

2023-25 Strategic Plan

March 13, 2023

Message from the Board of Directors

On behalf of the Board of Directors (the Board), I hereby submit WorkplaceNL's Strategic Plan for 2023-25. It has been prepared under my direction and in accordance with the **Transparency and Accountability Act** and the Guidelines for Multi-Year Performance-Based Planning for Category 1 Government Entities.

The plan focuses on the Board's priorities, and is not intended to describe everything we will achieve. These priorities consider the strategic directions of the Provincial Government as well as input from internal and external stakeholders and the general public.

We also engaged with employees to develop a revised organizational purpose and values (see Annex A) to reconfirm who we are and our commitments to our clients and each other.

Our Board remains committed to ensuring that the employer-funded, no-fault workplace injury compensation system can provide benefits to injured workers for years to come.

Our focus on preventing injury and supporting an injured workers' recovery at work, when medically appropriate, help mitigate impacts to the system due to rising claims duration and associated costs. However, we remain cautious. Pressures on the Injury Fund, including market fluctuations and possible benefit changes as recommended in the recent statutory review, may impact our funded position and employer assessment rates, during this planning cycle.

Over the next three years, our focus will be on building healthy and safe workplace cultures; return to work and recovery; and on growing strategic partnerships as we advance a sustainable workers' compensation system.

My signature below is indicative of the Board's accountability for the preparation of this plan and achieving the goals and objectives outlined herein.



March 13, 2023

John Peddle, ICD.D
Chair, Board of Directors
WorkplaceNL

Contents

- Overview of the Organization 1
- Board Governance 2
- Mandate 3
- Lines of Business 3
- Strategic Issues, Goals, and Objectives 4
- Strategic Issue 1: Building Healthy and Safe Workplaces 5
- Strategic Issue 2: Return to Work and Recovery 7
- Strategic Issue 3: Growing Strategic Partnerships 9
- Annex A – WorkplaceNL Purpose and Values 11

This document is available in an alternate format upon request.
Please email info@workplacnl.ca or call 709.778.1000 or 1.800.563.900 (toll-free).

Overview of the Organization

WorkplaceNL administers Newfoundland and Labrador's mandatory, employer-funded, no-fault workers' compensation system. We promote safe and healthy workplaces, in addition to providing return-to-work programs and benefits to injured workers and their dependents, based on assessments collected from employers.

The Meredith Principles are the foundation of all Canadian workplace compensation systems and include:

- No-fault compensation, which means workers are paid benefits regardless of how the injury occurred.
- Collective liability, so that the total cost of the system is shared by all employers.
- Security of payment, with a fund established to guarantee that compensation will be available for injured workers when they need it.
- Exclusive jurisdiction, which means only workers' compensation organizations provide workers' compensation insurance.
- Independent Board, that is autonomous and financially independent of government or any special interest group.

Each year, WorkplaceNL serves approximately 17,500 employers and 220,000 workers throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. A complement of 375 employees are located in three offices: St. John's, Grand Falls-Windsor and Corner Brook.

WorkplaceNL adheres to its funding and investment policies. In 2021, our \$350.2 million¹ in total revenue included \$144.1 million in assessment revenue from employers, \$202.6 million in investment income and \$3.5 million in administrative fees paid by self-insured employers and third-party reimbursements.

As of December 31, 2021, the Injury Fund remained fully-funded at 132.3 per cent, higher than the previous year due to better-than-expected investment income in 2021. This means the benefits promised to injured workers for the life of their claim are available. However, we remain cautious as there are pressures on the Injury Fund. Ongoing concerns, such as supply chain issues, inflation and geopolitical developments, have led to volatility in global financial markets.

The success of our operations is based on collaboration, communication and sound working relationships with clients, stakeholders and partners. We work with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division, Department of Digital Government and Service NL to recommend and develop programs respecting workplace health and safety. We also work closely with stakeholder groups that represent workers and

¹ The most recent audited financial information at the time this plan was prepared is for the 2021 calendar year.

employers. We have also developed partnerships with industry associations, government departments, agencies, unions, safety sector councils, community groups, as well as health and safety coalitions at both provincial and national levels.

Board Governance

In accordance with the **Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act** (the Act), the Board of Directors (the Board) consists of 10 members appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor in Council, including the chair and representatives of workers, employers and the public. Members continue to serve until re-appointed or replaced.

The Board also has two non-voting members: the Chief Executive Officer of WorkplaceNL and a Provincial Government employee, designated by the Minister responsible for WorkplaceNL.

As of January 1, 2023, the Board included:

Chair

John Peddle (term expires September 23, 2023)

Members representative of workers

Greg Pretty (term expires September 23, 2023)

Wayde Rowsell (term expires July 15, 2024)

Jerry Vink (term expires September 23, 2023)

Members representative of employers

Victoria Belbin (term expires September 23, 2023)

David Loveys (term expires September 23, 2023)

Greg Viscount (term expires September 23, 2023)

Members representative of the public

Lana Collins (term expires June 2, 2025)

Paula Corcoran, injured worker representative (term expires September 23, 2023)

Anne Fagan (term expires June 2, 2025)

Non-voting members

Dennis Hogan, Chief Executive Officer, WorkplaceNL

Gail Boland, Assistant Deputy Minister, Digital Government and Service NL

Mandate

Under the authority of the Act, WorkplaceNL:

- Promotes workplace health and safety in order to prevent and reduce workplace injury and illness.
- Strives to ensure injured workers receive the best care possible and the benefits to which they are entitled.
- Facilitates injured workers' recovery, and early and safe return to work.
- Administers an employer classification and assessment system.
- Ensures adequate funding for services through sound financial management.

Lines of Business

1. Education on the prevention of workplace injury, illness and occupational disease

WorkplaceNL provides workplace health and safety education, as well as injury, illness and occupational disease prevention initiatives. Specifically, we:

- Promote public awareness of, and foster commitment to, workplace health and safety.
- Educate and provide advice to employers, workers, and others about workplace health and safety.
- Promote and fund workplace health and safety research.
- Develop training standards for certification under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act**, certify people who meet these standards and approve training programs for certification.
- Promote the importance of health and safety education and training, and develop strategic partnerships, as appropriate, in its delivery.
- Collaborate with and make recommendations respecting workplace health and safety to the OHS Division of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL.

2. Claims management for injured workers

WorkplaceNL proactively manages all aspects of an injured worker's claim relating to workplace injury, illness or occupational disease. Specifically, we:

- Register injured workers' claims and determine their entitlement to benefits, such as wage loss, health care and retirement benefits.
- Provide active case management, focusing on what they can do to remain active in their workplace as they recover, when medically appropriate.
- Deliver appropriate programs to injured workers, such as early and safe return-to-work (ESRTW) and labour market re-entry.
- In the case of a fatality due to a workplace incident or an occupational disease, provide benefits to dependents of the deceased worker.

3. Employer assessments (no-fault compensation coverage)

The Act requires employers performing work in the province to register with WorkplaceNL and pay assessments for workplace injury coverage for their workers.

Under this line of business, we:

- Register employers
- Administer and monitor employer payroll reporting
- Set assessment rates
- Collect and audit payroll

The assessment revenue collected from employers is used to pay the cost of injured workers' claims and associated costs to administer the workers' compensation system.

These lines of business are supported by corporate departments with specialized knowledge which provide organization-wide support to WorkplaceNL.

Strategic Issues, Goals, and Objectives

The strategic plan identifies three priority areas, also described as strategic issues, that we will address over the next three years. These priority areas include: building healthy and safe workplaces; return to work and recovery; and growing strategic partnerships.

To address these strategic issues, we have developed three-year goals, along with corresponding annual objectives. To help us achieve our goals and objectives, we will continue to modernize our organization and the delivery of services, by investing in technology, reviewing our processes and ensuring our people have the tools and training they need. The strategic issues are not listed in order of importance; all are interrelated.

These priorities have been identified considering the Provincial Government's strategic directions – and support promoting a healthy Newfoundland and Labrador and building strong partnerships.

Strategic Issue 1: Building Healthy and Safe Workplaces

WorkplaceNL is committed to making Newfoundland and Labrador workplaces safer for all workers, and we will continue to partner with stakeholders to achieve a culture where health and safety in the workplace is valued.

In this planning cycle, we will start to implement our 2023-28 provincial injury prevention strategy – developed in partnership with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division of the Department of Digital Government and Service NL; and, in consultation with safety partners and stakeholders. This strategy builds on past achievements and focuses on evolving OHS priorities.

We will improve programs and services to support workplaces to foster better health and safety outcomes. We will introduce changes to our Prevention and Return-to-Work Insurance Management for Employers and Employees (PRIME) program, based on feedback from consultations in 2021 and 2022. Our goal is to help more employers participate in this financial incentive program – to improve their OHS programs and early and safe return-to-work practices.

We will also continue to offer more digital services and improve processes to respond to our clients' expectations, while ensuring paper-based options and in-person services remain available.

Strategic Issue 1: Building Healthy and Safe Workplaces

2025 Goal: By December 31, 2025, WorkplaceNL will have concentrated efforts to impact the safety culture of workplaces.

Goal Indicators:

- Advanced programs and services that promote safe workplaces.
- Supported workplaces to foster better health and safety outcomes.

2023 Objective: By December 31, 2023, WorkplaceNL will have commenced program and service enhancements to advance the safety culture of workplaces.

Objective Indicators:

- Completed a review of programs targeted at select workplaces that aim to improve safety performance.
- Implemented new education tools in health, safety and return to work for small workplaces.

2024 Objective: By December 31, 2024, WorkplaceNL will have continued program and service enhancements to advance the safety culture of workplaces.

2025 Objective: By December 31, 2025, WorkplaceNL will have furthered program and service enhancements to advance the safety culture of workplaces.

Strategic Issue 2: Return to Work and Recovery

We understand that a workplace injury impacts the worker, their family, their employer and their community. We are committed to supporting workers who experience a work-related illness or injury by providing them with appropriate and timely services and benefits.

We will proactively help workers stay at work or perform duties that are as close as possible to their pre-injury job while they recover and receive medical treatment. Staying active in the workplace, if possible, is important for a worker's emotional well-being as they stay connected with their co-workers, maintain skills, return to full pay and recover faster. By supporting workers during a healthy recovery, employers may maintain productivity, keep qualified workers, reduce hiring and training costs, manage claims costs and fulfill legal requirements.

As we support worker recovery and return to work, we plan to explore individualized approaches based on workers' needs. We also plan to introduce new evidence-based tools to help with our decision making on claims.

In the next planning cycle, we will review and update return-to-work and recovery processes to make them more efficient and improve service delivery to our clients and partners. We will continue to improve digital service options, while maintaining person-to-person services.

Strategic Issue 2: Return to Work and Recovery

2025 Goal: By December 31, 2025, WorkplaceNL will have modified delivery approaches that support return-to-work and recovery from workplace injuries.

Goal Indicators:

- Launched initiatives to support safe and effective recovery from injuries.
- Streamlined business processes that support recovery and return to work.

2023 Objective: By December 31, 2023, WorkplaceNL will have commenced enhancements to return-to-work and recovery approaches.

Objective Indicators:

- Initiated a review of programs and services to improve return-to-work and recovery approaches.
- Identified key performance baselines, measures and measurement tools to monitor recovery and return-to-work outcomes.

2024 Objective: By December 31, 2024, WorkplaceNL will have continued enhancements to return-to-work and recovery approaches.

2025 Objective: By December 31, 2025, WorkplaceNL will have furthered enhancements to return-to-work and recovery approaches.

Strategic Issue 3: Growing Strategic Partnerships

Our purpose is to improve the quality of life of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador through safe workplaces and support for our clients. We cannot do this alone. We will build on our strategic partnerships with the many, diverse stakeholders we work with.

We will create opportunities to collaborate with partners as we regularly monitor and assess our programs and services to determine if we are meeting our goals. We will use their feedback to inform changes to programs and services, understand compensation requirements and improve employer assessment-related services.

As well, the [2019 Statutory Review of Newfoundland and Labrador's Workers' Compensation System](#) had several recommendations that require collaboration to achieve results. We recognize and appreciate the varied views of our stakeholders, and will continue to look for ways to improve our partnerships and consultation efforts.

Strategic Issue 3: Growing Strategic Partnerships

2025 Goal: By December 31, 2025, WorkplaceNL will have strengthened partnerships with organizations, industries and employers to improve programs and services.

Goal Indicators:

- Supported collaboration with partners, industries and employers.
- Enhanced partnerships and consultation efforts to inform program and service delivery change.

2023 Objective: By December 31, 2023, in collaboration with our partners, WorkplaceNL will have commenced the implementation of innovative program changes.

Objective Indicators:

- Consulted with key partners to develop solutions that impact WorkplaceNL's mandate.
- Identified program and service delivery changes, in collaboration with partners.

2024 Objective: By December 31, 2024, in collaboration with our partners, WorkplaceNL will have continued the implementation of innovative program changes.

2025 Objective: By December 31, 2025, in collaboration with our partners, WorkplaceNL will have furthered the implementation of innovative program changes.

Annex A – WorkplaceNL Purpose and Values

Purpose

To improve quality of life through safe workplaces and support for our clients.

Our Values

While the Meredith Principles are the foundation of all Canadian workplace compensation systems, these values define who we are and what we aspire to be. These are our commitments to each other, and to our clients.

Accountability: We are responsible for our words, actions, results - we learn from our mistakes, and trust each other to do the same.

Respect: We value and treat everyone with dignity and empathy.

Integrity: We are open and honest, and always try to do the right thing.

Service: We honour our responsibilities to those we serve, communicating with purpose and clarity.

Excellence: We always put our best effort forward, accomplishing more by working together and learning as we grow.

Safety: Everyone's health, safety and well-being is our priority.

WorkplaceNL

Health | Safety | Compensation

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