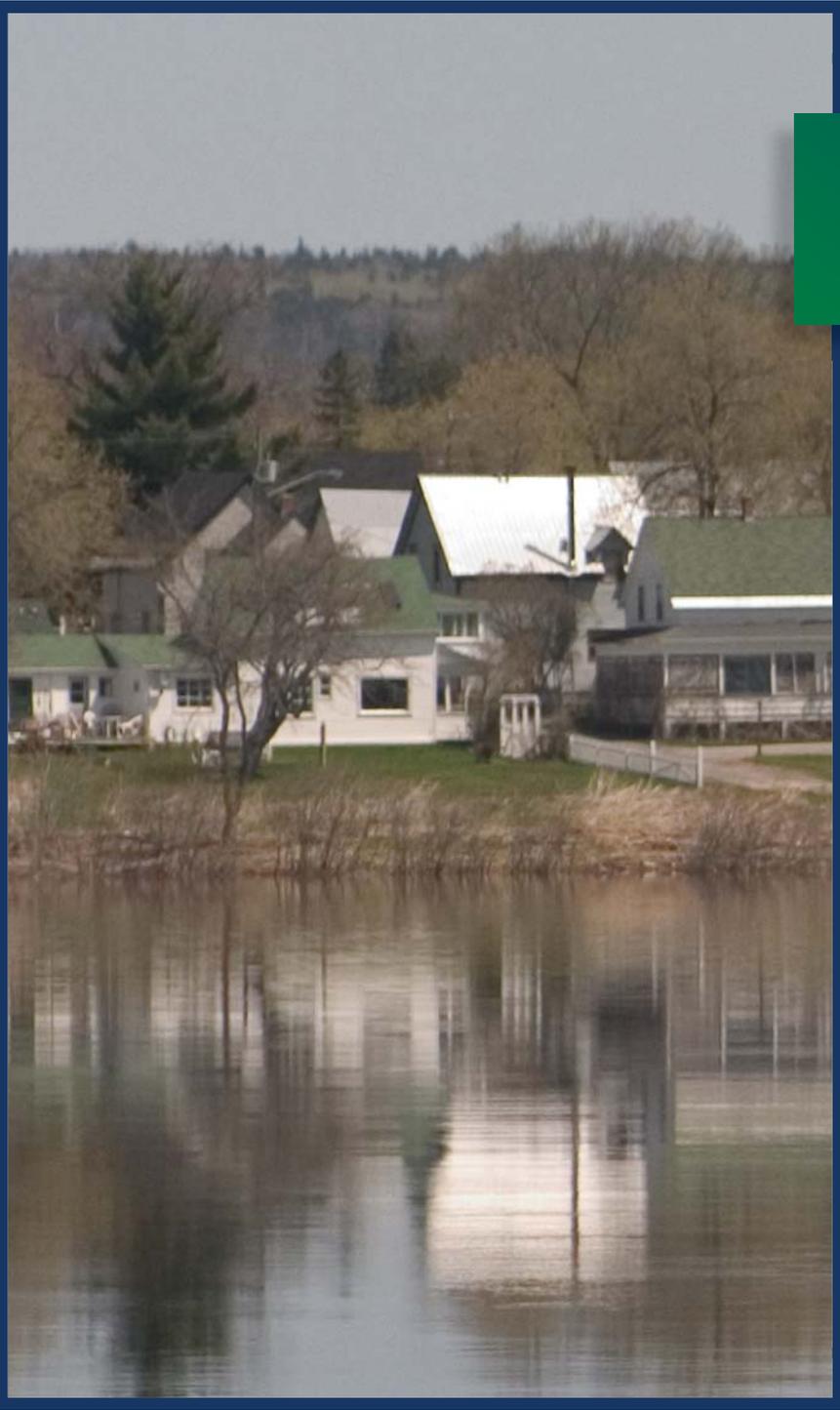


Uses of CommunityAccounts



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Newfoundland
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Use of the Community Accounts

The Community Accounts are an on-line system of data on a wide variety of social and economic indicators at community, regional and provincial levels in Newfoundland and Labrador. They are similar to the National Accounts since they include production and economic information. The Community Accounts go much further, including information that assists government policy makers and citizens to understand individual and collective well-being and the factors that affect them. The objective is to use the data to plan for improving the well-being of society. Evidence in the Community Accounts can be used to make decisions about interventions that are needed, and provide a reliable and independent accounting system to report on social and economic progress after interventions have been implemented.

The data are arranged by domains providing a structured way of thinking about information to determine social and economic well-being. The Community Accounts enables users to focus on data in specific domains, for example health, education, income, labour market, or demographic information or to draw information together to focus on indicators from all domains. The domains in combination are inter-related, reflecting aspects of our lives which impact our well-being overall. This enables users to assess social and economic determinants and root causes of problems. A new determinants model is being developed that will highlight individual indicators that will show the status of overall well-being at a glance. This new structure will make the Community Accounts more user-friendly than in the past.

Uses of the Community Accounts

The Community Accounts can be used for social, community and economic development as well as private sector business development.

The social and economic development process has various stages. The Community Accounts can be used at each stage.

- Preparing social and economic landscapes for measuring the status of the population and communities to identify issues of concern;
- Identifying problems to determine where social and economic problems exist;
- Assessing needs to understand the nature, scope and extent of problems;
- Ascertaining root causes of problems by linking well-being indicators with one another to enable researchers to identify potential sources of issues;
- Selecting communities for research where the correlation between the various factors being studied is significant;
- Informing the development of policy by informing policy analysts and policy makers on the issues that need to be addressed for people in communities;
- Planning to implement policies to resolve social and economic issues;
- Designing program and services to match desired outcomes;
- Developing programs and services to meet specific community needs;
- Targeting program delivery to places where needs are the greatest;
- Monitoring progress over time by following the changes in the status of people and communities over time;
- Evaluating if programs and service investments have resulted in social and economic change over time.

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The Community Accounts can be used for private sector business development in preparing business plans. They can be used for

- Assessing market conditions;
- Identifying communities where businesses might locate;
- Determining labour market availability, skills and education levels.

Users of the Community Accounts

The data are available to the public, thus can be used by many users for many purposes. For example, they can be used by the public sector, the voluntary community-based sector, the private sector, students and researchers in academic institutions, and interested citizens.

Government

Government can use the Community Accounts at federal and provincial levels for both planning and evaluating. Virtually, all levels of decision-making in a government system can be informed by the Community Accounts data.

- The provincial Cabinet, provincial MHAs or federal MPs can use the Community Accounts to become knowledgeable about the status of the people in the places that they govern and to inform their decisions about government's policies and investment requirements;

- Government policy analysts can replace anecdotal information with real information to assess the actual needs of the people and their communities by preparing social and economic landscapes of communities, regions or the province;
- Departments of government can use the Community Accounts to inform program design and development to meet local, regional or provincial needs;
- Implementers of government programs can better target programs and interventions to areas where problems are the greatest;
- Evaluators can use the data to determine changes in social and economic status over time to assess the impacts of programs.

Health

- The Department of Health and Community Services used the Community Accounts to determine communities where youth were determined to be “at risk” to enable them to target programs more effectively. Managers in the Department indicated that the quality and timeliness of staff analysis improved markedly by accessing the Community Accounts.
- The Division of Child, Youth and Family Services, Department of Health and Community Services has used the Community Accounts to identify Communities “at risk” to determine where Family Resource Centres would be located. Their Partners in Labrador, the Strategic Social Plan Regional Steering Committee, used the Community Account's dynamic output features to determine the best location in that region, and as a result, two Family Resource Centres were established.

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Economic Development

- By using the Community Accounts, the Business Resource Centre in St. John's was able to provide individuals and businesses with better information to produce more accurate and effective business plans.
- A regional office of the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development has used the Community Accounts to help verify population trends in the region as it pertains to Business Development.

Rural Secretariat

- The Rural Secretariat used the Community Accounts to develop profiles of the nine Regional Council regions in the province. Regional Councils were provided with information on the social and economic status in their regions to inform their deliberations on a future vision for each region.
- The Burin Peninsula Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat have used the Community Accounts many times to access all types of data that are used in meetings to provide a background and understanding of the Burin Peninsula region.
- A Regional Planner used the Community Accounts in doing a workshop on proposal writing for the Family Resource Center's Provincial Conference 2006 to educate volunteers and employees on how to access statistical information for an evidence-based rationale to support an organization's need for funding.
- A Rural Secretariat Planner trained a group of aboriginal front line workers on using the Community Accounts to help them increase their research knowledge and ability to use data.

Regional Boards

Regional boards and educational institutions are the deliverers of public services at regional levels. They deliver social services such as health care through health boards, education through school boards, as well as enhance economic development through regional economic development boards.

Prior to the establishment of the Community Accounts, regional data was extremely difficult to access and most boards relied on administrative data. This data provided information on the clients served, but did not provide a context for this information nor information on the needs of the population. The extent of the need for service in a region was based on anecdotal information only, and often resulted in "hit or miss" approach. Furthermore, determining if social and economic progress had been made over time was based merely on those able to provide service rather than improvement in the status.

Data in the Community Accounts was designed to be accessed at regional levels to inform these boards on the specific needs of the population in their regions and in the communities within their regions. This allows better targeting of their programs, services and interventions to achieve greater impact in resolving social and economic problems. This regional level data also enables boards and institutions to compare themselves to other regions. For example, data on specific illnesses allows health boards to determine the illnesses that are most prominent in their region, compare themselves to other regions to identify the severity of these health problems and identify specific communities where these illnesses are most common, and implement specific health care services and preventative interventions to reduce the incidence of these illnesses.

Collaborative approaches across sector are also supported

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evidence-based decision-making using data in the Community Accounts. When Regional SSP Steering committees were operating, which allowed boards and institutions to work together in six regions of the province, data on various sectors could be compiled to depict a regional social and economic landscape. This allowed SSP Committees to identify more holistically communities “at risk” in regions. A Community Accounts features allows users at regional and community levels to see at a glance how communities are faring overall. This enabled regional boards and institutions to begin to explore root causes of problems and act together to remedy problems in a collaborative way.

Regional Economic Development Boards

- The Regional Economic Development Board’s Economic Development Officer used Community Accounts data in Central Labrador to determine aboriginal populations, employment and education.
- The Long Range Red Board and Marine and Mountain Zone Corporation used the Community Accounts to assist with rationale for various proposals as well as for their most recent business plans required by their funding partners.
- The Schooner Regional Development Corporation used the Community Accounts in developing its annual strategic plan for the corporation, assisting commercial clients with business plans and helping communities and community based organizations to develop economic development projects and funding proposals.

(Regional Economic Development Boards Continued)

- The Humber Economic Development Board used the Community Accounts to conduct research to assist communities with proposal development.
- The Economic Development Officer in Marine and Mountain Economic Development Board used the Community Accounts to research labor market occupational distribution by gender in the region.
- The Emerald Zone Corporation (REDB) used the Community Accounts to develop Community Strategic Action Plans for 42 communities by preparing community profiles as marketing tools for the town and for background information on proposals for federal and provincial economic development funding. The development of these plans increased community capacity through teaching community groups (municipal economic policy committees) how to develop, write, and implement strategic plans.
- The Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation used the Community Accounts to gather statistics to include in their work plan, to justify activities in certain sectors such as education and mining, for background information in proposals and to prepare presentations for meetings with municipalities to demonstrate population shifts, education levels, and income levels.
- Exploits Valley Economic Development Corporation used the Community Accounts to develop maps and charts on population, education, income levels, and labor market data (e.g. employment rates, participation rates, and social assistance rates over time and geography) and compare regional statistics to provincial statistics for clarifying information in presentations and reports.
- The Long Range Regional Economic Development Board in Stephenville used the Community Accounts to determine the sample size for interviews with seniors in the region.

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SSP Regional Steering Committees

- The Central SSP Steering Committee used the Community Accounts to assess the number of children under five years of age in communities in the region when developing their early childhood development initiatives.
- The Northeast Avalon SSP Steering Committee used the Community Accounts to complete a needs assessment for their early childhood development strategy. The strategy compiled regional, community and neighbourhood information in areas such as number of 0 to 6 year olds, health status, family income and poverty, and family composition. The information was used to determine areas where children were “at risk” and to provide a baseline for future monitoring of progress.

Education

- A social worker in an urban school used the Community Accounts neighbourhood data to inform neighborhood groups in their design of prevention initiatives for children entering and in school who have not been part of the formal protection services section.
- Regional school boards used the demographic information on the Community Accounts that provided population projections, to make decisions regarding school amalgamation as populations of 5 to 18 year olds declined.

Health

- Data from the Community Accounts were used during the Burin Peninsula Community Health Needs Assessment by Eastern Health.
- The Community Accounts were used by the Integrated Health Authority, Health and Community Services Western’s Child Care and Youth Services to inform their planning, program development and service delivery for the region.
- The Central Health Board used the Community Accounts for strategic planning, service delivery planning, compiling regional/community profiles, projecting service needs through demographic monitoring, determining resource needs for particular services (e.g. to help determine need for long term care home beds and personal care home beds) and monitoring health status and other factors related to health.
- Because of ease of access, the Western Health Care Board was able to increase cost-effectiveness by determining the number of non-pandemic influenza shots to order. Previously, the Western Health Care Board was unable to make such informed decisions because of the time and cost involved in retrieving information.
- Health and Community Services Eastern used the Community Accounts to provide information on the region to enable staff in planning and implementing programs and services.
- The St. John's Primary Health Care Working Group (PHCWG) used the Community Accounts, and in particular the neighborhood-level data, to become informed about the health care needs to complete a capacity assessment for urban St. John's. They plan to use the neighborhood-level data to help assess the determinants of health in this area including educational attainment, employment rates, income levels, and incidence of social assistance. The Working Group also plans to use the Community Accounts' electronic map of urban St. John's that breaks down 95 neighborhoods to help to identify specific areas of need and gaps in services.

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Communities

Municipal Councils can use the Community Accounts for community planning. In the last 15 years, population loss in rural communities has put considerable stress on communities, as their tax base has been eroding and their future economic potential declining with the loss of youth from communities. Demographic projections allow them to prepare in advance for the extent of the population decline they might expect. Because they can compare themselves with other communities, they can also see if they are within the norm or are outliers that may require immediate intervention. Data on demographics in other communities within close proximity allows them to assess possible sharing of municipal services. The demographic data also allows municipalities to plan for infrastructure such as parks for children, arenas, recreation areas and arenas based on projections.

Many municipalities are also involved in community economic development. Data in the Community Accounts allows them to gather the data on the size of the labour force, labour market participation and unemployment, education levels of the population and other indicators that are factors impacting economic development. The Community Accounts are in the process of developing a community safety domain which will enable municipalities to plan for crime prevention and increase safety of residents.

Communities

- In Arnold's Cove, the Community Accounts data was used to develop a profile of the community for community development planning. It allowed the municipality to understand the status of the community compared to other communities and to plan where the community was hoping to make progress based on its status.
- The Town of Conception Bay South used the Community Accounts to complete a neighbourhood enumeration. They have enhanced the capability of the town to strategically plan for the future. The incorporation of this new neighbourhood level information into the Community Accounts provided a broader view of the socio-economic status of the town and allowed the town and its citizens to track progress.
- The Recreation Liaison for the City of Corner Brook has requested access to neighborhood data to enhance community recreation planning and implementation of recreation programs and services.
- The Town Manager in Stephenville used the Community Accounts for municipal planning of infrastructure and programming.
- The Mayor of Belleoram used the Community Accounts for writing proposals for organizations in the community such as the Church, Loyal Orange Lodge, and the Harbour Authority. The town also referred the company who will be operating the Rock Quarry to the Community Accounts for information on the community.

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Voluntary, Community-based Sector

Community organizations can become empowered by the Community Accounts. The Accounts level the playing field so that governments and community groups can obtain and use the same information in their negotiations on community investments. The Community Accounts are designed to inform people about themselves and their communities. The data is organized in a manner that enables people at community and regional levels to inform their social and economic development planning to increase their quality of life. The manner in which the data is presented allows citizens involved in the development of their communities to use data even without expertise in applying data in their efforts.

The voluntary, community-based sector is organized by issues of population groups rather than sectors. The Community Accounts provides information at community levels on many population groups. Organizations can, therefore, access data on such population groups as women, early childhood-aged children, school-aged children, youth, seniors or families in communities, regions or the province as a whole.

Voluntary, Community-Based Sector

- Rural Development Associations have used the Community Accounts to develop proposals and to identify needs for a particular community or area.
- The Community Education Network in Stephenville used the Community Accounts to do research on communities and to assist with their proposal writing.

(Voluntary, Community-Based Sector Continued)

- Baie Verte and Area Development Association have used the Community Accounts on a regular basis to determine the aging population, education levels and medical requirements in each community on the Peninsula. The information was also used to develop proposals for funding.
- The Community Services Council used the Community Accounts to develop a profile of two localities where their case studies on research collaborative governance was being completed.
- The Community Youth Networks used the Community Accounts for statistical analysis and to develop funding proposals related to youth employment in regions.
- Bay St. George Status of Women Council and Gateway Status of Women Council used the Community Accounts when writing funding proposals, to document changes, compare statistics on women and to identify future challenges based on trends.
- The Exploits Valley Community Coalition (Family Resource Center Programs) used the Community Accounts to look at numbers of children in certain areas for programming purposes, to gather information for a business plan, to do up Power Point presentations to the Municipal Council to gather information on the communities currently served for evaluation purposes, report writing, and statistics for writing funding proposals.
- The St. John's Boys and Girls Club used the neighbourhood data in the Community accounts to assess where to offer their programs in the city.
- The Kids Eat Smart Program used the Community Accounts to access community data to assess community needs. This allowed them to determine their funding allocations to each community.

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(Voluntary, Community-Based Sector Continued)

- The Working Group on Poverty, a community-based committee, prepared a social and economic landscape on poverty in the Northeast Avalon using the Community Accounts. They developed this profile for the region by selecting key indicators and compiling data by neighbourhoods in St. John's and by communities in the region as baseline information for identifying areas of concern and as a basis for their planning.
- The YMCA used Community Accounts information in funding proposals to plan for future recreation services and delivery. They also used the Accounts to prepare a presentation to the national YMCA Board to explain the financial and local situation related to YMCA development.
- The Baie Verte and Area Chamber of Commerce used the Community Accounts to gather information on the population of different areas of the region and to determine the potential usage of high speed internet during the implementation of Broadband in their region.

Private Sector and Public Corporations

The private sector often has use for data in the Community Accounts for marketing purposes. This allows them to target their advertising to those areas that are most likely to purchase their goods and services. When companies are determining where to local a business, the Community Accounts can provide information on education levels and labour market conditions. The Community Accounts are particularly helpful to the consultant sector that often

carry out program evaluations for government and voluntary sector clients. The Community Accounts provide baseline information from which progress can be measured.

Private Sector / Public Corporations

- The Newfoundland and Labrador Liquor Corporation head office and regional managers used the Community Accounts to determine the locations of retail liquor outlets across the province.
- NETWORK Newfoundland and Labrador, a public-private partnership developed to provide companies with information to determine the placement of contact centres in the province, used the Community Accounts to provide companies with the community-level information they needed, such as education levels and local labour market conditions.
- An entrepreneur in Labrador used the Community Accounts to see how many children there were in a local area between the ages of 6 and 12 years to determine if there was a market for an after school daycare program.
- An entrepreneur used the Community Accounts to determine the ages of children in an area as research for the potential for an inflatables rental business.
- A local media writer used the Community Accounts to obtain background demographic and labour market data for stories on rural Newfoundland and Labrador.
- The Community Business Development Corporation - Emerald used the Community Accounts for information on unemployment rates, workforce participation, social assistance dependency, education, income, and population when preparing annual business plans and for assisting clients to prepare their business plans.
- A Labrador entrepreneur used the Community Accounts research local housing statistics on rentals versus ownership.

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Post-Secondary Educational Institutions

Post-secondary institutions can use the Community Accounts in a variety of ways. They can assess education levels to determine the needs for general and specific types of education and training in regions. In addition, the Community Accounts can be used by instructors as a teaching tool or as a source of information for teaching courses. In addition, students can use them to complete research and analysis on the province, regions or communities.

Researchers in social and economic fields find the Community Accounts a valuable source of information. They can provide the baseline information on a community or population group being studied which allows them to place their research in a real context and to measure change. It also allows researchers to locate communities with the specific attributes they might require to study an issue such as poverty, crime, or industry. The Community Accounts are particularly useful to researchers carrying out ethnographic studies and case study approaches.

Post-Secondary Education

- Researchers at Community Medicine, Memorial University studying the role of social capital in economic development used the Community Accounts to select communities with high or low levels of social capital and high or low levels of economic resiliency after the fisheries closure in the early 1990s so that comparisons could be made in differing communities.
- Memorial University professors in the Faculty of Business Administration used the Community Accounts as a resource when teaching students in marketing and labour markets.
- Professors in the Faculty of Medicine at Memorial University used the Community Accounts when teaching students in Community Medicine.
- A graduate student in Applied Social Psychology, Memorial University used the Community Accounts in his co-op placement to gather information on neighborhoods served by a school.
- A Political Science student from University of Ottawa on a summer placement with the Western School Board Partnering Committee used the Community Accounts to study poverty and policy by preparing a profile of the area.

Citizens

Unorganized citizen's groups and interested individual citizens can use the Community Accounts to educate themselves on the social and economic status of their community, region and province. The media can use the Community Accounts to report to citizens on the status of the province, regions and communities as public education and to alert citizens to issues and problems in their areas.

