



AT THE
ROOMS

The Rooms
Corporation

**Strategic
Plan**

2023-26



therooms.ca



The Rooms education volunteers work with children during a visiting school program.

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Margaret Allan, Chair, Board of Directors, The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador

A Message From the Chair of the Board of Directors

I am very pleased to present The Rooms Strategic Plan 2023-26. This is the third strategic plan I have worked on with the organization since becoming Chair of the Board of Directors for The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador (the Corporation). I am very proud of the work the organization has accomplished throughout the previous planning cycle and I am excited for what the future will hold for The Rooms.

In June 2025, during the second year of the coming planning cycle, The Rooms will be marking its twentieth anniversary. I believe that the priorities outlined in this plan will serve the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and the communities in which we operate. This plan builds on the successes that the Corporation and its Regional Museums have achieved over the past twenty years and will set the strategic priorities for the coming three years.

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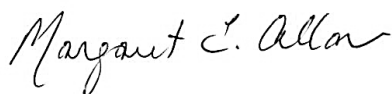
This plan's priorities align with museums and cultural institutions globally and nationally by emphasizing social inclusion (diversity, inclusion, equality, anti-racism) as well as decolonization. The organization has completed a revision of its mission statement which has been approved by The Rooms Board of Directors during the previous planning cycle. This new statement better reflects the prevailing global priorities of cultural institutions. This strategic plan will continue to focus on the sustainability of the organization, positioning The Rooms and its Regional Museums to better serve their communities and the people of this province.

The Corporation is a category one Crown Corporation under the Transparency and Accountability Act of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and, as such, it is required to submit strategic plans to government through the Minister of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation, every three years.

The priorities and goals as identified in this plan are achievable within the envelope of existing financial and human resources; are in alignment with The Rooms Mandate and the strategic direction of government; and, identify annual objective performance measures specific to each strategic area.

The Board and CEO are accountable for the preparation of this plan and for the achievement of the specific goals and objectives contained therein. We are committed to full accountability for the public funds with which we have been entrusted and are honoured to serve the people of Newfoundland and Labrador. The Board, CEO, management and staff are committed to achieving the Priorities and Goals set in this plan – sealing our commitment to delivering great value to the people of this province, and advancing The Rooms place in the cultural community of Newfoundland and Labrador.

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Margaret E. Allan
Chair, Board of Directors,
The Rooms Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador





The Labrador Interpretation Centre, Demasduit Regional Museum and The Provincial Seamen’s Museum

Overview of the Corporation

The Rooms is a Crown Corporation of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and steward of the province’s archival, art, artifact and natural history collection. In addition to its St. John’s location, The Rooms operates three Regional Museums which include: the Demasduit Regional Museum (DRM), located in Grand Falls-Windsor; the Provincial Seamen’s Museum (PSM) located in Grand Bank; and, the Labrador Interpretation Centre (LIC), located in North West River, Labrador.

The Rooms is a not-for-profit institution that connects visitors to people, place and culture. It challenges and inspires us to think differently. As a provincial cultural institution focused on the public interest, the focus of our mandate is education, public outreach and the presentation of permanent and temporary exhibits based on the provincial archival, contemporary and historic art, and museum collections entrusted to it by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

As a landmark cultural attraction for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Rooms supports the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation’s **Transition. Transform. Thrive. A Tourism Vision and Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador** and is committed to the strategy’s regenerative tourism approach.

The Rooms was established to collect, preserve, present and make available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of Newfoundland and Labrador. It collects, preserves, and presents provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art and promotes the works of contemporary visual artists of the province. The Rooms strives to develop and conduct programs and events that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and heritage of the province. The Rooms supports the development of cultural industries in the province and endeavours to strengthen the culture of the province, consistent with the strategic directions of the Provincial Government.

The Rooms encompasses 185,000 square feet and was built at a cost of approximately \$50 million when it opened in 2005. The collections of The Rooms are stored in climate controlled vaults under a rigorous security protocol.

The Rooms employs 43 full-time, permanent staff and employs four permanent seasonal staff to operate The Rooms Regional Museums. The Rooms employs a number of hourly staff on an annual basis to support visitor services, the archives reference room and regional operations. Its annual operating budget is \$8,229,900; out of which an annual appropriation of \$6,546,200 is provided by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador.

From April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, The Rooms welcomed 129,160 visitors and its Regional Museums welcomed 10,831 visitors (DRM 5,652; PSM 2,824; LIC 2,355). From September 2022 to March 31, 2023, the organization receive approximately 3,500 in-person visits from school children participating in curriculum-linked education programs, and from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, more than 10,000 students engaged with The Rooms in online education programs. The organization has established itself as one of Canada’s leading cultural institutions with 22 provincial, national and international awards.

The Rooms maintains a strong online presence via its website www.therooms.ca, and on Facebook @TheRoomsNL; Instagram @therooms_nl; and on Twitter @TheRooms_NL.





Installation view of the exhibition **Future Possible: An Art History of Newfoundland and Labrador**

Mandate

The Rooms Mandate is outlined in the **Rooms Act, 2016**, under Section 4, Objects of the Corporation as follows:

- (a) collect, preserve, present and make available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of the province;
- (b) conduct research with respect to the history, natural history, culture and heritage of the province for the purposes of paragraph (a);
- (c) collect and present provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art;
- (d) advance and promote the works of contemporary visual artists of the province;
- (e) support the development of cultural industries in the province;
- (f) strengthen the culture of the province; and,
- (g) provide and enhance client services and partnerships to promote the cultural collections of the province and to show other national and international collections.

See Appendix 1 – **Powers of the Corporation**





Mission Statement

We create welcoming spaces for all people to gather, share stories, engage with the past and challenge narratives, in order to build an inspired community around art, history, culture and our natural environment.

Vision Statement

The Rooms is a values driven, sustainable cultural community hub that builds an inclusive, diverse, creative and confident community by connecting people with Newfoundland and Labrador's past and present so they can envision a bright future.



Lines of Business

The Rooms is comprised of four departments: Archives and Collections; Art Gallery, Museums and Visitor Experience; Finance and Operations; and, Marketing, Communications and Fund Development. The Rooms also has two units: Education and Public Programming, and Technical Services.

The Archives and Collections and Art Gallery, Museums and Visitor Experience Departments collect, preserve, present and make available for research the collections within their disciplines. The Finance and Operations Department, Marketing, Communications and Fund Development Department, and Education and Public Programming Unit support their work through developing, delivering and promoting education and public programs to a wide variety of audiences.

The Technical Services Unit assists with the maintenance and presentation of exhibitions developed in-house and travelling from peer institutions. With a view towards providing an exceptional visitor experience, The Rooms also operates a café and gift shop.

The following is a list of The Rooms lines of business:

1. The Rooms acquires, preserves, presents and makes available for research the historic artifacts, natural history specimens and archival records that represent and illustrate the significant history, culture and natural heritage of the province.
2. The Rooms collects and presents provincial, national and international contemporary and historic art; is the province's steward of archival records and a co-facilitator of Information Management initiatives; and, serves to inform, present and interpret the province's history.
3. The Rooms is an important education and outreach vehicle, aiming to provide access to its collections through education programs, travelling exhibits, Regional Museums, virtual access, workshops, and artist residency programs.
4. The Rooms is responsible for collections security, research, maintenance and preservation to safeguard the provincial memory, history and culture.
5. The Rooms provides support to professional constituencies in the archival, visual arts and museum fields.





A seniors group from Grand Falls-Windsor area, participate in a program at the Desmasduit Regional Museum.

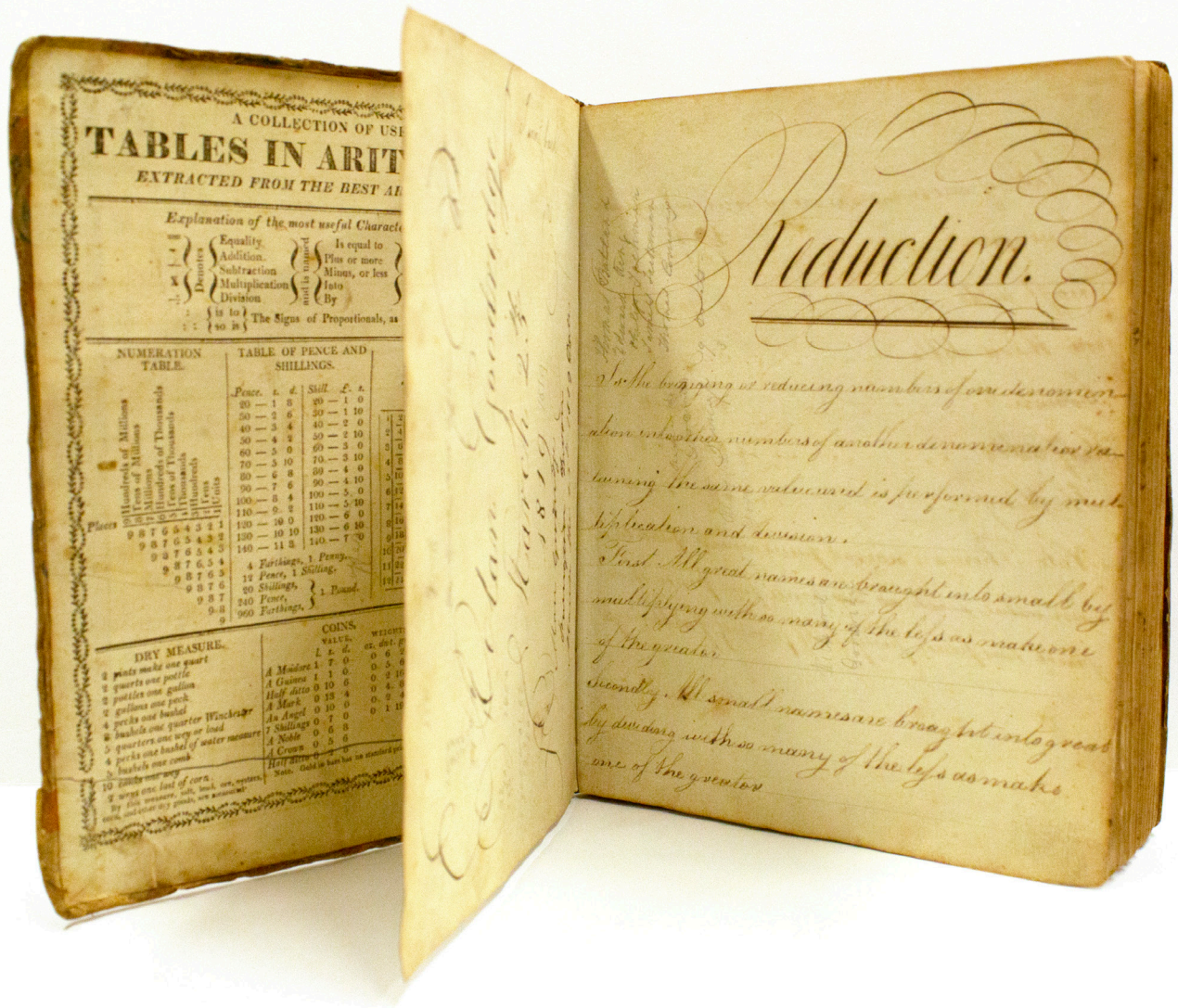
Primary Clients

The Rooms Corporation works closely with clients both external and internal.

These include:

- Residents of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Government of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation
- Department of Education
- The Office of Indigenous Affairs and Reconciliation
- Indigenous Communities
- Diverse Populations
- Non-resident Visitors
- Young Children
- School-aged Children
- Youth, Post-Secondary Students, and Lifelong Learners
- Families/Households
- Artists, Academics, Archivists, and Researchers
- Donors to Collections
- Individual Donors
- Corporate Sponsors





A recent donation to The Rooms of a book kept by Alan Goodridge as a schoolboy in Devon, England. Alan Goodridge & Sons was a Newfoundland mercantile firm, with its origins in the early nineteenth century.

Values

Enabling Discovery

sharing the stories and surprises that are contained within our collections

Stimulating Curiosity

constantly exploring how we can be accessible to, connect with and mean more to people

Building Team Culture

forging relationships, working closely together and with external groups to achieve shared goals

Striving to be The Best

commitment to applying the highest standards in all that we do

Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Anti-racism

commitment to a respectful, diverse, and welcoming environment where we are stronger together





“I have never ever spoken with as gorgeous a back drop as this – Wow!”

– His Excellency Guðni Th. Jóhannesson, President of Iceland, addressing an audience at The Rooms during his State Visit to Newfoundland and Labrador, May 31, 2023.

Issue One: Sustainability: Efficiencies and New Revenue Opportunities

The Rooms continues to be faced with external challenges affecting its ability to provide the high quality experience it is known for delivering. The Rooms and its Regional Museums must address economic challenges that threaten to deplete resources, thereby reducing the quality of experiences they have to offer.

There are many facets of sustainability, however, over the next three years The Rooms will focus specifically on: 1.) The Rooms and its regional operations becoming more efficient; and, 2.) new revenue opportunities.

The Rooms will advance this priority over the next three years through the implementation of a development strategy that ensures the growth and sustainability of the organization. The Rooms will also focus on initiatives that work towards enhanced financial stability by exploring opportunities for community and government support.

Three Year Goal (2023-26)

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have increased sustainability by creating a more efficient organization, and will have explored new revenue opportunities that align with operational priorities

Goal Indicators:

Efficiency

- The Rooms website visitor experience will have been enhanced through improved navigation and functionality
- The organization's collection processes, including intake and procurement, will have been standardized
- Organizational policies and procedures will have been updated
- The Rooms reorganization plan will have continued to be actioned
- Software utilized by the Corporation will have been consolidated
- A grants application process will have been streamlined
- Internal communications will continue to have been improved



Revenue Generation

- A special program for corporate memberships will have been researched
- Donor loyalty events will have been programmed
- Donor-based tracking and communication will have been implemented
- A stakeholder engagement plan will have been developed
- The Rooms Case for Support will have been completed
- An annual giving campaign will have been researched and new revenue-generating activities will have been explored

First Year Objective (2023-24):

By March 31, 2024, The Rooms will have evaluated and prioritized areas for improved efficiency, as well as evaluated and prioritized the elements of a fund development plan.

The indicators for first year objective are:

- An updated version of The Rooms website will have been launched
- An analysis of software needs will have been completed
- A process for streamlining grant applications will have been investigated
- Opportunities for streamlining business processes will have been evaluated
- A case for support will have been completed
- A pilot event with a corporate partner will have been developed

Second Year Objective (2024-25):

By March 31, 2025, The Rooms will have developed an action plan for improved efficiency, and will have implemented elements of the fund development plan.

Third Year Objective (2022-2023):

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have begun implementation of a fund development plan and will have been successful on improving efficiencies.





Global Music Series offered Wednesday evenings in August, in partnership with MusicNL and the Association for New Canadians.

Issue Two: Technology

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During the global pandemic, The Rooms, like many cultural institutions, found itself turning from delivering in-person experiences to delivering virtual experiences. This shift had the positive outcome of an expanded reach and new audiences. There is an opportunity to utilize equipment acquired during the global pandemic to further extend the organization's reach and engage with more people throughout the province, thereby serving more communities in Newfoundland and Labrador. Expanded virtual programming will extend the organization's reach nationally and internationally, sharing the province's stories with people all over Canada and around the world.

Enhancing the organization's technology expands its ability to deliver more inclusive, sustainable services, which aligns with the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation's **Transition. Transform. Thrive: A Tourism Vision and Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador**. This priority supports the strategy's pillars of Diversity, Inclusion and Well-Being, as well as, Sustainability of Natural and Cultural Environment, and aligns with the department's strategic direction to make Newfoundland and Labrador a destination of choice.

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Three Year Goal (2023-26)

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have utilized technology to expand its reach, enhance access to collections, and will have extended its operational activities.

Goal Indicators:

- Museum and art gallery collections will have been made available on-line
- Application forms will have been made available online
- The ability to make online donation will have been made available
- Increased virtual programs for schools will have been offered
- More programs and workshops will have been made available online

First Year Objective (2023-24):

By March 31, 2024, The Rooms technological capabilities will have been expanded, thereby extending the organization's reach.

The Indicators for First Year Objective are:

- The Rooms will have updated technology and equipment for its regional museums to afford these institutions better audience engagement
- The Rooms website will have been upgraded
- New guidelines including best practices for online programs will have been developed

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Second Year Objective (2024-25):

By March 31, 2025, The Rooms will have had expanded its audience reach through the use of technology.

Third Year Objective (2025-26):

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have evaluated the effectiveness of the technology used to increase audiences, as well as audience experience.





Members of the Inuit Drumming Group **Drummer's Heartbeat** from Lake Melville school in North West River, Labrador perform at The Rooms in St. John's at the opening ceremonies for Sharing Our Cultures.

Issue Three: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)

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The Rooms strategic priorities align with museums, art galleries, and archives globally and nationally by emphasizing social inclusion (inclusion, diversity, equity and, accessibility), as well as decolonization.

The organization has recently completed a revision of its mission statement which was approved by The Rooms Board of Directors during the final year of the previous planning cycle. This new statement better reflects the prevailing global priorities of cultural institutions.

The Rooms will continue to grow its audience by identifying, understanding and effectively reaching our existing audience, as well as potential new audiences. The organization will continue working towards offering an accessible, universal experience.

Growing The Rooms audience aligns with the department of Tourism, Culture, Arts and Recreation's **Transition. Transform. Thrive: A Tourism Vision and Strategy for Newfoundland and Labrador**. This priority supports the strategy's pillar Diversity, Inclusion and Well-Being, and aligns with the department's strategic directions to make Newfoundland and Labrador a destination of choice, and of promoting active, healthy lifestyles.

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Three Year Goal (2023-26)

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have incorporated the lenses of being inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible into the organization's core activities.

Goal Indicators:

- Research, identification, establishment of links and targeted marketing to inclusive and diverse communities will have been implemented and completed
- Programming that is targeted to inclusive and diverse communities will have been developed
- The Canadian Museums Associations report recommendations will have been reviewed and short, medium and long term possible actions will have been considered and identified
- An Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee will have been formed

First Year Objective (2023-24):

By March 31, 2024, The Rooms will have made connections with identified priority communities to better understand their needs.

The indicators for first year objective are:

- The Rooms will have established an Indigenous advisory committee
- The Rooms will have consulted with diverse communities to understand their awareness, satisfaction level, areas for improvement and possible new programs
- The Rooms will have reviewed its collections and catalogue information descriptions for Indigenous content

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Second Year Objective (2024-25):

By March 31, 2025, The Rooms will have reviewed and prioritized feedback from identified priority communities.

Third Year Objective (2025-26):

By March 31, 2026, The Rooms will have incorporated feedback from the recommendations of the community consultations into its operations and programs.



Appendix 1 Powers of The Corporation

6. (1) In carrying out its objects under this Act, the corporation may
- (a) acquire by purchase or lease real, personal, movable and immovable property, including securities and hold, manage or dispose of them as the corporation may determine;
 - (b) acquire by gift, bequest or devise real, personal, movable and immovable property, including securities and expend, administer or dispose of that property, subject to terms, if any, on which that property was given, bequeathed or devised to the corporation;
 - (c) enter into partnership, sponsorship and other contractual agreements that further the objects of the corporation;
 - (d) lease its property;
 - (e) operate restaurants, special events, parking facilities, shops and other facilities for the use of the public and lease or otherwise make available, on terms and conditions that the corporation considers appropriate, those facilities or space;
 - (f) expend money appropriated by the Legislature of the province for the purposes of the corporation;
 - (g) expend money received by the corporation from its operations including money received by it from leasing or otherwise making available facilities or space referred to in paragraph (e);
 - (h) establish classes of membership for the support of the corporation and its divisions and for that purpose may establish fee, donation and support amounts applicable to those classes;
 - (i) charge fees for the purposes of the operation of the divisions and facilities of the corporation; and
 - (j) generally, do and authorize those things that the corporation considers necessary for the attainment of its objects and the exercise of the powers of the corporation.

- (2) Property acquired by the corporation under paragraphs (1) (a) and (b) shall be acquired or accepted subject to the advice and direction of the chief executive officer.
- (3) Unless otherwise demonstrated or agreed upon between the owner of the archival record, artifact or specimen and the chief executive officer, archival records, historic artifacts and natural history specimens in the care and control of the corporation are the property of the Crown.
- (4) Notwithstanding paragraphs (1)(a) and (b), the corporation shall not acquire or sell real property without the prior consent, in writing, of the minister.
- (5) The corporation may conduct activities jointly with the department and may enter into agreements with respect to the shared funding of activities.
- (6) The deputy minister of the department may request that the corporation provide professional expertise and technical services to the department and the corporation shall comply with that request.
- (7) The corporation may apply for an order under the Rules of the Supreme Court, 1986 for the recovery of records, historic artifacts, art or other property to which the corporation is entitled.

Rooms Act, 2016 cR-15.2 s6



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