



Department of Social Development and Seniors

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



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Minister's Message

Honourable Dr. Wassim Salamoun
Lieutenant Governor of Prince Edward Island
PO Box 846
Charlottetown PE C1A 7L9



May It Please Your Honour,

I am pleased to submit the annual report for the Department of Social Development and Seniors for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barb Ramsay".

Barb Ramsay
Minister of Social Development and Seniors

Message de la ministre

Honorable Dr. Wassim Salamoun
Lieutenant-gouverneur de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard
Boîte postale 846
Charlottetown ÎPÉ C1A 7L9



Votre Honneur,

J'ai le plaisir de vous présenter le rapport annuel du ministère du Développement social et des Aînés pour l'exercice financier se terminant le 31 mars 2025.

Respectueusement soumis,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barb Ramsay".

Barb Ramsay
Ministre du Développement social et des Aînés

Deputy Minister's Message

Honourable Barb Ramsay
Minister of Social Development and Seniors
PO Box 2000
Charlottetown PE C1A 7N8



Dear Minister Ramsay,

It is my pleasure to provide you with the 2024-2025 annual report for the Department of Social Development and Seniors along with the year-end financial summary.

This report provides the public with a clear account of the Department's achievements and performance, while demonstrating how fiscal and human resources have been used to fulfill our mandate of supporting Island families and individuals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doriann Macmillan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Doriann Macmillan
Deputy Minister of Social Development and Seniors

Message de la sous-ministre

Honorable Barb Ramsay
Ministre du Développement social et des Aînés
Boîte postale 2000
Charlottetown ÎPÉ C1A 7N8



Cher ministre Ramsay,

J'ai le plaisir de vous remettre le rapport annuel 2024-2025 du ministère du Développement social et des Aînés, ainsi que le résumé financier de fin d'année.

Ce rapport a pour but d'informer le public des réalisations et des performances du ministère. Il met également en évidence l'utilisation des ressources financières et humaines du ministère pour mener à bien sa mission de soutien aux familles et aux personnes de l'île.

Sincèrement

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doriann Macmillan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Doriann Macmillan
Sous-ministre du ministère du Développement social et des Aînés

Department Overview

The Department of Social Development and Seniors (SDS) is made up of approximately 575 employees, including 429.4 full-time equivalent employees. These employees are spread across three divisions: Child and Family Services, Social Programs, and Strategy, Policy, and Seniors. SDS is a significant provider of services to the citizens of Prince Edward Island (PEI) with expenditures totaling over \$212 million for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. SDS is supported with finance, communications, human resources, and information technology through other departments and agencies of the Government of PEI.

Vision

Empowering individuals and families to be safe, healthy, secure, and connected with communities.

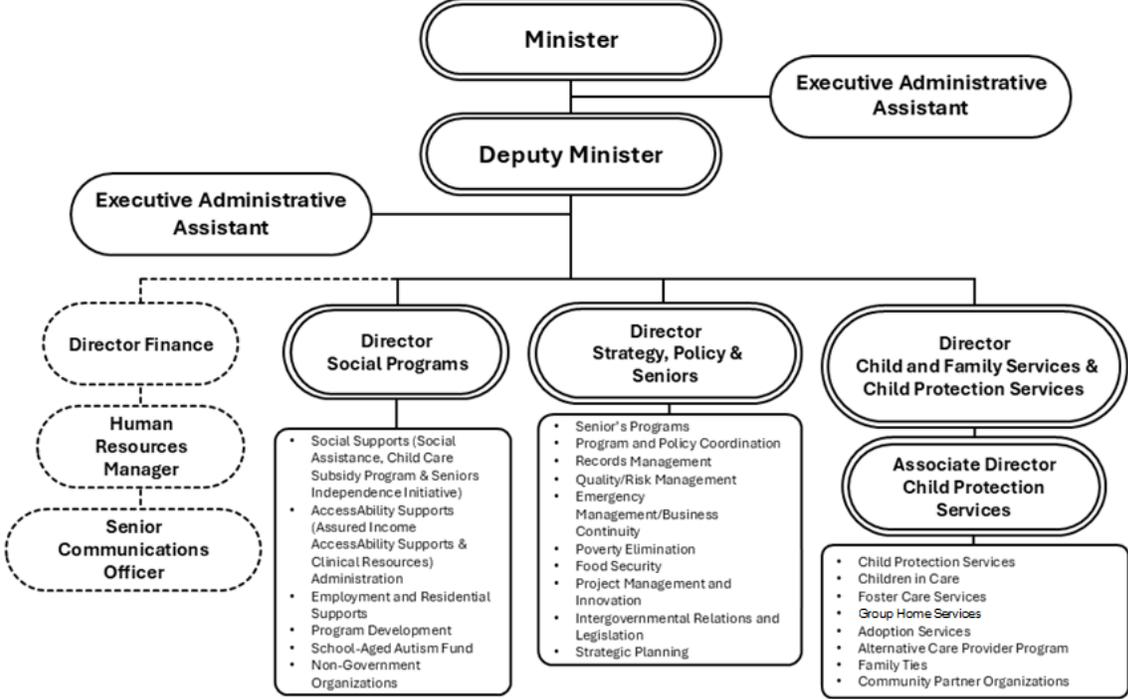
Mission

We enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities by fostering collaboration and innovation to support the growth of healthy, resilient, and self-reliant people.

Values

1. Respect – We embrace acceptance and inclusion, valuing every individual and their unique contributions.
2. Integrity – We act with honesty, openness, fairness, and remain non-partisan in all decisions and actions.
3. Accountability – We take responsibility for our actions, ensuring transparency and a commitment to continuous improvement.
4. Excellence – We strive for the highest standards of accuracy, proficiency, and knowledge in our work and in delivering quality services to the public.

Organizational Structure



Employee Profile

Full-Time Equivalent Positions by Division

Division	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Child and Family Services	180.9	260.4	272.4
Social Programs	107.5	131.0	136.5
Strategy, Policy, and Seniors	13.5	20.5	20.5
Total Full Time Equivalent Positions	301.9*	411.9	429.4

**This number does not include staff from the Housing division of the former Department of Social Development and Housing. With Housing divisional staff included, the total number of departmental full-time equivalent positions in 2022-2023 was 339.8.*

Legislative Responsibility

SDS is responsible for the following statutes:

- *Adoption Act*
- *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*
- *Down Syndrome Day Act*
- *Intercountry Adoption (Hague Convention) Act*
- *Poverty Elimination Strategy Act*
- *Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act*
- *Social Assistance Act*
- *Social Work Act*
- *Supports for Persons with Disabilities Act*

Services Provided

Child and Family Services

The Child and Family Services Division provides a wide range of programs, services, and resources to children and families across the province, including child protection services, group homes, foster care, adoption, and parental/familial support.

Social Programs

The Social Programs Division provides services including Social Assistance, AccessAbility Supports, Child Care Subsidy, the Seniors Independence Initiative, and the Senior's Hearing Aid Program. The division also provides funding grants to community organizations to facilitate residential and day programming services for adults with disabilities.

Strategy, Policy, and Seniors

The Strategy, Policy, and Seniors Division is responsible for program planning and development, addressing poverty and food insecurity, data analysis, Departmental reporting, federal/provincial/territorial relations, legislative coordination, and corporate services. This division also supports older adults through the Office of Seniors and provides various programs and services including the Seniors Navigator Program. The division works closely with the Seniors' Secretariat and the Poverty Elimination Council, who provide policy and programming advice to the Minister.

Highlights and Accomplishments

SDS provides a range of programs and services to PEI residents who require support. In 2024-2025, SDS made significant investments and/or enhancements in new and existing services, which are described below.

Direct financial support to PEI residents in need

- ✓ SDS provided \$121,485,122 in financial benefits to vulnerable PEI residents through Social Assistance and AccessAbility Supports programs. These investments have resulted in PEI continuing to have one of the strongest social support networks in the country, as recognized by the “Welfare in Canada, 2024” report issued by Maytree.
- ✓ The new PEI Child Benefit (PEICB) was launched on January 1, 2025. This new income-tested benefit provides support to low- to medium-income families to help offset the costs of raising children. Over the final three months of the 2024-2025 fiscal year, an average of 7,346 households, supporting 12,540 children, received this benefit each month. In total, \$986,990 was distributed through the program during the fiscal year.
- ✓ School-Aged Autism funding helps school-age children with autism access home- or community-based services outside of school hours. Families are eligible to receive up to \$6,600 per child on an annual basis. This funding can be used to offset the costs of therapeutic activities, tutoring support, or for a one-to-one aid during group activities. As of March 31, 2025, there were 278 children receiving this funding.
- ✓ Beginning in June 2024, SDS administered the At-Home Caregiver Benefit on behalf of the Department of Health and Wellness. This program recognizes and supports the vital work of PEI’s unpaid caregivers by providing a monthly benefit ranging from \$250 to \$1,500. This program enables individuals with a high likelihood of admission to a long-term care facility to age-in-place while receiving ongoing care from a primary caregiver. As of March 31, 2025, 304 unpaid caregivers were receiving benefits through this program.

Food security

- ✓ The Children’s Summer Food Program promotes food security and equitable access to food for school-aged children across the province. In summer 2024, this program delivered over 143,000 meals to support 2,277 children.
- ✓ SDS provides significant operational funding to PEI School Food Program Inc., a not-for-profit organization responsible for the delivery of the school lunch program in public schools across PEI. With a maximum cost of \$5.75 per meal, the program operates on a Pay-What-You-Can model and provides healthy meals to all PEI students (K-12) in the public school system. This program provided over 1 million meals to PEI students in the 2024-2025 school year.
- ✓ SDS partnered with the Department of Education and Early Years and federal officials to secure a three-year, \$7.1 million bilateral funding agreement under the National School Food Program.

- ✓ SDS strengthened its partnership with Meals on Wheels (MOW) PEI to expand meal capacity within existing chapters, expand services into new communities, and support the launch of the Rural Routes program, which provides frozen meal delivery to areas not serviced by an existing MOW chapter.
- ✓ Launched in February 2024, the Seniors Community Meal Grant Pilot Program funded 50 community-based projects, enabling them to provide free communal meals to seniors.

Programs and supports for seniors

- ✓ The PEI Seniors Navigators enhance access to information and the navigational experiences of near seniors, seniors, their family members and their caregivers. In 2024-2025, the program experienced a significant increase in inquiries and requests for support. Each month, the Seniors Navigators received an average of 470 requests and provided 25 outreach sessions across PEI.
- ✓ The Seniors Independence Initiative (SII) increased funding available to PEI seniors for practical services that help them to remain in their own homes and communities. This program provides financial assistance for services such as light housekeeping, meal preparation, transportation, medical alert systems, communication (including internet fees), grass cutting, and snow removal. The program complements supports provided to seniors by family members, friends, and other Government programs. On average, 3,179 seniors accessed SII during 2024-2025.
- ✓ The Seniors Hearing Aid Rebate Program offers financial assistance to older adults in need of hearing aids, providing up to a maximum of \$6,000 per individual once every five years. In 2024-2025, the program's eligibility criteria were aligned with the asset-testing mechanism used in the SII program, expanding access to this support. During the reporting period, 426 seniors received benefits through this program.
- ✓ The Seniors' Secretariat Grant program provided \$140,760 in funding for 59 community-based projects to promote positive images of aging, reduce social isolation, and improve personal safety and financial security for seniors across PEI.
- ✓ SDS worked with Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency to deliver five Seniors Financial Workshops across the province.
- ✓ The Seniors' Guide is a valuable resource for seniors to find information on programs and services that may be available to them. This guide is available in both French and English, and is available both digitally and in hard copy.
- ✓ In October 2024, five PEI seniors received a Senior Islander of the Year Award. These awards were created to celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of PEI seniors who promote positive images of aging and display outstanding leadership and personal qualities.

The *Child, Youth, and Family Services Act (CYFSA)*

- ✓ The *CYFSA* was proclaimed in September 2024 and replaced the *Child Protection Act*. This new legislation focuses on the best interests of the child and ensures that these interests are the paramount consideration in all decisions made in child protection cases.

- ✓ The implementation of the *CYFSA* has strengthened programs and services for PEI children, youth, and their families. Key enhancements include raising the age of eligibility for youth transitioning out of care to access supports (from age 21 to 25 years), and the use of collaborative approaches to assist families and staff through Family Group Conferences.
- ✓ To support the implementation of the *CYFSA*, an extensive training program was provided to SDS staff. Additionally, over 75 community engagement sessions took place with service providers and other provincial government departments to raise awareness of the new legislation, and the shared responsibility regarding duty to report child protection concerns.

Foster Care recruitment and retention

- ✓ SDS hosted information sessions across the province to help PEI residents learn more about the process and requirements for becoming a foster parent. Foster homes remain the preferred placement for children in care when living safely with their parents or a family member is not possible.
- ✓ In March 2025, SDS began developing a foster parent recruitment campaign, which is expected to launch in fall 2025.
- ✓ As of March 31, 2025, there were 86 foster families in the province, with over 60 percent of children in care living in foster homes.

Funding and collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

- ✓ SDS invested over \$20 million to support day programming, specialized residential services, transportation, and advocacy needs of PEI residents living with disabilities.
- ✓ SDS supported the delivery of the provincial 211 service through a comprehensive funding agreement with the United Way of PEI. From April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025, the 211 service responded to over 3,090 calls, supported approximately 43,610 web sessions, and made over 3,461 referrals to service providers.

Public engagement and program reviews

- ✓ SDS initiated comprehensive reviews of AccessAbility Supports and the Residential Services Program. These reviews will determine whether the programs are adequately supporting PEI residents living with disabilities to reach their full potential. Community engagement sessions were held in fall 2024, and a “What We Heard” report was released in January 2025.
- ✓ In fall 2024, SDS initiated an integrated public and interest-holder engagement process to gather information and input on seniors’ issues, poverty, food insecurity, and chronic homelessness. This process resulted in over 500 PEI residents providing input about their personal and/or professional experiences related to these topics. This input will inform the creation of a 5-Year Seniors Action Plan, a new Poverty Elimination Strategy, and “What We Heard” reports that reflect the outcomes of the engagement process. These strategic documents are expected to be released in winter 2025-2026.

Provincial-Territorial leadership

- ✓ Starting in September 2024, the Director of Child and Family Services began a two-year term as chair of the Provincial-Territorial Directors of Child Welfare table.
- ✓ As of January 1, 2025, the Minister of SDS began a two-year term as the provincial and territorial Chair and federal-provincial-territorial Co-Chair for the Ministers Responsible for Social Services. In this role, SDS will help to advance pan-Canadian discussions on poverty reduction, collaborative approaches to child and family services, employment-focused supports for individuals receiving financial assistance, and other initiatives aimed at supporting vulnerable populations.

Key Indicators

Child and Family Services*

Indicator	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Child protection reports received	3,894	3,686	4,159
Child protection investigations opened	1,860	1,816	1,810
Focused intervention services	489	482	457
Adoptions	4	10	10
Applications for post adoption services	42	40	37
Post adoption services provided	41	29	32
Average number of children in care per month	115	116	114
Average number of foster homes	86	88	86

*Some figures have been revised from previous annual reports.

Social Programs

Indicator	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Monthly average Social Assistance cases	3,037	3,228	3,479
Total people in households receiving Social Assistance	5,083	5,373	5,731
Children ages 0-17 years receiving Social Assistance	1,662	1,741	1,815
Single parents receiving Social Assistance	596	646	676
Single persons receiving Social Assistance	2,152	2,278	2,476
Monthly average clients accessing AccessAbility Supports	2,277	2,475	2,721
Monthly average children accessing Child Care Subsidy	1,382	1,199	1,006
Yearly average of seniors accessing the Seniors Independence Initiative	1,651	2,554	3,179
School Age Autism program participants	215	246	278
Targeted Basic Income Guarantee (T-BIG) recipients	620	628	639
Seniors Hearing Aid Rebate Program Clients	103	191	426
At-Home Caregiver Benefit Clients	N/A*	N/A*	304

*The At-Home Caregiver Benefit program was not launched until the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

Strategy, Policy, and Seniors

Indicator	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025
Seniors Navigator inquiries (total)	1,346	2,552	5,655
Seniors Navigator outreach sessions (total)	90	178	263
Seniors' Secretariat Grant applications received	62	93	116
Seniors' Secretariat Grant projects funded	42	51	59
Seniors Community Meal Grant applications received	N/A*	N/A*	60
Seniors Community Meal Grant projects funded	N/A*	N/A*	50
Average number of children enrolled in the Children's Summer Food Program	1,261	1,249	2,277
Estimated number of meals served for the Children's Summer Food Program	55,080	49,243	143,465

*The call for applications was launched in February 2024, with meal events beginning in April 2024.

Expenditures and Revenues (2024-2025)

Expenditures		
	Budget	Actual
Minister and Deputy Minister Office	\$443,100	\$481,959
Strategy, Policy, and Seniors	\$9,607,800	\$11,107,074
Child and Family Services	\$32,263,100	\$36,490,141
Social Programs	\$134,431,900	\$164,096,553
Total	\$176,745,900	\$212,175,727
Revenues		
Strategy, Policy, and Seniors	\$0	\$1,415,017
Child and Family Services	\$1,670,500	\$1,153,448
Social Programs	\$1,459,600	\$519,308
Total	\$3,130,100	\$3,087,773
Total Net	\$173,615,800	\$209,087,954



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