

[Menu](#)[Search](#)[Sign In](#)

Nfld. & Labrador

N.L. government agrees to pay \$45.8M to help compensate victims of church-linked abuse

Justice minister hopes funding will help bring a measure of closure to a dark chapter in province's history

[Terry Roberts](#) · CBC News · Posted: Apr 22, 2026 4:51 PM NDT | Last Updated: April 22



Listen to this article 

Estimated 4 minutes



St. John's lawyer Bob Buckingham represents 91 survivors of church-linked abuse in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Terry Roberts/CBC)

The provincial government has agreed to write a cheque for \$45.8 million to help compensate those who were abused at Catholic-run institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador, with a judge expected to approve the tentative settlement on Friday in St. John's.

It's the latest reckoning in a dark chapter in the province's history.

The tentative settlement was finalized earlier this week between the government and the lawyers representing hundreds of victims who were abused by Christian Brothers, clergy and other church leaders at institutions like the notorious Mount Cashel orphanage and Catholic-run, government-funded schools in eastern Newfoundland.

"It's very significant, and it's going to put money into the hands of survivors that we've been fighting for 30 years," said lawyer Bob Buckingham, who represents 91 abuse survivors.

The courts ruled that the Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporation of St. John's was vicariously liable for the abuse.

The corporation has been in bankruptcy protection since late 2021, and has been liquidating its assets, including churches and other properties, in a historic shakeup of a once-powerful institution.

Roughly \$50 million has so far been raised, with \$37 million distributed to the victims. That's well short of the \$121 million needed to satisfy the proven abuse claims for the more than 350 victims.

It's now clear that the episcopal corporation will not be able to raise enough money to meet its obligations.

WATCH | Province stepping in to help pay victims of church abuse:



New development in effort to pay victims of church-linked abuse in N.L.

▶ April 22 | 3:19

There's been an important development in the effort to compensate victims of church-linked abuse in this province. The bankrupt Catholic archdiocese in St. John's has not been able to raise enough money to meet its obligations. So the provincial government is now stepping in. The CBC's Terry Roberts reports.

Lawyers for the victims have long claimed that the provincial government also bears some liability. That's because many of the victims were either placed in an institution like Mount Cashel, or attended Catholic-runs schools funded by the government.

Both sides have been in talks for several years.

"I think the government is being proactive because the alternative we made clear — we're not going away," said lawyer Geoff Budden, whose firm represents more than 200 victims.

"They chose a better way, in my opinion, which was to proactively negotiate with claimants, counsel with us as representative council to try to address what I think at law has some pretty clear liability here."

Claimants who received compensation in a 1996 government payout, and a subset of victims who were abused by priests, will not receive money from this latest government settlement.

"Some of the men who aren't getting compensated, that has to be explained to them, but they've all understood why it is that that is so," said Budden.

"Those who are getting compensated are relieved that this is on the horizon, assuming, of course, that the court approves it."



St. John's lawyer Geoff Budden is pleased that the Newfoundland and Labrador government has agreed to pay millions in compensation to church-linked abuse victims. (Terry Roberts/CBC)

The justice minister is not commenting because the settlement is not yet approved by the court, but Helen Conway Ottenheimer said in a statement that this settlement is meant to provide additional compensation to the victims, and serve as a further measure of closure.

Conway Ottenheimer's statement does not include any admission of government liability.

Even if the tentative settlement is approved, there'll still be a shortfall of roughly \$40 million. And the episcopal corporation recently lost a court battle over an insurance policy that could have injected millions into the pool of money.

Buckingham and Budden say they are pursuing other avenues for funding, including other religious institutions, but are realistic about whether the victims will get all the money they're owed.

"I think we will increase it over where we are now and I'm certainly going to keep at it until we either get there or all reasonable avenues have been chased down," said Budden.

"Money does not repair the damage that was done to these men and women," added Buckingham.

Barring any last minute complications, the tentative settlement with the government should be approved by Judge Garrett Handrigan of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador during a hearing scheduled for Friday morning.

Budden said the money should start to flow to the victims by the end of the summer.

Popular Now in News

- 1 1 year later, few answers: the 'profoundly rare' disappearance of Lilly and Jack Sullivan**
- 2 Why a salary of \$115K isn't enough to purchase a house in some parts of Canada**
- 3 Pentagon procurement post reveals Canada quietly locked into HIMARS deal**
- 4 Protesters clash with police in Australia after suspected killer of Indigenous girl arrested**
- 5 New Banksy statue appears in London**