



# 2024-2025 annual report

  
**ÉLECTIONS NB**  
YOUR TRUSTED ELECTION SOURCE

### **Annual Report 2024-2025**

Published by: Elections New Brunswick

ISBN: 978-1-4605-4406-8 (Bilingual print edition)

ISBN: 978-1-4605-4408-2 (English version online)

ISBN: 978-1-4605-4407-5 (French version online)

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August 8, 2025

Mr. Shayne Davies  
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly  
Legislative Building, Centre Block  
P. O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB  
E3B 5H1  
Canada

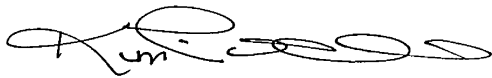
Dear Mr. Davies,

I have the honour of presenting the Annual Report of Elections New Brunswick for the period April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025.

I respectfully request that you forward this report to the members of the Legislative Assembly.

I would also welcome the opportunity to present my report to members of the Standing Committee on Procedure Privileges and Legislative Officers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kim Poffenroth', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kimberly A. Poffenroth  
Chief Electoral Officer

# Our Mandate

Elections New Brunswick's mandate is to conduct free and fair elections for New Brunswickers, to facilitate compliance with electoral laws, and to advance public awareness of and confidence in the electoral process.

# Our Vision

Elections New Brunswick is a trusted organization that supports the democratic process by providing innovative electoral services to all New Brunswickers.

# Our Core Values

Our three core values are the deeply ingrained principles that guide all of our actions and influence everything we do. They guide our internal conduct as well as our relationships with our stakeholders. They guide us in fulfilling our mandate and realizing our vision. These values are essential to creating a work environment that supports the execution of our strategy.

## **Integrity**

We work in an honest and trustworthy manner administering transparent and non-partisan electoral processes that adhere to legal and ethical principles.

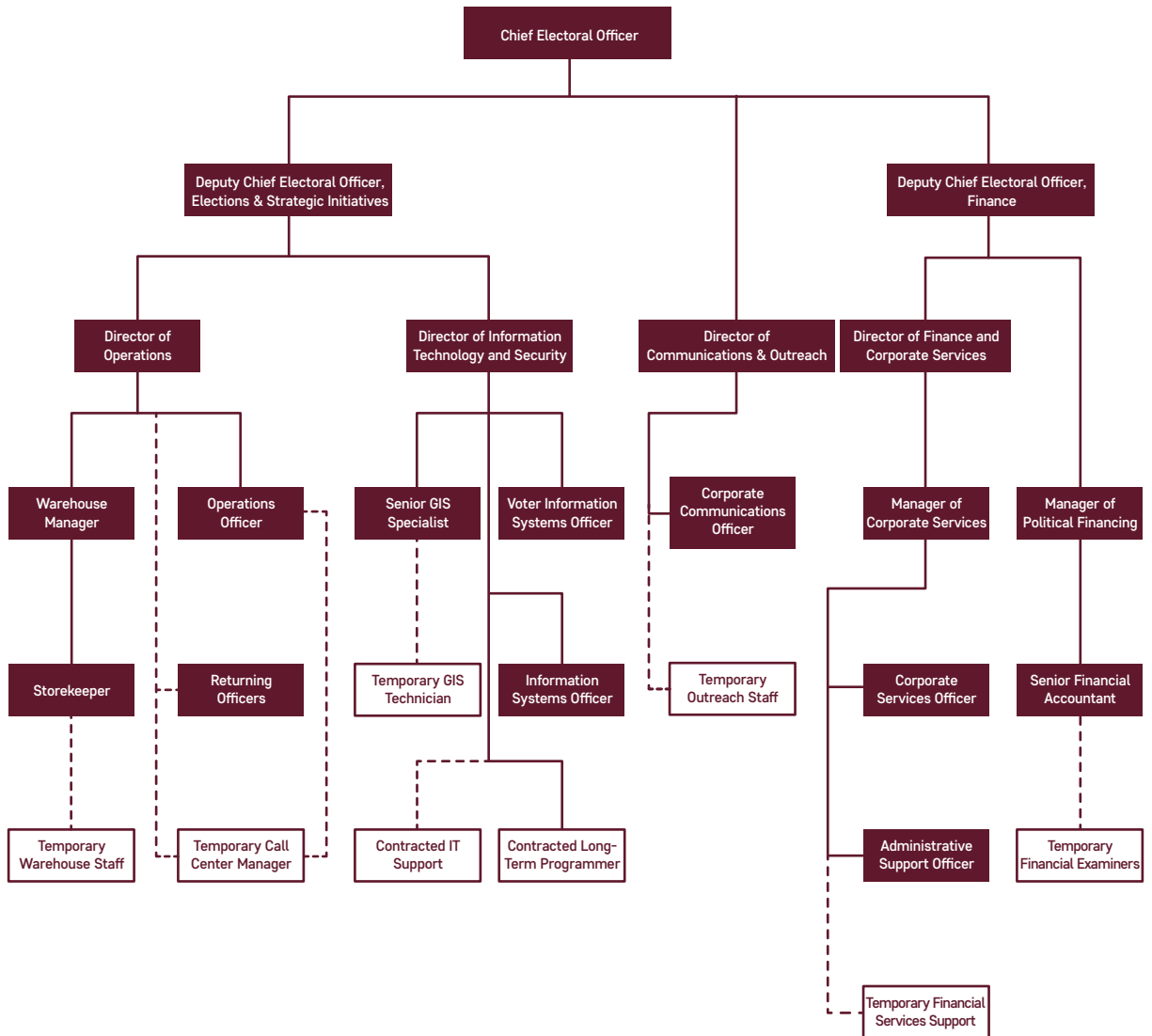
## **Innovation**

We strive to develop new and better ways to improve our electoral processes and services provided to all New Brunswickers.

## **Professionalism**

Our strength comes from the knowledge, experience and dedication of our staff. Working together, we consistently deliver high-quality electoral products and services.

# Organizational Chart



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# Message From the Chief Electoral Officer

As I reflect upon the past year, and our many accomplishments, including the delivery of the October 2024 provincial general election, I find it hard to believe I have now completed eight years of my ten-year appointment. In theory, this is the last provincial election I will administer, and the upcoming May 2026 local government elections will be the last province-wide elections to be conducted with me at the helm of Elections New Brunswick.

Greater detail on last October's election can be found in the "Electoral Events" section of this report, but I must take this opportunity to express how pleased I am with how smoothly that election unfolded. From the issuance of the writs on September 19, 2024, to the close of polls on election night, October 21, 2024, our team worked tirelessly to deliver an election that reflected our mandate to conduct free and fair elections.

As much as I would like to focus only on our successes over the past year, I cannot overlook a significant challenge that I fear could impact this organization's ability to ensure election integrity, security and effectiveness beyond my term as chief electoral officer.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, our team invested a significant amount of time working with an American-based vendor on the implementation of a new election management system for Elections New Brunswick. The objective was to replace our existing patchwork of legacy and *ad hoc* systems which no longer meet today's technological and security requirements.



Over a two-year period, it had been determined that this election management system provided the best options for mitigating serious risks to the electoral process while providing for future opportunities identified in our *2018-2027 Strategic Plan 2.0*.

Unfortunately, in February 2025, our budget request for funding to proceed with the development of the election management system was turned down. New Brunswick, and the rest of Canada, was embroiled in an unpredictable trade war with the United States and there was no interest in supporting a new proposal linked to an American-based business. As a result, the project was shut down.

This year saw a number of personnel changes at Election New Brunswick's head office. Michelle Turcotte, the former Corporate Services Officer, was promoted to the position of Manager of Corporate Services, and Chantal Poitras replaced Michelle as our Corporate Services Officer. Amanda Buchanan, who has worked with us on contract in a variety of roles over many years, accepted a permanent position as Operations Officer.



We also welcomed Louan Soumahoro as the newest permanent member of our political financing examination team. Louan accepted the position of Senior Financial Accountant.

These staffing changes are an important component in increasing our organizational resilience, a key objective in our strategic plan.

This year, we also recognized several of our returning officers for their years of service with Elections New Brunswick and, just as importantly, their dedication to upholding our vision of being a trusted organization that supports the democratic process.

Prior to a post-election debrief held in February 2025, Elections New Brunswick Service Recognition Awards were presented to four long-serving returning officers: Joanne Nice, 30 years of dedicated service, O'Neil Arseneau, 22 Years of dedicated service, Patti Nason, 19 years of dedicated service, and Victorine Robichaud, 19 years of dedicated service

These four individuals are a small sampling of the large team of election officials who answer the call each election to run our returning offices and coordinate the work in the field required to ensure elections run smoothly.

As noted in the "Looking Forward" section, our organization faces some challenges moving forward that may test our enviable position as a front runner in the evolution of election administration. However, I am confident that with the professional and dedicated staff I am very fortunate to have on our team, we will find the solutions required to uphold our reputation as New Brunswick's trusted election source.



*Joanne Nice, 30 years of dedicated service*



*O'Neil Arseneau, 22 Years of dedicated service*



*Patti Nason, 19 years of dedicated service*



*Victorine Robichaud, 19 years of dedicated service*



# Overview

As mentioned in the CEO's message, the first half of fiscal year 2024-2025 was focused on the successful delivery of the 2024 provincial general election held October 21, 2024. The second half of the fiscal year saw the conduct of important post-election debriefing sessions with political parties, returning office staff, and other stakeholder groups to obtain feedback to identify potential process improvements. Municipal by-elections were also planned and executed in this time.

The year also saw some important organizational restructuring in line with our strategic goal to increase organizational resilience. The retirement of a senior staff member from our Finance and Corporate Services Section in the prior year resulted in two other employees shifting roles and responsibilities. The Operations Officer position was made a permanent full-time position, and the Political Financing Section appointed a Senior Financial Accountant and hired an additional contract Financial Accountant to their team to assist with the review of electoral financial returns from the provincial general election.

In January 2024, three members of Elections New Brunswick participated in a Leadership Conference organized by the Canadian Election Official Training (CEOT). This professional development opportunity positions employees for future growth within the organization.

Employees of Elections New Brunswick also benefitted from participating in other election-related conferences in 2024-2025, including the Canadian Vote Summit held in Toronto in June 2024, the Conference of Canadian Election Officials hosted by Elections Alberta in July 2024, and the Council of Governmental Ethics Laws Conference, held in Los Angeles in December 2024.

As also mentioned in the CEO's message, fiscal 2024-2025 saw the organization dedicate resources to a much-needed upgrade to its election management system. With the funding request for the proposed solution denied, we find ourselves back at the drawing board, preparing another request for proposals to determine what other options might still exist in a very specialized market.

# Who We Are

Elections New Brunswick is the election management body responsible for the administration of provincial and local government general elections, by-elections and plebiscites. We also administer district education council elections on the same date that local government general elections occur.

The Chief Electoral Officer administers these elections to ensure they are fair and free of political influence in accordance with the *Elections Act* and the *Municipal Elections Act*. In New Brunswick, the Chief Electoral Officer also holds the positions of Supervisor of Political Financing and Municipal Electoral Officer, overseeing compliance with the *Political Process Financing Act* and the *Municipal Elections Act*. As an officer of the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick, the Chief Electoral Officer must be non-partisan and may not vote in any election for which she is responsible.

Elections New Brunswick has a full-time staffing complement of 19, including the Chief Electoral Officer, and an additional three term positions. The corporate office is located in Fredericton. The Chief Electoral Officer is supported in fulfilling her legislated duties by two Deputy Chief Electoral Officers. One is responsible for overseeing the electoral processes and strategic initiatives, while the other is responsible for overseeing all matters related to corporate services and political financing.



# Financial Summary

Elections New Brunswick's annual budget is approved by the Legislative Administration Committee (LAC) of the Legislative Assembly. As provided in the Main Estimates for fiscal year 2024-2025, we received initial funding of \$18,725,000. Supplementary funding of \$49,000 was received for wage increases payable to salaried employees. This resulted in a total budget of \$18,774,000.

An overview of our budget, expenditures, and surplus or deficit by financial program is presented in the following table and explanatory notes:

Program	Budget	Expenditures	Surplus (Deficit)	Notes
<b>Administration and Coordination</b>				
Administration	2,268,000	2,234,146	33,854	(1)
Annual Payments to Political Parties	668,000	667,999	1	(2)
	<b>2,936,000</b>	<b>2,902,145</b>	<b>33,855</b>	
<b>Infrastructure</b>				
Elections Infrastructure	2,168,000	2,744,390	(576,390)	(3)
	<b>2,168,000</b>	<b>2,744,390</b>	<b>(576,390)</b>	
<b>Local Government Elections</b>				
Municipal By-Elections:				
May 2024	500,000	219,826	280,174	(4)
December 2024	500,000	544,756	(44,756)	(5)
April 2025	-	181,481	(181,481)	(6)
	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>946,063</b>	<b>53,937</b>	
<b>Provincial Elections</b>				
October 2024 Provincial General Election:				
Direct Costs	10,670,000	9,319,239	1,350,761	(7)
Candidates' Reimbursements	2,000,000	1,642,841	357,159	(8)
	<b>12,670,000</b>	<b>10,962,080</b>	<b>1,707,920</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,774,000</b>	<b>17,554,678</b>	<b>1,219,322</b>	

- (1) The Administration program reflects the cost to operate the head office and warehouse of Elections New Brunswick.
- (2) An appropriation is authorized annually by the Legislature for annual payments to political parties (*Political Process Financing Act*, s.32). This funding supports the operations of provincially-registered political parties and reimburses their annual audit fees up to a maximum amount calculated under the Act.
- (3) Elections infrastructure is used for both local government and provincial elections. It includes equipment that must be maintained between elections, such as tabulation machines, personal computers and tablets. It also includes maintenance of software applications such as our proprietary New Brunswick Voter Information System (NBVIS).

This year, preliminary development work on a new election management system (EMS) and several instructional video projects represented substantial expenditures that were not part of the budget submission, resulting in a deficit in this program.

- (4) Fewer municipal by-elections were required in May 2024 than included in the budget submission.
- (5) More municipal by-elections were required in December 2024 than included in the budget submission.
- (6) Elections NB moved the spring 2025 municipal by-elections from May to April in order to avoid conflicting with the anticipated federal general election. This resulted in direct costs being incurred earlier than planned.
- (7) The provincial general election was held on October 21, 2024. Direct costs incurred in the current fiscal year were lower than planned for returning office staffing and operations, resulting in a substantial surplus of \$1.35 million. Direct costs of \$1.25 million, however, were also incurred in the previous fiscal year, thus largely offsetting the current year's surplus.
- (8) Total reimbursements for the election expenses of eligible candidates represented 82% of the funding received.

# Electoral Events

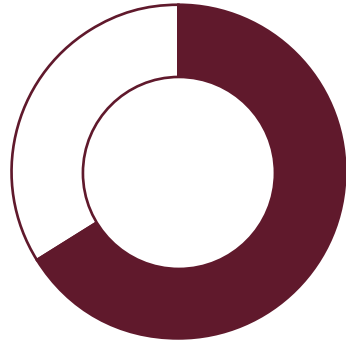
## Provincial General Election

The 60<sup>th</sup> Legislature was dissolved on September 19, 2024, and Writs of Election were issued for 49 electoral districts ordering a general election to be held on Monday, October 21, 2024, with the writs returnable on Friday, November 1, 2024.

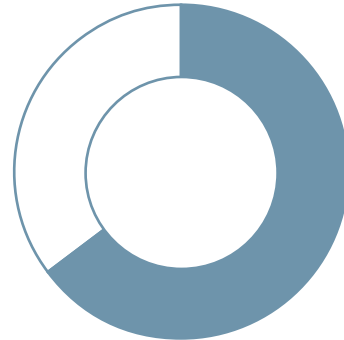
At the close of nominations on Tuesday, October 1, 2024, 207 candidates had officially filed nomination papers. The New Brunswick New Democratic Party candidate running in the electoral district of Saint John Portland-Simonds withdrew as a candidate on October 10, 2024.

To assist registered political parties in preparing for the provincial general election, Elections New Brunswick organized a one-day training session on April 24, 2024. This session served as a refresher on various aspects of provincial elections, including the requirements for financial reporting and election advertising, the process for becoming a candidate, voting procedures, and results reporting. The event included in-person and virtual participants.

376,054 electors voted in the election, for an overall voter turnout of 64.82%. This compares to 376,903 electors in the 2020 provincial general election where the overall voter turnout was 66.14%.



**376,903 electors  
voted in the 2020 election,**



**376,054 electors  
voted in the 2024 election,**

A post-election survey conducted in the days immediately following the election produced positive feedback from the 500 plus respondents. 93% indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their overall voting experience, an increase from 88% in 2018. Another 96% indicated that they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with services provided by election workers they encountered, and 95% of respondents indicated Elections New Brunswick provided them with enough information to know when and where to vote.

A detailed report covering the October 21, 2024, provincial general election is available on our [website](#).

## Local Government By-Elections

Following the October provincial general election, we held local government by-elections on December 9, 2024, to fill 16 council vacancies spread across the province. At the close of nominations, there were enough candidates to hold by-elections in ten of the communities.

Under the *Local Governance Act*, local government by-elections cannot be held within one year of a local government general election, the next of which is scheduled to be held on May 11, 2026. Therefore, the last set of local government by-elections were scheduled to be held on May 5, 2025. However, in February 2025, with the increasing probability that a federal election would be called in the spring of 2025, the Chief Electoral Officer made the decision to reschedule the by-elections for April 14, 2025. It was hoped that this would avoid competition with Elections Canada in the rental of spaces for returning offices and polling stations and the hiring of election workers, and also avoid potential confusion for electors.

## Finance and Corporate Services

Reporting to the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Finance, the Finance and Corporate Services Section consists of four permanent employees – the Director of Finance and Corporate Services, the Manager of Corporate Services, a Corporate Services Officer and an Administrative Support Officer.

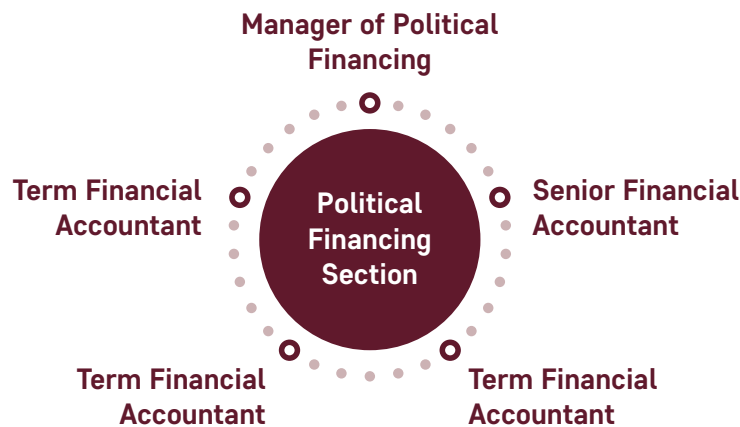
The Director of Finance and Corporate Services oversees the day-to-day operation of corporate services, including budgeting, accounting, procurement, accounts payable and payroll.

In October 2024, our Corporate Services Officer was appointed the Manager of Corporate Services, filling a position left vacant for 17 months. The Administrative Support Officer, who had been assisting with the processing and payment of invoices during that period, was appointed as the new Corporate Services Officer. A competition was successfully held to recruit a new Administrative Support Officer.



# Political Financing

The Political Financing Section consists of five employees – the Manager of Political Financing, a Senior Financial Accountant, and three term Financial Accountants. The Manager of Political Financing reports directly to the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Finance. In fiscal year 2024-2025, the Senior Financial Accountant was added to the team as a permanent position.



The 2024 provincial general election saw the creation of 49 new electoral districts. In the lead up to the election, the section dealt with the deregistration of old district associations and the registration of new ones. Both the old and new district associations were required to file annual financial returns for examination.

Prior to the election, staff in the Political Financing Section processed the registration of three new political parties that planned to run candidates in the election. Two of the parties did not present candidates in at least ten electoral districts as required under Section 140 of the *Elections Act* to maintain their registrations. As a result, in November 2024, the Chief Electoral Officer notified the Consensus NB Party and the Social Justice Party of New Brunswick that their registrations had been cancelled.

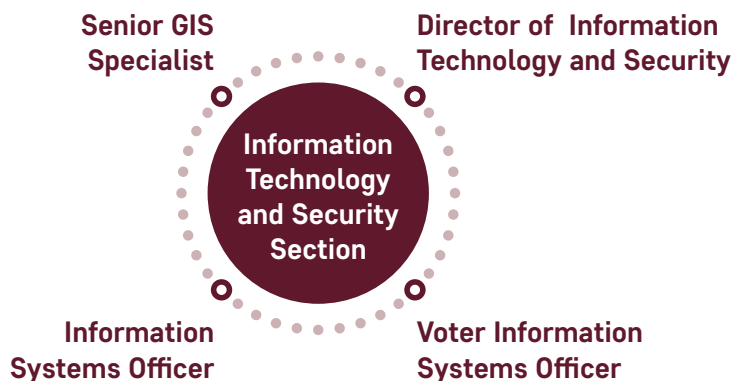
# Information Technology and Security

The Information Technology and Security Section plays a critical role in safeguarding the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of the organization's information systems. It is responsible for the secure development, implementation and maintenance of technology infrastructure and systems at our head office and in returning offices.

The Director of Information Technology and Security oversees all matters related to IT security including deployment, installation, testing and support of communications equipment, computer hardware, software, and other technologies. This includes ensuring systems are hardened, monitored, and compliant with applicable cybersecurity standards and policies.

In fiscal year 2024-2025, the section started the process of migrating data to a new Government of New Brunswick server farm. This server migration not only strengthened our cybersecurity posture, but also provided an opportunity to audit and securely dispose of legacy data that no longer met retention or relevance requirements.

Reporting to the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Elections and Strategic Initiatives, the Information Technology and Security Section is comprised of four permanent employees - the Director of Information Technology and Security, a Voter Information Systems Officer, an Information Systems Officer and a Senior GIS Specialist.



# Operations

Reporting to the Deputy Chief Electoral Officer, Elections and Strategic Initiatives, the Operations Section is comprised of four permanent employees – the Director of Operations, the Warehouse Manager, an Operations Officer, and a Storekeeper.

The Director of Operations oversees procurement and warehousing activities for Elections New Brunswick. The Director of Operations also coordinates the delivery of training programs to returning officers and the day-to-day conduct of electoral events.

As triage and cleanup of materials shipped back to the warehouse from the October 2024 provincial general election continued, warehouse staff were busy assembling and shipping supplies that were needed to open nine returning offices and numerous polling stations for local government by-elections held on December 9, 2024.

The position of Operations Officer was made permanent in fiscal year 2024-2025.

# Communications and Outreach

The Communications and Outreach Section oversees the development, design and deployment of all communication materials used to communicate to the public and to promote election-related activities of the organization.

With a provincial general election scheduled for October 2024, the section's efforts during the first half of fiscal year 2024-2025 focused on working with vendors in finalizing the creation and production of the various communication materials that were produced to promote and raise awareness of the fall election, as well as the implementation of the new electoral boundaries.

These efforts included the completion of a series of educational videos which were used in advance of, and during the election, to educate the public on our electoral processes and to debunk efforts to cast doubt on the outcome of the election.

The Communications and Outreach Section consists of two permanent employees – the Director of Communications and Outreach and a Corporate Communications Officer. A post-secondary student was hired as the Campus Outreach Coordinator during the summer of 2024. The Campus Outreach Coordinator worked on the organization and delivery of the campus vote program during the provincial general election.

# Activities Related to Strategic Goals

With a provincial general election scheduled for October 2024, a significant number of actions and activities that were undertaken during fiscal year 2024-2025 were tied to our strategic goal of encouraging voter engagement.

The pending election also focused our attention on the strategic goal of improving services to participants in the political process.

We also moved forward with initiatives aimed at our strategic goals of improving workplace efficiency and effectiveness and increasing organizational resilience.

## 1. Encourage voter engagement

- In June 2024, four months before the scheduled October provincial election, Elections New Brunswick mailed a 20-page bilingual pre-election flyer to every household in the province. The flyer would be the first in a series of communication strategies used to raise awareness about the approaching election and provide useful voting information well in advance of the event.
- In the past, Elections New Brunswick has sent generic mailouts to households encouraging people to update their voter information prior to an election. For the October 2024 provincial general election, we decided to send a pre-election postcard to every household containing all the names of the electors listed in our voter information system as living at that address. The mail out generated thousands of calls to our call centre with people doing exactly what had been asked of them, updating their voter information. This reduced the number of revisions required at polling stations and allowed a more accurate set of voter information cards to be mailed out. We did identify an area for future improvement. It is important that pre-election postcards clearly indicate that they are not a voter information card, as there was some confusion.





- After not having a campus voting program during the 2020 provincial general election held during the pandemic, Elections New Brunswick was pleased to make its return to the campuses of universities and community colleges during the October 2024 provincial general election. We hired a Campus Outreach Coordinator who worked with the student councils on 14 campuses to raise awareness about the dates, times and locations of campus voting. In total, just over 2,000 votes were collected over the four days of voting held at campuses across the Province.
- Research clearly shows that voter engagement should and must begin before individuals have even reached legal voting age. With that in mind, Elections New Brunswick was pleased to partner with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to support the delivery of CIVIX's Student Vote program to 237 registered schools. The votes cast by over 35,000 students from 205 schools were reported to CIVIX from their parallel elections, which were held in all 49 electoral districts.
- The 2023-2024 Annual Report provided details of Elections New Brunswick's plan to create a suite of five videos, in both official languages, to inform electors of electoral processes and educate them on the safeguards in place to protect elections. The videos were completed in May 2024, and were used in a robust media campaign that was run prior to and throughout the general election. The campaign included the videos being played in movie theatres province-wide and being published on a variety of social media platforms. The campaign promoted the election and reinforced the message that Elections New Brunswick is the trusted source for election information.
- In the summer of 2024, Elections New Brunswick was approached by the New Brunswick Multicultural Council seeking support for a project to encourage new Canadian citizens to vote in the October provincial general election. A \$5,000 grant was provided to the council, which it used to create a short, non-partisan video featuring testimonials from first-time voters about the importance of voting.

## 2. Improve services to participants in the political process

- As referenced in the last annual report, in April 2024, Elections New Brunswick organized Elections 101, a training session to assist registered political parties in their preparations for the provincial general election. The one-day session offered high-level information on electoral procedures impacting parties and candidates and on the rules related to political financing. In addition to being an in-person event, the session was live-streamed to allow for greater participation. Following the event, the presentations delivered at the Elections 101 session were posted on the Elections New Brunswick website.
- Elections New Brunswick's Political Finance Section delivered presentations on the political financing rules at two campaign colleges organized by registered political parties. In September 2024, in response to an invitation from the New Brunswick Federation of Labour, Elections New Brunswick attended a meeting to present the rules on third-party advertising rules during an election
- Just as important as the pre-election outreach we did with our stakeholder groups are the post-election debriefing sessions we conducted. These allowed us to receive unfiltered feedback on the voting experiences from various groups representing electors for whom we wish to improve services. In February 2025, Elections New Brunswick held a meeting with members of our Consultation Committee on Election Accessibility to solicit their feedback on the voting experiences of the groups they represent. Election workers' comfort levels in assisting electors with disabilities was identified as an area in which improved training was required. Despite this identified area for improvement, the overall feedback from members on their stakeholders' voting experiences in the October 2024 election was positive.



- In January 2025, Elections New Brunswick brought together the returning officers and election clerks who administered the October 2024 provincial general election. Each team was asked to keep track of issues that came up during the election and identify potential areas for process improvements during the debriefing session. These were discussed in greater detail by breakout groups during the debriefing session. Elections New Brunswick staff subsequently reviewed the suggestions that emerged from the session and prioritized those that were determined to be actionable.



### 3. Increase efficiency and effectiveness of electoral processes

- In preparation for an anticipated increase in traffic to the Elections New Brunswick website during the October 2024 provincial general election, steps were taken to make the website more accessible and user-friendly. Based on feedback provided by User Interface and User Experience Specialists with the Digital Transformation Team at Finance and Treasury Board, the Communications and Outreach Section began the process of modifying the reading level of the text used on the website, starting with the pages with the highest volume of traffic. Using website analytics from past elections, the specialists also identified the most frequently visited links to the website, which were moved to the top of the landing page offering greater visibility.

### 4. Improve workplace efficiency and effectiveness

- In preparation for the October 2024 provincial general election, and with the creation of 49 new electoral districts, the Geography Unit spent a significant amount of time preparing new electoral maps that would be printed and provided to the registered political parties. Elections New Brunswick's Senior GIS Technician took the opportunity to redesign the layout of the maps, using free space on the large-scale maps to include smaller inset maps with more detailed street information for populated areas within the district. This redesign significantly reduced the number of additional maps required, decreasing the quantity of paper used.
- In May and June 2024, the Chief Electoral Officer conducted a series of skip-level interviews with Elections New Brunswick staff. Skip-level interviews are one-on-one meetings between an employee and a manager who is at least two levels above them in the organizational hierarchy, essentially bypassing the employee's direct supervisor. Useful for succession planning, career development, and receiving unfiltered feedback from employees, these meetings aim to provide senior leaders with direct insights into an employee's perspective, fostering open communication, and gathering feedback on team dynamics and organizational health. These skip-level interviews also directly impact our goal of increasing organization resilience.
- Elections New Brunswick commissioned a review of existing policies and legislation related to the protection of electoral data. The report, *Electoral Data Privacy: A Discussion Document*, was tabled with the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick in March 2025. While not tied directly to the goal of improving workplace efficiency and effectiveness, it identified policy gaps related to how electors' personal information is utilized by Elections New Brunswick and participants in the electoral process, some of which can only be addressed through legislative changes.
- A number of Elections New Brunswick employees participated in a variety of conferences, courses and committees related to activities impacting the management and integrity of elections. These are important for the organization to remain up to speed on global trends and activities relevant to our field.
- With Elections New Brunswick's staffing complement growing again in fiscal year 2024-2025, it was determined the organization needed to establish formal policies and procedures related to the safety and well-being of employees. At the direction of senior management, a Workplace Health and Safety Committee was created in February 2025, with the mandate to ensure that the organization complies with current workplace safety rules.

## 5. Increase organizational resilience

- A key element of building the organization's resilience is the formalization of a succession plan that identifies strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the organization based on anticipated personnel changes. The Chief Electoral Officer finalized the first draft of Elections New Brunswick's succession plan. The plan was shared with the Deputy Chief Electoral Officers for feedback and updated accordingly. Viewed as a living document, the succession plan will be available for all three senior leaders to review, update and consult for ongoing succession planning activities.
- Organizational resilience must also include technical elements, which are the underpinnings of the essential processes that support the organization in meeting our mandate. As mentioned in the activities of the Information Technology and Security Section, an important migration to new Government of New Brunswick servers has begun. This will strengthen our cybersecurity posture and also provides an opportunity to audit and securely dispose of legacy data.
- As mentioned earlier in the report, there were several staffing changes at head office, including new hires, which have helped to increase our operational capacity and flexibility.



# Looking Forward

Elections New Brunswick has long been recognized by its peers across the country for the innovative steps we have taken to modernize our voting procedures.

The introduction of laptop technology at the polls to strike off electors as they arrive to vote replaced the paper-based voters list. This allowed for a more streamlined processing of electors, referred to as the bank teller model. Tabulation machines, used in New Brunswick since 2008, introduced efficiencies in the results reporting process while also bringing a proven accuracy in election results.

However, our efforts to remain on the leading edge of election management and to ensure the integrity and security of our processes faces a significant challenge moving forward.

Our current election management system (EMS), which supports the data driven processes required by election officials and other key stakeholders to administer each election, is outdated and built on multiple disconnected legacy systems. Two years ago, Elections New Brunswick assessed the weaknesses of, and threats to, its current election management processes. The assessment concluded that building or acquiring a purpose-built EMS is the only viable solution that will permit Elections New Brunswick to achieve many of its strategic goals, while remaining up to date with technology and security requirements. As mentioned earlier in this report, a funding request to the Legislative Administration Committee to pursue the acquisition of a modern EMS from a vendor with software compatible with our existing strike-off solution was rejected because it is a US-based company.

Another area of concern that we have flagged is the weakness of existing rules and the lack of legislation to protect elector data which we are legislatively required to share with registered political parties, candidates, and members of the Legislative Assembly. We issued a report in March 2025 which concluded that New Brunswick lags many of our Canadian counterparts when it comes to measures in place to protect voter privacy once voter information is shared with candidates, political parties and members of the Legislative Assembly. The report, *Electoral Data Privacy: A Discussion Document*, offered a range of recommendations to better align New Brunswick's practices for safeguarding elector data with rules that exist in other Canadian jurisdictions. These include creating a legal distinction between the information collected and what must be shared, as well as requirements for political parties to develop privacy policies that would be subject to approval by the Chief Electoral Officer. Our ability to address the concerns raised in the report and implement solutions can only be advanced with the support of elected officials.

Lastly, it has become evident that election management bodies must continue to be proactive in efforts to educate voters and the general public on the ongoing and escalating efforts to destabilize the democratic process through the use of disinformation campaigns. The federal Commission on Foreign Interference concluded that the greatest threat to the very existence of our democracy is disinformation – both domestic and foreign. While the International Institute for Democracy and Elections consider disinformation to be among the top three threats to democracy globally, alongside a global decline in support for democratic norms and the rise of populism and polarization.

Generative artificial intelligence, used in concert with social media platforms, is already being widely leveraged to easily and cheaply create and disseminate disinformation campaigns designed to influence voters. This, too, is an area of concern in which legislative action will be required from elected officials to support efforts to counter this emerging threat. Civics education and digital literacy will also be crucial in combatting the impact of disinformation on elections, election management bodies and democratic institutions.

