



House of Assembly Service

***2007/08
Activity Plan***

Message from the Speaker

I am pleased to present the House of Assembly Service Activity Plan for 2007/08. It reflects the values, missions and goals for the planning cycle. This plan has been prepared as appropriate for a Category 3 entity pursuant to the provisions of the *Transparency and Accountability Act*. Categorization of the House of Assembly Service is pending and will be finalized for the three year plan for 2008-2011 to be tabled by June 30, 2008.

This Activity Plan was prepared by the House of Assembly Service and, in accordance with my obligations under the Act, I am accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained therein.

The image shows a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Roger Fitzgerald'. It is positioned to the left of the printed name.

Honorable Roger Fitzgerald
Speaker
House of Assembly

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OVERVIEW

The House of Assembly Service was established by statute, *The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, which was proclaimed on June 14, 2007. It consists of operations established to support the functioning of the House of Assembly and its committees, the House of Assembly Management Commission and Members of the House of Assembly.

It includes the Speaker, the Clerk and the Office of the Clerk. It also includes the Corporate and Members' Services Division which provides financial, human resources, payroll and administrative services, and the Information Management Division which includes the services of the Legislative Library, Records Management services, Broadcast Services and Hansard. The House of Assembly Service has a total of 42 employees.

The Speaker, the impartial presiding officer of the House, is the guardian of the privileges of the House and of Members.

The Clerk is the principal procedural adviser to the Speaker and Members. The Clerk is responsible for the overall administration of the House of Assembly and interprets the Standing Orders, conventions, precedents and usages of the House in order to advise the Speaker and Members of the House on parliamentary procedure. The Office of the Clerk is also responsible for the support of parliamentary operations. It co-ordinates House of Assembly support services and ensures that all forms of business pass through each of the required procedural steps.

The Clerk is also the chief administrative officer of the House of Assembly responsible to the Speaker and, through the Speaker, to the House of Assembly Management Commission for the management of the operations of the House of Assembly Service and the administration of the Statutory Offices. The Office of the Clerk also provides full administrative support to the House of Assembly Management Commission.

BUDGET

The House of Assembly has a budget of \$12, 450,900 for 2007/08.

The details are noted below:

Salaries	\$4,621, 700
Employee Benefits	15, 000
Transportation and Communications	992, 500
Supplies	157, 200
Professional Services	221, 000
Purchased Services	897, 500
Property, Furnishings and Equipment	130, 000
Allowances and Assistance	5,380, 000
Grants and Subsidies	36, 000
TOTAL	<u>\$12,450, 900</u>

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MANDATE

The House of Assembly Service derives its mandate from the provisions of the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*. The mandate of the House of Assembly Service is contained in subsection 25 (1) of the Act, which states:

- 25 (1) The House of Assembly Service consists of operations established, whether by law or otherwise, for the purpose of supporting the functioning of the House of Assembly, its committees and members, and includes
- (a) the speaker;
 - (b) the office of the clerk and other officers of the House of Assembly;
 - (c) the law clerk;
 - (d) the financial and administrative services;
 - (e) the legislative library;
 - (f) the office of Hansard;
 - (g) the broadcast centre; and
 - (h) other divisions that may be assigned by law or designated and provided for by the commission.

The House of Assembly Service supports the work of the Speaker, the Clerk, the House of Assembly and its Committees, Members and the House of Assembly Management Commission, by:

- Coordinating and supporting the decision-making process of the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Providing advice and interpretation on parliamentary procedure and protocol;
- Providing financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, administrative and information services;
- Providing legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly;
- Providing parliamentary library, records and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly, including reference, research and records organization and control;

- Providing compliance with *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*;
- Providing official transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly and the House of Assembly Management Commission;
- Broadcasting the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Communications; and
- Providing strategic communications advice and support to the Speaker, the Clerk, and the House of Assembly Management Commission.

LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The mandate of the House of Assembly Service is informed by the following legislation:

Legislative Responsibility

- *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*
- *House of Assembly Act*
- *Elections Act, 1991*

Related Legislation That Influences The Work Of The Office

- *Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act*
- *Transparency and Accountability Act*
- *Financial Administration Act*
- *Management of Information Act*

LINES OF BUSINESS

In fulfilling its mandate, the House of Assembly Service provides the following lines of business.

1. Support to the House of Assembly and the Committees of the House

The House of Assembly Service provides executive, administrative, and advisory support to the House of Assembly and its Committees. It advises the Speaker and Members on parliamentary procedure, provides procedural advice to Committees, drafts minutes and reports, keeps records, and organizes meetings.

The House of Assembly Service, through the Law Clerk, provides legal advice on Parliamentary matters to the Speaker, the Clerk and to the House of Assembly, and provides in-house corporate legal advice. The Law Clerk provides drafting services on amendments in committee where required and for Private Members' Bills.

The Sergeant-at-Arms is responsible for preserving order and maintaining security in the galleries, corridors and other areas in the Parliamentary Precinct Assembly and is also responsible for public education and visits to the House of Assembly.

Hansard provides the official and complete transcript of debates and proceedings of the House of Assembly and the meetings of the House of Assembly Management Commission.

The Broadcast Centre is responsible for the televising of the House of Assembly proceedings and meetings of the House of Assembly Management Communications.

2. Support to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission:

The House of Assembly Service is the primary support for the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role incorporates the preparation of briefing materials, the coordination and facilitation of Commission meetings, and the maintenance of all Commission records.

Strategic communications advice and support are provided to the Speaker and the House of Assembly Management Commission. This role includes developing communications policy and procedures and advising on communications.

3. Support to Members of the House of Assembly

The House of Assembly Service supports the Members of the House of Assembly in carrying out their roles and responsibilities. This includes Member orientation, providing relevant training as necessary, setting up Members' offices, purchasing required supplies and services for Members, processing Members' expense claims, payroll and human resource Services.

The Legislative Library provides parliamentary library and information services to all Members and Officers of the House of Assembly in the execution of their duties, including reference and research services and information access and awareness.

4. Support to Statutory Offices

The House of Assembly Service supports the Statutory Offices in carrying out administrative responsibilities. This includes financial, budgetary, human resources, payroll, and information management services.

VALUES

The following values are fundamental to all interactions and communications between the House of Assembly Service and its clients.

<i>Value</i>	<i>Action Statement</i>
Impartiality	Each employee provides services in a non-partisan manner to all Members and their staff.
Fairness	Each employee performs his or her duties in an unbiased and independent manner.
Respect	Each employee performs his or her duties in a manner that respects the rights of other employees, Members of the House of Assembly and the public.
Confidence	Employees will not abuse their official position for personal gain and will not accept any gift or benefit which may result in an obligation to a third party.
Trust	Each employee exercises due care and control of records created or collected in the exercise of their responsibilities, ensuring that records are organized, secured and managed according to applicable policy and legislation.
Integrity	Each employee performs his or her duties honestly, ethically and free of personal interests and activities which may appear to interfere with their duties.

PRIMARY CLIENTS

The House of Assembly Service defines its primary clients as those individuals, groups and organizations who are the principal beneficiaries of its lines of business. These clients include the following:

- a) The House of Assembly and its Committees
- b) House of Assembly Management Commission
- c) Members of the House of Assembly
- d) Statutory Offices of the House of Assembly

VISION

The vision of the House of Assembly Service is a legislature that is fully open and accountable to the people of the province through their elected representatives.

MISSION

The Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters was established following the publication of several reports by the Auditor General, in June and July of 2006, alleging irregularities in the administration of the affairs of the House of Assembly.

The report of the Review Commission, commonly referred to as the Green Report, contained a broad range of 275 specific recommendations and provided draft legislation to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations. The new legislation, *The House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*, received Royal Assent on June 14, 2007 and establishes an administrative framework for the House of Assembly that is transparent and accountable. The legislation includes subordinate legislation known as *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules* which promote accountability in, and transparency with respect to, the expenditure of public funds.

By March 31, 2011 the House of Assembly Service will have supported the implementation of the recommendations of the *Report of the Review Commission* to establish an administrative framework for the House of Assembly that is transparent and accountable.

1) Measure: *Will have implemented the recommendations from the Report of the Review Commission*

Indicators:

- The House of Assembly is operating according to the new rules detailed in the *Members' Resources and Allowances Rules* subordinate to the *House of Assembly Accountability, Integrity and Administration Act*
- Appropriate administrative and financial policies and procedures are implemented
- Management certifies that appropriate systems of internal controls are in place and operating effectively
- Increased communication activities to promote awareness of the legislature, including the roles and responsibilities of Members of the House of Assembly

GOALS

In consideration of the *Report of the Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters*, the following have been identified as the key areas of focus of the House of Assembly Service for the 2007-2008 fiscal year.

- 1) **By March 31, 2008**, the House of Assembly Service will have implemented measures to improve operational efficiencies in keeping with the *Report of the Review Commission on Constituency Allowances and Related Matters*.

Measure: Implemented measures to improve operational efficiencies

Indicator:

- Corporate and Members' Services Division established with clear segregation of duties
 - Appropriate reporting structures are in place and revised organization charts prepared
 - Position descriptions prepared which clearly outline roles and responsibilities
 - Appropriate financial controls and procedures are established
 - Deployment of TRIM records management system
 - Information Management Capacity Assessments completed
 - Code of Conduct developed for employees
- 2) **By March 31, 2008**, the House of Assembly Service will have supported the House of Assembly in being more open and transparent to the public

Measure: Supported the House of Assembly

Indicator:

- A Publication Scheme is developed which includes direction on the publishing of information about the expenditures made by or on behalf of Members and other classes of information relating to the operation of the House of Assembly, including written or electronic publication on a website

- Briefing materials for House of Assembly Management Commission are posted on House of Assembly website at the beginning of Commission meetings
 - New and enhanced website www.assembly.nl.ca launched
 - ATIPP office established to administer requests, establish policy and provide advice to Offices and Members regarding ATIPP issues
 - Hansard, the official transcript of House of Assembly proceedings, and other legislative materials are available on the website
 - House of Assembly Management Commission meetings are televised in the same manner as sittings of House of Assembly
 - Policy and Procedures Manual for Commission has been developed and approved
- 3) By **March 31, 2008**, the House of Assembly Service will have supported enhanced understanding of Members of the House of Assembly in carrying out their roles and responsibilities.

Measure: Supported enhanced understanding

Indicator:

- Members' Handbook and Members' Resources and Allowances Rules Manual have been produced and provided to all Members of the House of Assembly
- New Rules and related processes and forms are in place and have been communicated to Members.
- Members are given copies of all relevant legislation
- Reference manuals are posted on House of Assembly website
- Members are oriented to their roles and responsibilities and provided training on the new rules and regulations