seniors must file an income tax return in order to receive the benefit. The estimated amount of this benefit for 2015 is $42.1 million.

Since 2012, approximately $3.7 million is provided annually to support a **seniors discount** for people aged 65 years and older on driver’s licenses, vehicle registration, and other licenses/fees including hunting, fishing, cutting wood and camping. Based on age only, there is no financial test to determine eligibility for this discount.

Having access to information about finances is also essential to people’s financial well-being. In 2010, the Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors released a series of eight **financial facts sheets** to help seniors access information and plan for their financial well-being:

- ► Financial Planning
- ► Income and Benefits from Government Programs
- ► Managing and Protecting Assets
- ► Planning for Possible Loss of Independence
- ► Planning for Future Housing Needs
- ► Having a Will and Making Funeral Plans
- ► Financial Abuse
- ► Frauds and Scams

These documents are available through the Department of Seniors, Wellness and Social Development and are distributed to seniors and stakeholders during conferences and meetings. These fact sheets are also available at local banks and can be found at: [www.seniors.gc.ca](http://www.seniors.gc.ca).
This priority direction works toward ensuring people as they age have the best possible physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual health and well-being.

Technologies and opportunities for healthier lifestyles have contributed to increased longevity making old age a “healthy” time for many people. These advancements have lessened the period of time in which some people experience a decline in health.

While a healthier old-age is enjoyed by many older adults, some do live with chronic diseases/conditions with 13 of the 20 most common chronic diseases in Canada being linked to age. Recent data reports that in 2011-12, over 85 per cent of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador aged
65 years or older had at least one chronic disease/condition.\textsuperscript{11} Further, people with chronic diseases often live undiagnosed until they are older; this delay can result in more invasive and costly treatments which impact quality of life.

Evidence shows that health promotion and disease prevention strategies help all people to age well, including those living with, or are at risk of, chronic diseases/conditions. It is increasingly recognized that encouraging communities to create age-friendly physical and social environments will better support older adults in making choices that enhance their health and well-being and allow them to participate in their communities, contributing their skills, knowledge and experience.\textsuperscript{12}

Living a more active lifestyle is very important for healthy aging. A number of initiatives have been implemented to ensure that as people age they have the best possible physical, emotional, social, mental, and spiritual health.

Since 2005, government has promoted \textbf{health and wellness grants}. The \textbf{Community Healthy Living Fund} supports healthy living and wellness community-based projects by focusing on key areas such as healthy eating, physical activity, tobacco control and injury prevention throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. While projects are aimed at all ages, seniors and seniors’ organizations are one of the primary targets.
**Healthy Eating for Healthy Aging** is a resource promoting seniors’ nutritional needs and healthy eating. Aimed at seniors, this resource provides practical, easy-to-read information to encourage healthier eating choices from the planning stages to putting meals on the table.

The **Tobacco Reduction Strategy Newfoundland and Labrador** has also adopted a lifespan perspective where it is recognized that positive health outcomes can be achieved through reducing and quitting smoking at any age. A public awareness campaign includes seniors as a target group when spreading tobacco cessation messages.

In December 2011, the Provincial Government released **Improving Health Together: A Policy Framework for Chronic Disease Prevention and Management in Newfoundland and Labrador**. This framework provides an opportunity to improve health outcomes by focusing on areas such as self-management, standards of care, team-based care and stronger partnerships between the health care system and community agencies.

Each person must take charge of his or her own health and well-being. **Improving Health: My Way** is a free program designed to help people positively manage the daily challenges of living with a chronic condition. The program features workshops co-led by trained leaders who themselves have a chronic condition or have cared for someone living with a chronic condition. Workshops consist of six sessions that are offered for 2.5 hours once a week, over a six-week period. A support person (friend or family) may accompany the individual to the training sessions. Workshops are offered throughout the province, in each of the four regional health authorities. A recent evaluation of the program noted that the average age of program participants was 62.5 years.

There have been significant advancements to support seniors and other adults who require high levels of support and care. A major commitment made by the Department of Health and Community Services is **Close to Home: A Strategy for Long-Term Care and Community Support Services**. Released in June 2012, this 10-year strategy is guiding and transforming the delivery of long-term care in Newfoundland and Labrador. Approximately $695 million is expended
annually and every year, more than 20,000 people avail of the long-term care and community support services program. Many seniors access services in the system, such as care in long term care facilities, personal care homes, home support, and professional services provided at home and in the community. Approximately 1,500 new personal care home subsidies have been created since 2006 and new long-term care facilities have opened in Clarenville, Corner Brook, Happy Valley-Goose Bay and St. John’s. In addition, new facilities are also being constructed in Lewisporte and Carbonear. In addition to these new facilities, renovations have been made to existing long-term care facilities and new equipment purchased.

The incidence of people living with dementia is increasing nationally and provincially. There is growing concern about how best to address the services and programs required to support people living with dementia.

Newfoundland and Labrador has invested in protective community residences where people living with mild to moderate dementia are able to retain independence and participate in daily activities. These small, self-contained facilities are located in residential neighbourhoods, with common and private spaces. Personnel working in these facilities have additional training in best practices in dementia care. Personal care attendants provide supervision, assistance with activities of daily living and personal care.

Beginning in March 2014 Government committed $8.2 million to increase innovative caregiving options through the Paid Family Caregiving pilot program. This program is administered through the regional health authorities and provides up to 250 subsidies, over an 18-month period for seniors and adults with disabilities to pay a family member for approved home support. The subsidies will be provided through a direct individualized funding model which provides more flexibility for clients and reduces the administrative burden. The new option is in addition to the self-managed and agency-based options for care that currently exist.

The Palliative End-of-Life Program further supports people to live and die with dignity. This program is
administered through the regional health authorities and provides increased access to supports for palliative and end-of-life care.

In order to ensure that individuals are offered the most appropriate services, $3.9 million has been invested in the development and implementation of interRAI, which is an electronic assessment tool. The purpose is to promote evidence-based decisions through collecting and interpreting data about the characteristics and outcomes of persons served across a variety of health and social services settings. The target group for the continued implementation of the RAI-HC in Newfoundland and Labrador are seniors and other adults living with disability who receive home support services; reside in or are seeking placement in personal care homes or long-term care facilities.

Increased support for a lifelong approach to oral health has been demonstrated through the Adult Dental Program. Since 2012 select diagnostic and therapeutic dental services were made available to eligible adults who traditionally have had difficulty accessing regular dental services. The program provides basic dental services including an examination, extractions, two x-rays, and routine fillings on a three year cycle; and standard dentures once every eight years. Budget 2015 announced an increase of the annual cap for basic services to $300 and for denture services to $1,500 to allow delivery of an upper and lower denture at the same time. A prior approval is required for denture services.

To improve access to needed medications the Newfoundland and Labrador Prescription Drug Plan provides financial assistance for the purchase of eligible prescription medication under five different plans. The 65Plus Plan provides coverage to eligible residents aged 65+ years who receive Old Age Security Benefits (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS). Individuals under this Plan also pay a maximum co-payment of only $6 per prescription for covered drugs. The 65Plus Plan annually serves approximately 40,000 people at a cost of approximately $46 million.

Since 2007 a commitment has been made to create a society where older adults are free from violence and neglect. The Violence Against Older Persons Public Awareness Campaign, a component of the Provincial Violence Prevention Initiative, was developed through the Violence Prevention Initiative, Women’s Policy Office and Seniors and Aging Division. It focuses on messages that represent an uncomfortable reality. Images of older adults in Newfoundland and Labrador are partnered with questions such as whether you would choose a warm hug or a forceful shove; three square meals or an empty stomach; or a helping hand or an empty wallet.

A complementary initiative, Respect Aging program was designed to educate and train various audiences in the recognition, prevention and intervention of violence against older persons. The
vision of this project is that all older persons in this province should live free from fear, exploitation and violence in safe and supportive communities. Materials provide information, resources and tools for anyone who interacts with older persons affected by or likely to experience violence.

In an effort to further protect more vulnerable adults in our province An Act Respecting the Protection of Adults was proclaimed on June 30, 2014. This Act replaces the Neglected Adults Welfare Act. It protects adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect, and who do not understand or appreciate that risk. This Act applies to all adults meeting the criteria of an adult in need of protective intervention, regardless of living arrangement. Living arrangements include, but are not limited to a private residence, personal care home, alternate family care home, hospital or long term care facility.

An adult in need of protective intervention is defined as one who lacks capacity and is incapable of caring for himself/herself or refuses, delays, or is unable to make provision for adequate care and attention for himself/herself; or is abused or neglected.

The public awareness campaign includes a poster, brochure, print ad, and radio ad. The radio ad has been translated into Inuktitut and Innu-Aimun. To make a report with respect to the Adult Protection Act, an individual can call the provincial report line at 1-855-376-4957.
PRIORITY DIRECTION:

Employment, Education and Research

This priority direction aims to focus on the impact of an aging population on employment, education and research.
Population aging in Newfoundland and Labrador is occurring amidst a changing social, economic and cultural landscape. Understanding these changes can help to inform policy and support planning for the future.

Economic prosperity depends on the size and quality of the workforce. As people age, historically their likelihood of participating in the labour force tends to decrease. However, as lifespans increase, potential working lifespans also lengthen. It is reasonable to predict that a growing number of workers (especially those employed in non-manual labour industries) can continue to be productive members of the labour market later in life.

In 2014, Canadians aged 55 years and older had an employment rate of 35.1 per cent and the rate for those aged 65+ was 12.9 per cent. In Newfoundland and Labrador, these numbers were significantly lower with only 27.7 per cent of people aged 55 years and older working, and for those aged 65+, only 9.6 per cent.  

The impacts of aging on a worker are as varied as the individual who is aging. Generally, older workers may experience physical, sensory and cognitive changes that may accompany aging; however, they also accumulate experience, knowledge, and insight as they age, making them a valuable resource.

Older workers generally have low turnover rates and positive work values. They also tend to favour less rigid work arrangements than the general population. In fact, according to Human Resources and Social Development Canada14 almost one-third of all work arrangements are now “non-standard” which includes part-time and temporary work, and self-employment. These lower intensity work arrangements provide the perfect vehicle for older workers to gradually move into retirement (referred

![Per cent of Seniors Employed](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CANADA</th>
<th>NL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35.1</td>
<td>55+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>65+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I believe that ambition is ageless and this program supports older adults to learn new skills and continue to contribute to the paid workforce. As an ‘older’ independent business owner I understand the importance of continuing to work and also the importance of hiring people of all ages.”

Shirley Letto, L’Anse au Clair, Member, Provincial Advisory Council on Aging and Seniors
Data shows that the majority of older workers have non-standard work arrangements with approximately two-thirds working part-time by choice. By comparison, just 28 per cent of prime working-aged adults (ages 25-54) work part-time out of preference.

In our increasingly information-driven society, information comes from many different sources and can be presented in simple or in complex ways. Literacy is defined as the ability to understand and then use information. It is essential not only for participating fully at work, but for everyday life as well. With a more literate workforce, Canada is better able to compete in the global economy. In 2012, the Provincial Government invested almost $500,000 to participate in an international survey which provided information on the literacy skill levels of the population ages 16 – 65 years old. Results demonstrate that Canadian literacy and numeracy scores are highest for ages 25 to 34, and are lower among the older age groups.

Yet, there is also variation among the older age groups. Today’s seniors have higher levels of education than previous generations. Education levels have increased considerably over the past decade and are expected to continue to increase in the coming years. According to the 2011 National Household Survey, close to 15 per cent of younger seniors had university credentials at, or above, the bachelor level compared to 10 per cent of older seniors. Government provides support for tuition for eligible students and promotes the concept of lifelong learning.

While older adults have been active contributors to the labour market, tomorrow’s seniors are likely to be attached to the labour market longer. Employers will have to be more attentive to the needs and capacities of their older employees.

The Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors developed a booklet and self-assessment tool called Age-Friendly Workplaces: Promoting Older Worker Participation. These publications for employers are aimed at reviewing current practices and
developing new ways to retain older workers. This tool is available to workplaces to encourage more age-friendly practices. For an electronic copy go to: www.seniors.gc.ca.

Since 2007 a number of initiatives have been implemented focusing on older workers. The **Targeted Initiative for Older Workers** is a federal-provincial-territorial cost-shared initiative, aimed at helping unemployed workers. This program provides a range of employment activities, including skills upgrading, for unemployed older workers. The initiative targets those living in vulnerable communities with populations of 250,000 or less, or those affected by significant industrial downsizing/closures. Since 2008-09, Newfoundland and Labrador has had over $13 million in expenditures under this initiative as a result of funding 69 projects to support 767 clients.

Research allows us to build on existing opportunities, put in place interventions that are known to be effective, and to show leadership by supporting innovative approaches to challenging problems. One example of supporting research in Newfoundland and Labrador is government’s commitment to the **Healthy Aging Research Program (NL-HARP)** which provides up to $100,000 annually to support research in the area of aging and seniors. NL-HARP has granted more than $1.2 million to support healthy aging research since 2008. Past winners have investigated a range of topics, from body mass index trajectories to the health impacts of social isolation.

Community Accounts is an innovative information system providing a reliable source of community, regional, and provincial data. A public, online system for locating, sharing and exchanging information related to the province and its people, Community Accounts provides users with data that would normally not be readily available. The **Seniors Profile**, available on the Community Accounts website, was developed in partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) and provides information available about those 55 years of age and older.
Conclusion

The first phase of this framework established a commitment and partnership with all sectors of society including governments, older persons, seniors’ organizations and retiree groups, the volunteer sector, the educational sector, community organizations, and the business community; this collaborative effort will continue.

Under this framework many effective programs and services for older adults have been established but there is still more work to be done. As initiatives under this framework evolve, Government’s capacity for future policy development will be reinforced as Newfoundland and Labrador continues to strengthen its age-friendly culture.

The Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework is the Provincial Government’s promise to find lasting solutions that will ultimately benefit all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. It does not exist in isolation as it is complementary to numerous other government frameworks, strategies and plans including:

- Provincial Wellness Plan;
- Working Together for Mental Health Provincial Policy Framework;
- Active, Healthy Newfoundland and Labrador: A Recreation and Sport Strategy;
- Poverty Reduction Strategy;
- Provincial Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities;
- Close to Home: A Strategy for Long-term Care and Community Support Services;
- Violence Prevention Initiative;
- Improving Health Together: The Chronic Disease Policy Framework; and,
- Population Growth Strategy.

It is the collective impact and outcome of all of these government strategies as well as the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework that will contribute to Newfoundland and Labrador’s preparedness in welcoming its aging population.
References


3 Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) Health Care in Canada, 2011 A Focus on Seniors and Aging

4 Statistics Canada, Community Health Survey, 2011-2012.


6 Financial Post, April 5, 2014

7 Statistics Canada. Table 202-0407 – Income of individuals, by sex, age group and income source, 2011 constant dollars, annual, CANSIM (database).

8 www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/84-537-x/84-537-x2013005-eng.htm

9 Statistics Canada. Table 202-0407 – Income of individuals, by sex, age group and income source, 2011 constant dollars, annual, CANSIM (database).


11 Statistics Canada, Canadian Community Health Survey, 2011-2012

    www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/index_pages/

