



Moving Toward Equity

Employment Equity and Diversity
in the Nova Scotia Public Service

2022–2023

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Moving Toward Equity:
Employment Equity and Diversity in the Nova Scotia Public Service
2022–2023

Respectful Workplace & Corporate Diversity
Nova Scotia Public Service Commission

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Message from Minister

As the minister responsible for the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission (PSC), I am pleased to share the 2022-23 Moving Toward Equity (MTE) report for the Government of Nova Scotia (GNS).

Meaningful action on equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) continues and is a priority within the Nova Scotia Public Service. These annual reports capture our progress and demonstrate our ongoing efforts. We are proud of all the work we do to ensure equity in workplaces across the public service, even while recognizing there is still more to be done.

Through the [*All Together – Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service 2019-24*](#) we provide corporate leadership and support on EDIA. As this strategy ends, I am pleased by how we have measured progress and increased our engagement with and support for those who belong to equity groups to better learn and understand barriers to employment. I'm pleased to share that the PSC is working on the next iteration of this action plan for 2024 onwards.

I am also particularly proud that the PSC worked with and supported 20 departments to complete the Global Diversity Equity Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) assessment. This tool helps departments understand and assess their own departmental EDIA efforts. I look forward to seeing those results in action to help us achieve the equitable organizations we want and will continue to report on their progress next year.

To conclude, I want to thank the individuals, committees, departments, and agencies for their commitment to advancing EDIA across the GNS.

Hon. Twila Grosse

Minister of the Public Service Commission

Introduction

The GNS continues to work towards its goal of being a workforce representative of the diverse public it serves. The All Together Action Plan and the GNS [Employment Equity Policy](#) (EEP) support the Government of Nova Scotia's effort to achieve equitable representation of four designated employment equity groups: Indigenous People, persons with disabilities, African Nova Scotians (ANS) and other racialized persons, and women in roles in which they are under-represented.

While an important focus is placed on the four employment equity groups, the government recognizes and values diversity in all its forms, including sexual orientation and gender identity. The GNS is committed to preventing and removing the systemic barriers to employment and advancement experienced by members of all equity groups, while also taking into consideration the complex nature of the impacts of intersectionality. Please refer to the EEP for more information and definitions of the designated groups.

The PSC plays an important role in the work to achieve the goal of an equitable, diverse, inclusive, and accessible public service. By providing corporate leadership, advice, and support across the public service, the PSC collaborates with departments across the GNS to advance EDIA as per the GNS EDIA action plan: All Together.

Launched in March 2020, the All Together action plan builds on the government's first strategy, Raising the Bar 2014-19 and focuses on four priority areas:

1 . Senior Leadership Accountability

2 . Leadership Development

3 . Removing Barriers

4 . Measurement of Progress

The annual *Moving Toward Equity* (MTE) report provides an update on the government's actions and activities toward achieving employment equity in the public service for the 2022–23 fiscal year. This report covers 20 departments with a combined workforce of more than 12,000 employees.

Departments are encouraged to use MTE as a resource to identify what others across government have done, and where opportunities exist to collaborate and celebrate successes for future EDIA initiatives. As you read through the report, you may note that the acronyms used (D&I, EDIA, EDI, IDEA) vary based on what departments reported and what they are currently using. Corporately we are moving toward EDIA to reflect the importance of accessibility in our work.

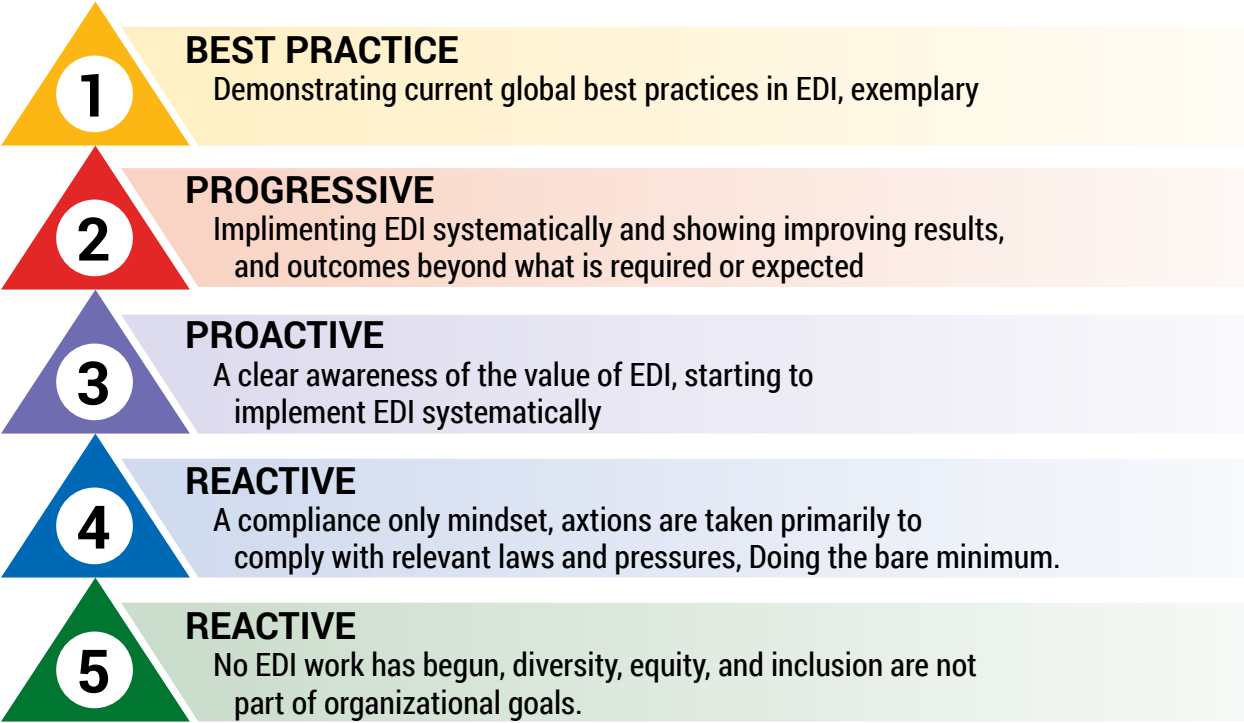
Global Diversity Equity Inclusion Benchmark Assessment (GDEIB)

In response to the Auditor General 2019 recommendations, departments were asked to complete the Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) Assessment. The assessment and accompanying resources were provided to department EDIA leads/contacts during an introductory meeting in June 2022. They were asked to complete the assessment in their departments and to submit the scores to the Public Service Commission, for collation by the end of October 2022, to meet the established timeline for the Office of the Auditor General.

- The Global Diversity Equity and Inclusion Benchmark is an assessment and measurement tool used to support organizations globally in the development and implementation of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI), and accessibility best practices
- The GDEIB has four key areas of assessment, with several categories under each area. Progress in each category is scored on a five-point scale ranging from best practice to inactive, as pictured on the next page:

All departments were successful in completing the GDEIB assessment, providing departments with rich, comprehensive, and valuable information from which to make informed decisions, assist with human resource and employment equity planning, and enhance strategic and business planning for the future.

The Five Levels of Progress



The GDEIB Model



Diagram above from Global Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Benchmarks: Standards for Organizations Around the World © 2021, Nene Molefi, Julie O'Mara, and Alan Richter. Used with permission. All Rights Reserved.

Demographic Data

Nova Scotia’s Labour Force

Nova Scotia’s labour force¹ increased by 1.3% as of July 2023 from 529,800 to 536,800 (+7,000 people).

Designated Groups (March 2022)

Labour Force Group	Labour Force	Share of Labour Force	Data Source
Indigenous People (age 15+)	24,655	5.1 per cent	Census 2021
Visible Minority (age 15+)	52,000	10.7 per cent	Census 2021
Black (age 15+)	13,275	2.7 per cent	Census 2021
Women (age 15+)	264,500	49.3 per cent	Labour Force Survey (LFS) March 2022
All persons (age 15+)	514,300		LFS March 2022
Persons with Disabilities (age 25-64)	78,400	19.7 per cent	Canadian Disability Survey (CSD) 2017
All persons (ages 25-64)	397,600	100 per cent	LFS 2017

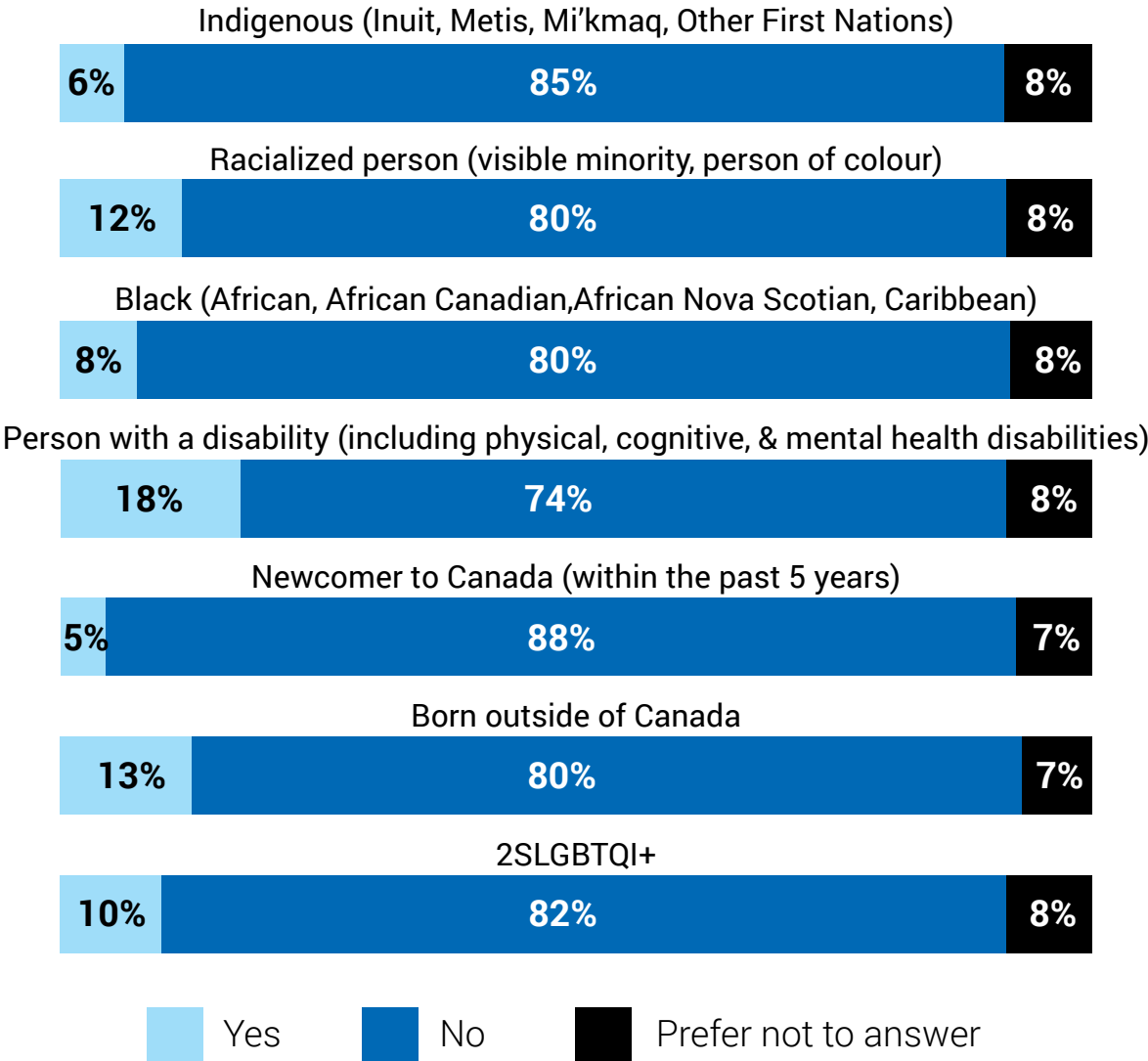
¹ The labour force refers to those who were 15 years of age and over and were employed or unemployed and looking for work during the survey reference week.

Nova Scotia Public Service & Government Workforce Census

As of April 1, 2023, the Nova Scotia Public Service had a total of 12,192 employees.

The table below, entitled Diversity of Respondents, outlines the percentage breakdown of employees who self-identified in the 2022 *How's Work Going* (HWG) survey. Approximately 41 per cent of the civil service (permanent employees and contract employees) population responded to this question; therefore, it does not represent the full population of the workforce.

Diversity of Respondents



Accessibility Highlights

The initiatives and activities supporting the goal of being an inclusive and accessible employer are reflected throughout this document. In addition, there are several highlights below which support the GNS commitment to being a more equitable and barrier-free province and to lead by example for all Nova Scotians.

Government of NS Accessibility Planning:

The Accessibility Act requires the Government of Nova Scotia to have an accessibility plan and update its plan every three years.

Between April and December 2022, the Accessibility Directorate in cooperation with 26 departments and agencies (through the Accessibility Interdepartmental Committee) completed and gained cabinet approval for the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2022-2025.

The plan was publicly launched December 19, 2022.

This is government's second accessibility plan and marks a milestone toward an accessible province. Notable changes for the 2022-2025 plan:

- Updating priority areas to align with provincial accessibility standards.
- All government departments include Deputy Minister-approved commitments and will be working toward advancing accessibility related to department mandates and business plans.
- Applying an accessibility lens into government policy.
- Aligning accessibility commitments with existing equity, diversity and inclusion priorities across government.
- Including six government-wide commitments for all departments to support.

Progress updates:

- By March 2023, 50% of departments completed implementation plans (for fiscal 2023-24) attached to accessibility commitments.

- The PSC and Accessibility Directorate developed a statement of work to hire a vendor to develop accessibility training for government managers. The training will be developed in collaboration with a first voice advisory committee and launched in 2023-24.
- Several departments began conversations around embedding accessibility into department equity, diversity and inclusion plans.
- The Public Service Commission's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team added the 'A' to their team's title to acknowledge accessibility as part of its scope, promoting an intersectional lens.

For more information, please refer to the [*Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan 2022-2025*](#).

Common Departmental Highlights

As per All Together, there are a number of implementation points under each of the four priorities. Below is a summary of common accomplishments departments have reported on for certain implementation points.

Senior Leadership Accountability

Implementation Point - Senior leaders will establish measurable strategic objectives, report on their progress for their departments, and be held accountable for diversity and inclusion in their departments.

Many departments reported:

- New or continued senior leadership representation on their departmental EDIA Committees.
- Senior Leadership teams participating in and offering additional EDIA training outside of what is offered in the Learning Center.
- Senior leaders including a target specific to EDIA in their annual performance goals.

Leadership Development

Implementation Point - Departments will set hiring goals for leadership positions and follow an established process for designating positions. To help develop diversified leadership talent, departments will also work closely with unions to designate positions when opportunities arise.

Many departments reported:

- Designating one or more positions, including some leadership positions for one or more of the designated groups.
- Encouraged hiring managers to use the Diversity Hiring Panel Program to ensure diverse representation throughout the hiring process including on the interview panel.

Implementation Point - Leaders will receive training to build cultural competence.

Many departments reported:

- Supporting equity staff to enroll in the Leadership Development Program (LDP).
- Many or all leaders participating in the Diversity for Leaders course through the Learning Center.
- Providing training or development opportunities around EDIA and for EDIA staff outside of what is offered in the Learning Center including formal training as well as informal mentoring/coaching.

Implementation Point - Leaders will demonstrate an understanding of current diversity and inclusion tools and initiatives such as the EEP and guidelines developed to support equity employees.

Barrier Identification/Solution

Implementation Point - The PSC will support departments in the Employment Systems Review (ESR) process.

Many departments reported:

- Committing to/or participating in a departmental ESR, which is supported by the Public Service Commission.

Implementation Point - Consultation with communities and partner groups about the barriers they face will be integral to the process.

Many departments reported:

- Completing accessibility/other EDIA related reviews of documents, processes, policies in consultation with first voice to remove and prevent barriers.
- Increased efforts in recruiting candidates from diverse backgrounds by sharing vacancies in community, and in other creative ways outside of posting on the Government of Nova Scotia job page.

Measurement of Progress

Implementation Point - The PSC will work with Departments to promote participation in the HWG survey and Count Yourself In! (CYI) workforce demographic surveys.

Many departments reported:

- Increasing staff participation in the How's Work Going (HWG) Survey.

Implementation Point - Departments will engage in periodic pulse checks to assess the progress and impact of initiatives and activities.

- All departments completed the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) assessment to understand the current state of EDIA in their department.
- Some departments have completed departmental EDIA action plans.

Departmental Highlights

Departments were required to report on their highlights related to each priority area in All Together. These are just some of the many things departments have achieved over the 2022-23 fiscal year.

Advanced Education (AD)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Developed its vision, mission, and mandate as a fairly new department with EDIA woven throughout.
- Established an EDIA Committee to support senior leaders to monitor, assess, and report on EDIA performance metrics.
- Included EDIA related goals in annual performance plans.
- Reviewed potential policy and program adjustments through an EDIA lens.
- Developed a strategy map and accompanying operational plan for achieving the vision, mission, and mandate that includes actions focused on EDIA.

Leadership Development:

- Designated six positions. Three of which are in leadership positions.
- Ensured hiring panels included at least one member who represents an equity group.
- Ran 15 competitions with a total of 903 applicants. 435 applicants identified as employment equity applicants. 14 job offers were accepted and seven offers were accepted by individuals who self-identified as employment equity applicants.
- Nominated employees for the Leadership Development Program.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Offered accommodation options where necessary and possible for clients and key partners. This included closed captioning in Microsoft Teams meetings,

flexible working arrangements, and ensuring cultural competence by doing appropriate research.

- Moved the department into a new office space. As part of the move, accessibility was taken into consideration during the design phase. This resulted in some of the following:
 - Wide hallways in some areas
 - An automatic push button for the entrance door
 - Procuring an accessible dishwasher for the kitchen
 - An accessible washroom in the Minister's Executive suite
 - Procuring high quality, easy-to-use teleconferencing equipment (e.g., audio, visual)
 - Creating a quiet room for an individual to use should they become overstimulated in the workplace.

Measurement of Progress:

- Increased staff participation in the How's Work Going (HWG) Survey from 82% to 100%.
- Established a HWG Action Team to ensure that work is done to maintain and improve scores in future years.

Department of Agriculture (AG)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Hired a designated Director of Engagement, Equity and Belonging.
- Updated the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on diversity initiatives and needs within the department and supported staff in engaging with EDIA work.

Leadership Development:

- Encouraged hiring managers to use the Diversity Hiring Panel Program and the Employment Equity and Fair Hiring Policies and Guidelines.
- Encouraged hiring managers to reach out to employee networks and/or local diverse organizations when sharing employment opportunities.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Committed to participating in the Employment Systems Review (ESR), which is supported by the Public Service Commission.
- Established a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to create and develop measurable actions for an Accessibility Implementation Plan to remove accessibility barriers in programs, services, and workplaces.
- Developed an internal bi-weekly employee newsletter that includes a section on diversity and inclusion initiatives within the department and across government, including hiring practices.
- Held the first 'Grow Where You're Planted' event at the Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in May where African Nova Scotian high school students spent 24 hours on campus and learned about agricultural careers, research and technology, and post-secondary options.

Measurement of Progress:

- Increased participation in the HWG Survey.

Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage (CCTH)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Continued the implementation of the first departmental Human Resources Plan and renewed it for 2023-25. This plan is helping to build a workforce that is more inclusive and reflective of the people and communities served, creating a workplace that is equitable, welcoming, collaborative, and engaging, while providing opportunities for development and advancement.
- Provided weekly email updates from Deputy Minister/ Associate Deputy Minister including EDIA highlights.
- Piloted an ESR with support from the PSC.
- Created a monthly EDIA calendar.
- Led the province in the inaugural commemoration of Emancipation Day on August 1, 2022.

Leadership Development:

- Migrated human resource EDIA tools for managers to a new SharePoint site.
- Supported staff to enroll in the Leadership Development Program (LDP).
- Designated positions at the leadership level.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Completed an accessibility review of the Acadian Affairs and Francophonie Community Funds program.
- Identified EDIA barriers including lack of transparency/ clarity in the process for approving applications to designate positions and competitions for diverse candidates in specialized fields including library professions.

Measurement of Progress:

- Continued to designate and track designated positions across the department. In 2022-23 the department reported 21 designated positions across four equity groups. Seven of the 21 designated positions were excluded non-union positions; the other 14 were unionized.
- Posted 109 job competitions where 1894 (or 39%) of 4849 applicants for those jobs, identified as employment equity applicants.

Communications Nova Scotia (CNS)**Senior Leadership Accountability:**

- Shared job postings broadly, including through universities and specific associations and government's employee networks, including the Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network, Pride Nova Scotia Government Employee Network and the Black Men's Network and the Immigrant/Newcomer Network, to name a few.
- Continued to work with government's web strategy team to ensure a more user-friendly Government of Nova Scotia website, with international accessibility standards built into the development.

- Continued the development of draft guiding principles for communications to guide efforts to make communications practices accessible and inclusive.

Leadership Development:

- Worked to develop a training plan for Client Services staff to increase internal capacity with accessible and inclusive design.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Made efforts to ensure more people see job postings, recognizing that people don't necessarily see government postings in traditional ways.
- Developed a checklist for accessible design to be used by Client Services in project management.
- Developed a vendor resource to provide consistent French communications.

Community Services (DCS)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- The organizational culture of DCS continues to include diversity and inclusion as an important component. The impact of the mandatory anti-Black racism (aBr) e-learning continues to be witnessed in the development of programs and policies and in the delivery of services. aBr goals continue to be identified in staff's performance evaluations.
- Internal program and policy development recognized the need to collaborate with First Voice community members through community engagement sessions. This has been an invaluable process resulting in programs and policies that richly attend to the needs of the communities DCS serves.
- Executive leaders continued to engage in collective professional development and senior leaders have augmented their learning, through the workshops facilitated by the Association of Black Social Workers (ABSW), and through personal learning: attending community events and continual engagement with family and friends.

Leadership Development:

- Senior leaders continued to collaborate with union representatives to discuss the barriers and restrictions on designating positions and the resulting impact in the department's ability to provide culturally attentive services. Despite this, there has been an increase in the hiring of management staff who identify being of African ancestry.
- Continued support for staff of African ancestry continues through monthly conversations facilitated by ABSW, monthly book club meetings, quarterly meetings with executive members, and the annual healing session and leadership summit.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Continued to prioritize African Nova Scotian staff for Leadership Development Training and supported the participation of seven Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) students, (five who graduated 6/2023) and one Master of Social Work student (who will graduate 10/2023).
- Led collaboration with Dalhousie University and other government and community organizations to develop an Africentric BSW program at Dalhousie University.
- The Inclusion, Diversity and Community Relations (IDCR) division continued to action the strategies of their multi-year strategic plan. An outcome of this year's leadership summit in collaboration with the PSC is underway to provide career development workshops that will focus on areas such as resume writing, interview skills, coaching, etc.
- The IDCR division developed a Community Relations position, that will engage with community members to support DCS' efforts to reduce barriers to various communities.

Measurement of Progress:

- All level of management are expected to continue to access and support their staff as they engage with the application of aBr.
- The IDCR division implemented "Conversation for Change" - a monthly event that invites all DCS staff to engage in conversation aimed at creating increased awareness of the issues that oppress various marginalized communities. Participation in these

conversations is voluntary and currently there are 198 staff registered.

Economic Development (ED)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Through the hiring of the Director, Organizational Excellence, a portfolio approach was created to address the planning and reporting on EDIA deliverables.

Leadership Development:

- 100 per cent of leaders have participated in the Diversity for Leaders Course.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Considered inclusivity when designing funding supports and ensured that there is an EDIA lens applied when partnering with funding organizations.

Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Continued to implement the D&I Plan including reviewing internal practices around the use of pronouns and supporting staff with an understanding of diversity through Lunch and Learns.
- Executive Directors included EDI goal in their professional development.

Leadership Development:

- Held indigenous learning session from Wksitkanu for leadership.
- Increased the number of employees who identify with equity groups within the leadership team.
- Designated several positions.
- Committed to meet obligations under the Nova Scotia Accessibility Act.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Addressed barriers to participation in the workplace including flexible hours, accessible and assistive technologies/strategies and work tools/equipment,

ergonomic assessments of the built environment, and a focus on culturally responsive practices in meetings and interactions.

Measurement of Progress:

- Continued to gather results from the large-scale assessments across the PSC such as HWG and continue to seek first voice consultation through interdepartmental initiatives.
- Created a survey to evaluate onboarding practices more clearly through an equity lens via the Directors Forum and the D&I Team.

Environment and Climate Change (ECC)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Required Executive Directors to include diversity and inclusion objectives and goals in their performance plans.
- Approved the Department's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Workplan to be implemented over three years.
- Promoted diverse representation on departmental hiring panels.
- Participated in educational activities to advance competencies in matters relating to EDIA.

Leadership Development:

- Implemented the Departmental Diversity Hiring Panel.
- Nominated employment equity staff to PSC's Leadership Development Program (LDP).
- Supported staff in completing Certificates in Diversity and Inclusion Development.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Continued to participate in the Black Youth Mentorship Development Program (BYMDP) to create meaningful opportunities for African Nova Scotians, Black and racially visible communities.
- Continued to participate in the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) program to welcome immigrants and newcomers, who as interns had the

opportunity to gain experience in the province's work environment and develop network connections.

Measurement of Progress:

- Increased participation in the HWG Survey due to a concerted effort by ELT to raise awareness about the importance of completing the survey.

Finance and Treasury Board (FTB)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Joined the Accessibility Interdepartmental Committee. Following this, Senior Leadership prioritized the development of a departmental 2022-2025 Accessibility Plan and completed the Accessibility Implementation Planning and Monitoring Tool.

Leadership Development:

- Monitored, reported, and discussed growing a diverse leadership team and maintaining high completion levels for diversity-related training.
- Engaged in consistent sharing of diversity-related information via departmental e-mails. The communications promoted awareness and education of diverse celebrations and information on diversity-related training opportunities.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Increased diversity within new hires and that staff are trained in several diversity-related subject matters.
- Continued to monitor and identify any hiring and promotional barriers that may be impeding a diversified workforce.

Measurement of Progress:

- 83 per cent of staff are trained in the diversity course, and 82 per cent have completed the Introduction to Disability Course.
- 71 positions were hired in the last fiscal. 48 per cent of the positions were filled by self-identified equity candidates.
- 75 per cent of staff participated in the HWG Survey.

Fisheries and Aquaculture (DFA)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Established IDEA as a guiding principle within the strategic framework for the department; ensuring the department applies an IDEA lens to all work.
- Created a leadership working group who met regularly to help structure the behaviours and learning expected from senior leaders and staff to put the guiding principle into action.
- Established a Community of Practice for the IDEA guiding principle, where staff are to meet quarterly to share learning and best practices of integrating and applying the IDEA principle.

Leadership Development:

- Asked hiring managers to consider designating any upcoming or opening positions.
- The Deputy Minister offered a three-part workshop series to all leadership and staff on the following topics: Unconscious Bias, Power and Privilege, and Words Matter. All three virtual workshops were well attended and allowed staff to ask questions and contemplate these topics with colleagues.
- Created an IDEA Library with books on inclusion and belonging to support DFA's learning.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Participated in the BYMDP to employ two students.
- Prioritized the IDEA Action Plan as a department priority.

Measurement of Progress:

- 100 per cent participation rate for the 2022 HWG Survey.
- Posted 33 job competitions of which 12 job offers were accepted by applicants who self-identified as equity individuals.

Health and Wellness (DHW)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Demonstrated the importance of equity in the department, by reclassifying the inaugural position of

Director, Equity and Engagement as Executive Director, Equity and Engagement. This included additional staff supports, and increased focus on health system equity and accountability.

- Created a regular space for Equity and Engagement Division to present and build leadership capacity, such as the Health Leadership Team and the ELT meetings.
- Completed the first Staff Equity Strategy and Action Plan which includes 25 actions that will be implemented over the next three years.

Leadership Development:

- Presented and received support for pilot project, LEAP Leadership Equity Achievement Program (LEAP) to support and increase representation of equity staff in department's leadership through capacity building, mentorship, and on-the-job-assignments.
- Designated 6 positions.
- Participated in workshops and training opportunities relating to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Accessibility (EDIRA). Some of these include White Fragility by Robin DiAngelo, Executive Speaker Series, and Tajikeimik Indigenous workshop.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Worked to identify various barriers impacting the attraction, retention, and sense of belonging for equity staff through the department's first Staff Equity Strategy and Action Plan. Some of these actions included:
 - Creating leadership pathways for equity staff
 - Conducting regular policy audits to ensure all equity-related policies at the department are being adhered to; and
 - Reviewing the staff onboarding and exiting processes to ensure relevant data is collected, and feedback used to improve retention initiatives.
- Established the first French Language Services Advisory Committee providing staff the platform to participate in advancing Francophone and Acadian opportunities among staff, and with community partners.

Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Committed to providing an inclusive, accessible environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and acknowledges and supports diverse groups and identities, including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, and abilities.

Leadership Development:

- Staff who are racially visible have completed leadership development training with the PSC.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Added department-specific EDIA language to its template for job postings.
- A member of IGA's staff has volunteered and undertaken training to participate in the PSC's Diverse Hiring Panel program.
- Undertook a cross-jurisdictional comparative review of accessibility legislation at the federal and provincial-territorial levels.

Measurement of Progress:

- Continued to maintain a highly diverse workforce, with 30 per cent of staff contributing to the diversity of our department. This reflects an increase of 10 per cent from 2021-22.

Department of Justice (DOJ)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Encouraged the IDEA Committee to action initiatives and support divisions in moving ideas and initiatives forward. Members were also supported by their senior leaders.
- Executive Directors have established divisional IDEA goals and are expected to report on their efforts and achievements in attaining these set goals.
- Executive Directors are committed to have a diverse panellist on every hiring panel and to include specific questions related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Executive Directors are required to report on EDIA progress to the Deputy Minister and Associate Deputy Minister annually.

Leadership Development:

- The Deputy Minister has led various culturally educational sessions to help equip leaders.
- During African Heritage Month, the Deputy Minister invited advocates from the African Nova Scotian community with disabilities to educate staff on their unique barriers.
- During Accessibility Week, the Deputy Minister invited accessibility advocates and first voice individuals to share their thoughts to further enhance the development of managers and potential managers.
- Helped develop future leaders through student placements and mentorship programs.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Made efforts in recruiting candidates from diverse backgrounds. Aside from posting vacancies on the Government of Nova Scotia job page, the department created a community key partner list to distribute and share vacancies.
- Utilized townhall meetings as an avenue to engage community about vacancies which has resulted in diverse hiring.

Labour Skills and Immigration (LSI)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- The Engagement, Equity and Belonging Branch (EEB) supported senior leadership teams to collect input on building branch specific equity, diversity, and inclusion plans.
- The EEB held Bridging the Gap Between Community and Government, the department's annual Executive Leadership Retreat'.
- The Labour Services Branch (LSB) leaders included a target specific to EDI in their annual performance goals.
- The Labour Board leadership team implemented its EDI

Agency, Board and Commission Recruitment Framework to attract more diverse board members.

- The Skills and Learning Branch (SLB) and Adult Education Division (AED) organized several all-staff presentations on topics such as Black History Month, Asian History Month, and Indigenous History Month.
- The Safety Branch implemented an Action Plan designed to support communications and engagement, learning and development, advancement of employment equity and accessible/inclusive work environments within the scope of EDI.
- The Immigration and Population Growth Branch (IPGB) established a set of actions that form a commitment toward EDI.
- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) made gender-based analysis training mandatory for all employees and board members.
- The Corporate Policy and Services Branch (CPSB) worked with key partners to address accessibility concerns in office spaces.

Leadership Development:

- 27 leaders across LSI completed the departments Inclusive Leadership Program.
- EEB held an information session with PSC on Designated Positions with more than 65 leaders across the department participating.
- EEB held Ally Week in April of 2022 which presented an opportunity to hear first voice experiences from members of equity-deserving communities and have courageous conversations on privilege, intersections of power and oppression, and examine allyship and why it is important to further equity and inclusion at LSI. More than 133 LSI staff participated in the week.
- The LSB designated four positions.
- The LSB facilitated EDI training for the Arbitration Advisory Committee members and 40 Labour Board members who participated in adjudication.
- The SLB partnered with the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and the Toronto Regional Economic Inclusion Council to support cultural competency development among employees and with key industry

leaders who partner with SLB to deliver programs and services.

- The Safety Branch designated an Inspector Specialist position to increase equitable representation within this role and an internship position to provide entry-level opportunities for recent equity-deserving graduates seeking to pursue a career in the public service.
- The IPGB Managers ensure that all employees have EDI goals included within their annual performance plan to increase overall competence.
- The NSAA managers continue to work with the PSC to designate positions. Currently, NSAA has 11 positions designated.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- The EEB identified a need to educate employees in access, equity, diversity, and inclusion and now offers Respect, Equity, Access, Diversity, and Inclusion (READI), a program for all non-management employees. The first cohort in September 2022 had 22 employees complete the course.
- The EEB created the Cedar Room, a space for LSI employees to find peace, rest, and heal. The Cedar Room is a place for employees to recharge away from their desks. The name Cedar was chosen for the room because of its significance in multiple cultures, especially within Mi'kmaq communities where cedar is considered a sacred medicine because of its protective qualities.
- The SLB Youth Initiatives division supported neurodivergent employees and those living with mental health challenges in a variety of unique and responsive ways to ensure they are working to their full capacity and feel psychologically safe and supported in the workplace.
- The IPGB worked to better understand barriers faced by interprovincial migrants with special consideration for those who are also immigrants.
- The Safety Branch entered a partnership with Access Language Services (ALS) to offer interpretation services in a wide range of languages and translated a variety of safety resources that are available to the public.

Measurement of Progress:

- All programs administered by EEB have an evaluation and reporting process to review lessons learned and improve each program for the next cohort.
- The LSB Labour Board launched the Access to Justice (A2J) Initiative in partnership with Justice Canada's research team which invited tribunals to complete a survey to generate a report on tribunal processes and practices for planning and development work.
- The Safety Branch administered the Guiding Minds at Work survey in support of psychological health and well-being within the branch.

Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Engaged in conversations to participate in a ESR with support from the PSC.
- Instructed senior leaders that all hiring panels must have an EDIA representative on every hiring panel.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Developed and launched an EDIA resource page on the departmental SharePoint site.

Natural Resources and Renewables (NRR)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Created a new designated position for a Manager, Diversity and Inclusion to be accountable for the development and implementation of a departmental action plan, including strategic initiatives that are focused on creating a more diverse, inclusive, and equitable work environment.
- The Deputy Minister hosted bi-monthly webinars for staff to share updates on department priorities and answer staff questions.
- Included diversity goals in management performance appraisals.

Leadership Development:

- ELT and Directors participated in a facilitated session on personal and professional benefits of embracing diversity. Leaders were actively engaged in discussions which translated into applying an EDIA lens to their work.
- Promoted a culture of diversity and inclusion through outreach and engagement by encouraging and supporting staff to participate in employee networks.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Applied employment equity and fair hiring policies and guidelines at various steps in the hiring process including screening and assessment.
- Encouraged employees from equity groups to share information within their communities about working in the department and provincial government more broadly.
- Continued to build relationships with employment officers within Mi'kmaq organizations to strengthen awareness of our department's recruitment process and job opportunities.
- Hosted a diversity event at the Shubenacadie Wildlife Park and Oakfield Provincial Park to inform, encourage, and engage individuals of African descent, newcomers to Nova Scotia, and other marginalized communities about the importance of natural resources in Nova Scotia and the related services, jobs, and recreational opportunities available.
- Identified digital accessibility as an important consideration for all staff when hosting virtual events, meetings, documents, and other means of engaging and sharing content digitally.

Measurement of Progress:

- Worked in partnership with Human Resources Business Partners (HRBPs) to monitor and report on the use of fair hiring guidelines and employment equity policy in hiring processes.

Public Service Commission (PSC)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- The Client Service Delivery (CSD) Pods all have an EDIA Plan in place.
- The Policy, Planning, and Accountability (PPA) Unit provided an opportunity during its team meetings to discuss EDIA issues and find ways to incorporate the social equity lens or gender-based analysis lens into their work.
- The Workplace Employee Communication and Experience (WECE) unit used an EDIA lens to ensure cultural communication tenets are identified, considered, and utilized.
- The EDIA Unit established monthly meetings with the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism and quarterly meetings with EDIA Departmental leads and employee networks.

Leadership Development:

- Supported and encouraged staff in designated positions to participate in leadership development and professional development opportunities.
- Adjusted the design of the LDP to include cultural competence e-learning for all levels, and inclusive leadership in the Supervisor/Manager levels.
- Certified 6 new racially visible coaches for Manager LDP 360 coaching.
- Designated all vacancies in the PPA Unit and Workforce Intelligence and Systems (WIS) Unit to employment equity designated groups.
- The CSD Division designated 80 per cent of all competitions to job seekers from equity groups.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Worked with employees on career development plans, supporting opportunities for career growth and advancement.
- The EDIA Unit created a new Self Identification tool that will replace the previous Count Yourself In census. The new tool will allow employees to self-disclose several aspects of their identity and provide the PSC with an accurate picture of the workforce to address gaps and barriers to employment.

Measurement of Progress:

- Began tracking equity participation in LDP through a voluntary self-disclosure survey.

Public Works (PW)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Identified diversity as one of the top three priorities for the department.
- Senior leaders developed personalized land acknowledgments.

Leadership Development:

- Established a working group in partnership with Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) to develop a plan to address education and awareness, as well as initiatives to support a more diverse, safe, and inclusive environment for everyone.
- Leaders have participated in three workshops on Anti-Black Racism from Shumba Consulting and are working in partnership with Bear River First Nation and Chief Carol Potter to receive Treaty Education training.
- Provided education and awareness sessions on how to have conversations about inclusive language and appropriate terminology.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Heard from leaders in Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities who have identified barriers to employment for their members which will support the development of a new training strategy.
- Highway Construction Services in partnership with the Mi'kmaq Economic Benefits Office in Sydney have adapted tenders that will now require that contractors seek to employ 10 per cent of their workforce from Mi'kmaq communities across the province.

Seniors and Long-Term Care (SLTC)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Committed to applying an EDI lens to the work within government and external with various partners and for those the department serves and has relationships with.
- Focused on hiring staff that is reflective of the population that serves Nova Scotians who rely on continuing care and Long-Term Care (LTC) services.
- The Deputy Minister shared their personal goals and performance plan with Senior Leadership which included working collaboratively with the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, engaging with teams to discuss ways in which equity could be strengthened, and ensuring that employees have at least one goal related to inclusion within their personal development plan.

Leadership Development:

- All senior level staff have identified professional development that includes training in EDI and are working with their teams to do the same.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Supported employees' goals for professional development as well as committee work that interests them.
- Senior Leadership participated in education sessions and shared resources amongst one another to support and ensure equity staff that their experience at the department is celebrated and successful.
- Considered diversity and inclusion throughout infrastructure plans. This included a holistic approach requirement in the LTC space and design documents in social, physical, mental, and spiritual areas to best meet care outcomes.

Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services (SNS-IS)

Senior Leadership Accountability:

- Senior Leadership is expected to support staff in working on the IDEA Action Plan committees and groups as well as implementing the initiatives brought forward from the plan.

- Empowered staff to learn about IDEA through formal training, as well as informal mentoring/coaching, to build awareness, understanding, and skills in a practical way.
- Explored partnerships with private/public sector entities supporting persons with disabilities.
- Incorporated IDEA as part of the Performance Measurement Framework.
- Mandated various training modules on diversity and related subjects and audited completion of these mandatory courses.

Leadership Development:

- Included diverse panel members in hiring panels and followed the EEP and guidelines.
- Partnered with the Office of Workplace Mental Health to deliver the Having the Conversation workshop to 75 managers.
- Nominated several individuals from diverse backgrounds to the LDP.

Barrier Identification and Solutions:

- Worked with the PSC to ensure job postings were known to selected communities and had a representative from a diverse community sit in on hiring panels.
- Welcomed 9 students from the BYMDP.
- Created the SNS-IS IDEA Corner on the department SharePoint Site.
- Included four commitments in the GNS 22-25 Accessibility Plan.
- Launched a new employee orientation program.
- Implemented Gaelic, Arabic, Mandarin, and Mi'kmaq knowledge testing options in all of Access Centres in-person and online.

Measurement of Progress:

- 78 per cent of employees completed the How's Work Going Survey.

Conclusion



As we recognize the many EDIA successes in the 2022-2023 year, we also emphasize that this is continued work to create and sustain inclusive workspaces where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and able to bring their full selves to work every day. The government continues its commitment to having a workforce that is inclusive, culturally competent, and free of discrimination, that values diversity and is representative, at all levels, of the population it serves.

