



**RecreationNL**

Wellness Supporters

make 'you' time

**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**January 2024- December 2026**

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## ABOUT RECREATION NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador (RNL) was established in 1971 to promote, foster and develop recreation provincially and promote its value and benefits. RNL is a member-based and not-for-profit organization that has successfully navigated over fifty (50) years of success. Its core services embrace advocacy, communication, education and training.

RNL's current membership is comprised primarily of recreation practitioners, community volunteers, educators and facility (recreational facilities, aquatic centres and arenas) members along with students and corporate members.

RNL's governing body is comprised of 12 Board of Directors. In addition, there are seven (7) sub-committees. Staff consists of the Executive Director, two (2) Recreational Specialists, an Eat Great and Participate (EGaP) Coordinator and a Communications Coordinator.

We actively engage with communities to deliver programs and services and provide supports to assist Newfoundlanders and Labradorians realize and maintain healthy lifestyles through the pursuit of recreation. We see recreation as a fundamental right that should be considered an essential service.

Over the past 50 plus years we have realized significant milestones, celebrated numerous successes and successfully overcome many challenges. Our efforts would not be possible without the financial support we receive from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation.

At this time in our history, we recognize the importance of updating our strategic plan to ensure we are well-positioned to build on our successes, capture opportunities, respond to the challenges that lie ahead and close gaps that still exist.

## OVERVIEW OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

There are several notable features of our strategic plan:

- A strategic plan should focus on 'make or break' issues. These are issues or conditions that must be addressed for an organization to remain relevant and responsive. The responses to these 'make or break' issues are referred to as **strategic directions**.
- 'Make or break' issues usually emerge from an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing an organization. Strengths and weaknesses tend to be internal to an organization. Opportunities and threats tend to exist outside an organization. This disciplined process is referred to as a **SWOT Analysis**.

- Regardless of the size, maturity and the level of available human and financial resources of an organization, few have the capacity to respond to more than three (3) ‘make or break’ issues in a three-year period.
- Strategic directions begin to live when they are accompanied by measurable objectives and time frames, which articulate accountability for implementation.

Early 2020, we engaged an external consultant to assist us in the development of our strategic plan. The initial strategic planning session took place with the RNL Board of Directors March 2022 and plans were underway to complete the remaining engagement activities associated with the strategic planning process.

However, due to the global pandemic, provincial lockdowns and the severe impact it was having on our members, the decision was made to pause the strategic planning process. In May 2021, the Board reevaluated the organization’s planning needs within the context of the pandemic. It was agreed the development of a 12-month tactical plan (January 2022-2023), as opposed to a strategic plan, would best serve the organization at that time.

In the spring of 2023, the RNL Board of Directors resumed its strategic planning process. Many changes, both positive and negative, are occurring within the environment in which operate. As such, it is important for us to identify goals and objectives that will support our continued growth, development and success in this changing and dynamic environment.

The following activities were undertaken by an external consultant to inform and facilitate our strategic plan development:

- Review of RNL’s annual reports, previous strategic plan, and relevant research and publications;
- Primary research in the form of key informant interviews, focus groups and an online membership survey;
- A half- day initial planning session with the RNL Board; and
- A full-day strategic planning session with a designated group of RNL Board members and RNL’s Executive Director.

This strategic plan spans a three-year time horizon, from January 2024 to December 2026. To assist with the identification of strategic issues, a preliminary SWOT report was prepared based on the findings of the document review and primary research conducted. The SWOT report was delivered in advance of the full-day strategic planning session to all Board members.

Our strategic plan focuses on significant ‘make or break’ issues facing RNL. These issues are of major strategic importance and if successfully addressed they will result in long-term value for RNL and its members.

Over the next three (3) years, we will focus our energies and efforts on profiling the value and importance of recreation, diversifying, growing and supporting our membership and tailoring

our professional development services to meet the changing and dynamic needs of our members. More specifically, we have adopted the following strategic directions:

1. Raise the Awareness of Recreation
2. Membership Engagement, Growth and Support
3. Professional Development

For each of these strategic directions, high level objectives have been formulated. These objectives will be further operationalized by identifying key activities along with timelines and leads required to realize these objectives.

We will establish a Strategic Planning Task Force to monitor progress in these strategic directions. Most importantly, we expect our members, partners, funders and the community-at-large to hold us accountable for our planned achievements and thus, progress reporting will become a regular feature of our communications and meetings.

Together, RNL can become even stronger and more effective. We sincerely thank everyone who contributed in both large and small ways to our strategic planning process.

## **VISION, MISSION, GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND CORE SERVICES**

### **Vision**

The vision of RNL is:

*“Recreation Newfoundland and Labrador envisions a province of engaged communities where all people embrace the benefits of recreation to enhance their quality of life.”*

### **Mission**

RNL’s mission is as follows:

*“Recreation NL is the provincial association promoting wellness through the practice of recreation. We support and enhance our members ability to deliver recreation.”*

## Guiding Principles

Our work is guided by the following principles for recreation:

- Inclusion
- Access
- Affordability
- Equity
- Lifelong Participation

## Core Services

We provide three (3) core services to our members:

*Communications:* Facilitate the exchange of ideas, methods and concerns and raise the understanding of recreation through effective networking, collaboration and promotion

*Advocacy:* Ensure recreation continues to be a critical part of the dialogue on enhancing the well-being of communities and individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador

*Education & Training:* Encourage, advise, develop, coordinate, deliver and evaluate programs of education and training in the field of recreation

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

### Strategic Direction 1: Raise the Awareness of Recreation

#### *Planning Imperative*

The recreation sector touches many aspects of life and has a significant role to play in improving the overall health and well-being of NL residents. It is important that we clearly articulate recreation's contribution and value in this regard and position recreation as an essential service. Most recently, we have revised our branding to reflect the connection between recreation and health.

As the lead agency and voice of recreation in the province, we have an obligation in educating the general public and our stakeholders of the contribution of recreation to overall health and well-being. Of note, we believe we have much to offer and have a significant role to play in overcoming the healthcare challenges facing the province. We see ourselves as being instrumental in assisting in the realization of many of the goals and objectives outlined in the Newfoundland and Labrador Health Accord that relate to health promotion and primary prevention.

The objectives we have developed to achieve this strategic direction are as follows:

- 1.1 Articulate the role of recreation in Health and well-being
- 1.2 Increase public awareness of the benefits and scope recreation and well-being
- 1.3 Position the field of recreation as a career choice
- 1.4 Strengthen existing as well as forge new partnerships

### Strategic Direction 2: Membership Engagement, Growth and Support

#### *Planning Imperative*

As the recreation sector expands and evolves, it is imperative that our membership base reflect these changes. To advance recreation, we must focus on not only equipping our current members with the skills and resources they need to embrace this change, but also diversify our membership base to ensure it is inclusive and reflective of the sector.

Our focus over the next three (3) years will be on building on our existing networking and educating capabilities and educating both existing and prospective members on the value and benefits of RNL membership.

We will also reach out to smaller municipalities to determine their unique needs and challenges in recreation delivery and programming and look for innovative ways to better support this segment of our membership base.

We endeavor to create an environment that enables members and partners to discuss areas of mutual interest and concern in a productive and collaborative manner.

The objectives we have developed to achieve this strategic direction are as follows:

- 2.1 Work to create and advance efficient means of engagement
- 2.2 Grow and diversify the membership base
- 2.3 Articulate the value and benefits of RNL membership

### **Strategic Direction 3: Professional Development**

#### *Planning Imperative*

Education and training are core service delivery commitments and benefits of RNL membership. We provide our members access to professional development services that enables them to advance and deliver recreation programming throughout the province.

We are considered the recreation subject matter experts and our members look to us to provide them with the most up to date trends, industry standards and best practices as well as keep them apprised of funding opportunities.

Going forward, we must ensure that we have a clear understanding of our members' and partners' information, and education needs. In response, we will design and deliver professional development services and offerings that meet these needs using the most effective formats and venues (in-person and/or virtual). Preliminary findings indicate our members are interested in professional development opportunities in equity, diversity and inclusion as well as those that align with the province's changing demographics (seniors) and those that focus on the unique needs of volunteers. These areas will be incorporated into our professional development planning process.

We will also develop an evaluation framework to monitor and track the impact of our professional development offerings.

The objectives we have developed to achieve this strategic direction are as follows:

#### *Objectives:*

- 3.1 Ensure professional development aligns with member needs
- 3.2 Collaborate to deliver professional development opportunities where appropriate
- 3.3 Determine the resource requirements to sustain professional development services
- 3.4 Ensure a framework and/or processes are in place to evaluate all professional services



## **MONITORING/EVALUATION/EVERGREENING PLAN**

We will actively monitor our progress to ensure our strategic directions remain relevant. As conditions change, we will then be well positioned to amend existing plans and/or add new actions.

As previously noted, a Strategic Planning Task Force will be established to help further identify the activities required to achieve the objectives outlined for each strategic direction as well as establish timelines and key performance indicators. This Task Force will also closely monitor our plan and progress reports will become a standing agenda item for all Board meetings. The Task Force will review our progress annually and make the necessary for presentation to the Board of Directors. In this way, more detailed actions are planned, implemented, monitored and evaluated keeping our strategic plan a living, dynamic tool and creating long-term value for RNL, our members, partners, communities, municipalities, and the residents of NL.