

Accountability Report

2016–2017

Public Service Commission
July 2017

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1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Public Service Commission for the year ended March 31, 2017, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Public Service Commission Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Public Service Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Public Service Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Public Service Commission management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Public Service Commission 2016-2017 Business Plan.

Public Service Commission

Original signed by

The Honourable Tony Ince
Minister

Original signed by

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner

2.0 Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner

Thank you for taking the time to read the Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2016-2017 Accountability Report. We are pleased to highlight the PSC's achievements from the past year that have reinforced our commitment to younger workers, diversity and inclusion, as well as employee engagement and client service delivery.

We are focused on making the public service an employer of choice to attract the best candidates. This year, we launched a new job posting service, SuccessFactors, that makes it easier to apply for jobs in the Nova Scotia public service and improves the process of starting a new job in government.

We continue to focus on recruiting younger workers and are pleased to report that more than half of new employees hired into the public service in 2016-2017 are younger workers (aged 35 years or younger). We continue to enhance opportunities for youth by reducing barriers and encouraging applicants with entry level experience to apply to government.

We continue to provide improved flexibility for public servants through FlexNS, a workplace program that offers employees choices about when and how they work. It maximizes flexibility in how people are assigned, hours they work, the spaces in which they work, and how technology is used to enable workers and their managers to adopt practices that promote better work-life balance while meeting operational demands.

The PSC remains committed to promoting diversity and inclusion through government's diversity strategy, "Raising the Bar". In 2016-2017, we created the Diverse Hiring Panel program, which provides hiring managers with over 40 employment equity employees who are trained to participate in interview panels. We have also enhanced the process for designating vacant positions for members of employment equity groups.

'HR by Design' is a comprehensive strategy for cultivating and nurturing a nimble, responsive and skilled public service in which employees have a quality employment experience as they build their careers. The PSC looks forward to building on this strategy, providing modern HR support to government employees and departments, so they are equipped to serve Nova Scotians with pride and excellence.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

The Honourable Tony Ince
Minister

Original signed by

Laura Lee Langley
Commissioner

3.0 Introduction

As an internal service provider, the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission's (PSC) responsibility is to ensure that the Nova Scotia Government has the human resources (HR) required to manage, create and deliver excellent, high-quality programs and services to citizens. We achieve this by developing and implementing corporate human resource policies, programs, services and standards that help government departments meet their HR goals. In addition, the PSC is the government's agent for collective bargaining with unions that represent direct government employees and provides advice to government on collective bargaining in the broader public service.

This year's accountability report is based on the progress made toward achieving our two main outcomes during the fiscal year 2016-2017 as they relate to our mandate and core functions. The PSC's main outcomes remain to be an engaged, productive workforce to support government's priority goals, and to improve client service delivery through accountability and engagement.

To achieve these outcomes, strategic actions were identified in the PSC's 2016-2017 business plan, available here: <https://novascotia.ca/government/accountability/>. The strategic actions demonstrate PSC's support of government's 2016-2017 priority goals (people and education), as well as our core function areas (client service delivery, labour/employee relations and benefits, corporate business development and support, and public service renewal, now known as people and culture).

Each strategic action is linked to specific performance measures to provide evidence that an activity/program is achieving its intended outcomes. These measures, along with the progress the PSC has made for each strategic action during fiscal year 2016-2017, are described in the remainder of this report.

4.0 Summary of our Performance

Overall, the PSC has made significant progress on our two main outcomes through the attainment of deliverables under each of our strategic actions. Most of the strategic actions from our business plan are multi-year projects, each with a set of key deliverables that must be achieved each year. Many of the strategic actions were carried forward to fiscal year 2017-2018 with new sets of deliverables.

In support of government's stated commitment to hire youth, the PSC continued to focus on the recruitment and retention of younger workers. We increased the number of job postings for entry-level opportunities, removed barriers – such as experience requirements - for younger and less-experienced workers, and launched, 'Make it Here', an initiative designed to attract younger workers to the civil service.

This year, the PSC launched a new [on-line recruitment system](#) (SuccessFactors) to improve our ability to conduct proactive, strategic recruitment. We also enhanced our recruitment marketing strategies by increasing our presence on social media, and for the second consecutive year, the PSC successfully administered a common pool of existing positions available to government departments to create co-operative and internship positions for younger workers. As a result of these initiatives, more than half of the new employees hired into the public service were younger workers, surpassing our initial target of 5%.

The progress made on the strategic actions to support our core functions continue to highlight our commitment to continuous improvement in serving our clients. During 2016-2017 the PSC renewed its focus on workforce planning through "HR by Design", a workforce planning initiative designed to cultivate an expert, highly trained, and motivated public service. Deputy Ministers were provided with tools and resources to develop human resource plans for their departments. When departments plan-for and make changes that support their human resource needs, the results can be felt through a strengthened public service that is ready to deliver quality programs and services to our citizens.

These are just a few of the many initiatives and programs that demonstrate the PSC's progress in achieving our two main outcomes. The remainder of this report will outline the specific progress made on each strategic action and the results of each performance measure as indicated in our 2016-2017 business plan.

5.0 Measuring our Performance

5.1 Progress on Government Priority: People

<i>Younger Workers 2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action</i>		
<p>In partnership with other government departments, the PSC will attract younger workers to the public service by supporting government’s younger worker initiative.</p>		
<i>Performance, Accomplishments & Progress</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In fiscal year 2016-2017, the PSC was in Year 2 of our five-year commitment for younger worker programs and initiatives. • More than half of the new employees hired into the public service during fiscal year 2016-2017 were younger workers. • As many entry level positions as possible were highlighted on the government jobs website. • The PSC continues to provide supports, such as resume writing and job application tutorials, to encourage applicants with entry level experience to apply to public service. • We successfully launched a new on-line recruitment system (SuccessFactors), which improves our ability to conduct proactive, strategic recruitment marketing, recruitment management and onboarding activities. This includes an increased use of social media to target specific audiences, such as younger workers. • The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018. 		
<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	 <i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	 <i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Successfully filling more than 70, targeted, entry level positions within the NS public service.	This measure was completed by the end of March 2016 when more than 70, targeted, entry level positions were filled by younger workers. Highlighting entry level opportunities will continue as work in this area progresses.	This measure has been achieved and although it will not be highlighted in future, work to hire younger workers will continue in a robust manner.
5% of all new hires to the public service will be younger workers.	More than 50% of the new hires to the public service were younger workers.	This measure is carried forward.
Participation of younger workers (aged 35 and under) who are gaining public service experience through the various enhanced employment programs under the government’s younger worker initiative (e.g. internships, co-op terms, and government’s summer hiring program).	The common pool of positions for hiring interns, co-op terms and summer students was fully utilized. Positions will be added for 2017-18.	This measure is carried forward.

5.2 Progress on Government Priority: Education

<i>Youth Programs 2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action</i>		
<p>Through our involvement in government's younger worker initiative, the PSC will build stronger programs and partnerships that encourage government departments to utilize co-operative and internship positions for younger workers.</p>		
<i>Performance, Accomplishments & Progress</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the second consecutive year, the PSC successfully administered a common pool of existing positions available to government departments to create co-operative and internship positions for younger workers. • The PSC is participating in a cross-departmental senior officials working group, led by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, to support the achievement of government's youth objectives. • The PSC had a successful year of hiring interns, co-op, and summer students. The actions accomplished under this priority support government's commitment to retaining youth in the Province of Nova Scotia. By reducing barriers and creating more entry level positions, the PSC is providing opportunities for younger workers that open doors to a solid career in the Nova Scotia government. • The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018. 		
<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Participation of younger workers (aged 35 and under) who are gaining public service experience through the various enhanced employment programs under the government's younger worker initiative (e.g. internships, co-op terms, and government's summer hiring program).	A common pool of positions was created and fully utilized by departments for hiring interns, co-op, and summer students.	This measure will be expanded under the merged younger workers strategic action.

5.3 Progress on our Core Responsibilities and Services

<i>Workforce Planning 2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action</i>		
Support the workforce planning and human resource needs of departments by creating “HR by Design,” a workforce planning initiative that focuses on two main elements: a skilled public service, and a quality employment experience for workers.		
<i>Performance, Accomplishments & Progress</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Ministers have, or are in the process of developing, HR plans for their departments that will identify human resources needed, as well as priorities and strategies to help them achieve the goals of the organization. • Workforce planning will support and enable departments to maximize their human resources through talent management, engagement and succession planning, to strengthen our public service and prepare it for the future. • The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018. 		
<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Percent increase in the corporate Talent Capacity Index as per the “How’s Work Going?” employee survey and other similar survey tools.	Results of the 2017 “How’s Work Going?” employee engagement survey will be available in Fall 2017.	This measure has been carried forward. More indicators to measure progress will be determined in fiscal year 2017-2018.

*HR Policy Review
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action*

Implement the recommendations outlined in the HR Policy Review Action Plan and initiate work to update, streamline, and modernize policy content based on the feedback gathered from policy content owners and consultations held in 2015-2016.

Performance, Accomplishments & Progress

- The HR Policy Review is progressing and is nearly complete.
- In 2016-2017, three corporate policies were updated, including a significant review and update of the Employee Personnel Record Policy.
- In addition to the three policies that were updated, 21 remaining corporate policies are flagged to be reviewed and updated. Of the 21 remaining, review work began on 15 policies in 2016-2017. It is anticipated that the review and update of the remaining 21 policies will be completed in fiscal year 2017-2018.
- The updating of corporate policies shows progress on the HR Policy Review and early success in the goal to review and update all corporate HR policies by the end of next fiscal year.
- The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018.

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>→ Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>→ Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Number of policies reviewed, updated and streamlined based on the HR Policy Review Action Plan.	Three corporate policies reviewed, updated and published in the Corporate Administrative Policy Manual - Human Resources Management Manual 500.	This measure has been modified to reflect the percentage of policies reviewed.

*Client Services
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action*

Through client consultation, evaluate the effectiveness of PSC client services and refine HR processes with a specific view on lean practices (e.g. applying Six Sigma methodology), create service standards and measures, and apply technology solutions to assist in client service delivery (e.g. MyHR, SuccessFactors).

Performance, Accomplishments & Progress

- In response to the findings and recommendations of a review of the Short Term Illness (STI) Support Program, work will continue for this strategic action. In addition, we have accumulated two years of client satisfaction data on the STI Support Program and are monitoring for trends as we improve the process and modify program parameters for STI services.
- Client service surveys and measures were implemented for the STI Support Program, with plans to add surveys and measures for other areas such as recruitment.
- The PSC has started a project with the Worker’s Compensation Board (WCB) to initiate improvements to processes and services for work-related injuries that will identify areas for injury reduction and claims management efficiencies.
- Further activities to leverage our capacity for Lean Six Sigma are being evaluated and opportunities for incorporating further process improvements are underway in areas such as Classification.
- A new recruitment and selection software system (SuccessFactors) was implemented in January 2017 to replace CareerBeacon.
- Through the "Doing Business with the PSC" initiative, we have drafted sample service standards that will be launched to clients in early fiscal year 2017-2018.
- The Managers’ Service Centre within MyHR has been created and will be promoted more actively to provide another service channel to government departments.
- An operational plan for MyHR has been developed to identify areas of content management that will increase client self-service levels and satisfaction. Enhancements to MyHR were implemented at the end of fiscal year 2016-2017 to further improve client access and service.

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>→ Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>→ Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Percent reduction in estimated time to complete client service processes (where Lean principles have been applied).	The time between approval to fill a position has been reduced from 11 days to 5 days, and the time to process and post a position vacancy has been leaned out from six steps to three steps.	This measure has been achieved and, therefore, discontinued.
Number of service standards defined.	This work has been drafted and will be confirmed in 2017-2018.	This measure has been carried forward.
Percent of clients who describe their service experience as “satisfied.”	Data to support this measure is unavailable due to the transition from CareerBeacon to SuccessFactors.	This measure has been carried forward.
Number of days between client decision to fill vacancy and selection process completed.	Data to support this measure is unavailable due to the transition from CareerBeacon to SuccessFactors.	This measure has been slightly modified to specify the competition completion process.

***"Raising the Bar" Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action***

Continue the implementation of the corporate diversity and inclusion strategy, "Raising the Bar," by focusing on the following priority areas for improvement: diversity and inclusion training; the collection of employee diversity demographics; related policies; and awareness of various diversity and inclusion programs in the public service.

Performance, Accomplishments & Progress

- The PSC developed a Diverse Hiring Panel Program that provides hiring managers with access to over 40 employment equity employees who are trained to participate on interview panels. Having this roster of panelists in place provides a tool for hiring managers to use to ensure a diversity lens is placed on the hiring process and that equity is represented on hiring panels.
- In October 2016, a new streamlined application process was put in place to approve and track the number of designated positions within government. This provides hiring managers one way to help reach their department's equity goals, as well as allows for the tracking of designated positions.
- 10 employment equity employees graduated from the pilot "Pathways to Advancement" program, which is an individually-customized professional development program for employees from designated employment equity groups.
- Another development pilot designated five seats in the Leadership Development Series for members of the African Canadian Women in Public Service.
- The new learning and development calendar is offering a certificate in "Diversity and Inclusion Development." In addition, the PSC has been actively participating in an interdepartmental working group for Treaty Education in the public service.
- Input was collected on creating inclusive signage for gender-neutral washrooms.
- The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018.

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measure</i>	➔	<i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	➔	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
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Percent increase in representation of equity groups within the public service using the "Count Yourself In" (CYI) Census tool.

The following representation of designated groups in the NS public service is based on the results of the 2016 CYI Census. This data serves as a baseline that will continue to be monitored and will be compared to the 2016 NS Labour Force Census data once it is released.

This measure has been carried forward.

Designated Group	NS Public Service*	Nova Scotia Labour Force±
Aboriginal People	2.2%	3.3%
African Nova Scotians and Other Racially Visible	8.2%	4.6% (Visible Minority including Black)
Persons with Disabilities	9.2%	9.9%
Women	59.5%	48.9%

*These percentages reflect only the persons who completed the CYI Census. Approximately 6,000 employees completed the census (over 50% of the NS public service).

± Source: National Household Survey (NHS), 2011. Refer to Appendix 1 for definitions and data sources.

*"Raising the Bar" Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action*

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measure</i>	<i>→ Results as of March 31, 2017 →</i>	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Increased awareness and enrollment in diversity and inclusion related training.	Between fiscal years 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, there have been increases in diversity training programs offered through the PSC learning calendar including enhanced Diversity & Employment Equity training, and a workplace culture program delivered by the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia.	This measure has been slightly modified to include other development offerings.
Number of positions filled by equity group applicants.	A new streamlined application process for designated positions was put in place to track the number of designated positions within government. Between the initiation of the process in October and March 31, 2017, there were nine designated positions. As a new measure, this number better reflects the impact of diversity and inclusion work.	This measure has been carried forward.

***"Pride in the Public Service" Employee Engagement Strategy
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action***

Continue the implementation of the 2015-2018 corporate employee engagement strategy, "Pride in the Public Service," by: working with managers and leaders in government to develop and enhance transformational leadership skills and behaviours most associated with successful engagement outcomes; continuing to work on anti-stigma/self-awareness mental health training; incorporating Psychological Health and Safety (PH&S) into corporate policy; implementing test cases for workplace flexibility (FlexNS).

Performance, Accomplishments & Progress

- 11 groups within six government departments are participating in FlexNS with numerous departments expressing their interest.
- The biennial "How's Work Going?" survey has been revised based on consultation with managers and employees. The 2017 survey will be launched in May 2017.
- The Province was acknowledged by the Mental Health Commission of Canada for its completion in the Case Study Research Project.
- The "Road to Mental Readiness" training for law enforcement staff was launched in February 2017. This training provided employees a greater understanding of health as a continuum and increase awareness of resources available within the organization to maintain their psychological health.
- A program was developed to support manager engagement and approximately 115 managers in three cohorts are participating in 2017-2018.
- Eight new certificate programs were launched in the Learning and Development calendar and the PSC achieved Advanced Standing partnerships with Dalhousie University for Manager and Executive Leadership Development Programs (LDP) and with NSCC for the Supervisor LDP.
- The development of programs and training under this strategic action demonstrate our progress towards supporting the four pillars from the engagement strategy: internal communications, opportunities, well-being, and job support.
- Training has helped bring awareness of employees' well-being, which positively influences the potential to respond to employee needs in mental health.
- The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018.

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
2,000 public servants receive "The Working Mind" training by the end of fiscal year 2016-2017.	Over 2,000 employees have completed the "Working Mind" training.	This measure has been modified to include the "Road to Mental Readiness" training program.
Percent increase in corporate Leadership Index as per the "How's Work Going?" employee survey and other similar survey tools.	<p>Results from the 2017 "How's Work Going?" survey will be available Fall 2017.</p> <p>Other information monitored included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ FlexNS Program (11 programs (six departments) are underway or will soon be started with upwards of 650 participants as of March 31, 2017) ○ Manager Engagement project (three groups with approximately 115 managers) ○ Leadership Development Program (250 leaders successfully completed the program) 	This measure has been replaced with indicators that will better reflect progress on specific outcomes, including employee's access to information, internal communications, and other measures as per the employee engagement strategy.

*Public Sector Bargaining
2016-2017 PSC Strategic Action*

Develop an efficient, effective and streamlined approach to public sector bargaining that will innovate and enhance labour relations throughout the public sector.

Performance, Accomplishments & Progress

- Discussions continue with employers and major unions. There is mutual interest in streamlining processes, however, impediments in the public sector labour relations regime, such as a fragmented public sector with large number of collective agreements and independent employers, have prevented significant progress.
- The priorities for this multi-year strategic action will continue into fiscal year 2017-2018.

<i>2016-2017 Performance Measures</i>	<i>Results as of March 31, 2017</i>	<i>Changes to Measures for 2017-2018</i>
Number of negotiated and ratified collective agreements that align with the public service sustainability mandate.	Approximately 12 agreements settled in fiscal year 2016-2017. Settlements aligned with the sustainability mandate.	This measure has been carried forward.
Reduction in time to settle collective agreements.	<p>Bargaining across the public sector is proceeding efficiently and with due diligence on the part of the employer.</p> <p>The employer remained committed to negotiating agreements within the public service sustainability mandate as its priority over a reduction in length of time to settle collective agreements.</p>	This measure has been carried forward.

6.0 Financial Results

	2016-2017 Estimate	2016-2017 Actual	2016-2017 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$ thousands)		
Departmental Expenses			
Client Service Delivery	7,936	7,514	(422)
Employee Relations	1,926	1,939	13
Office of the Commissioner	490	366	(124)
People and Culture	2,821	2,643	(178)
Corporate Business Development & Support	6,043	6,016	(27)
Total: Departmental Expenses	19,216	18,478	(738)
Additional Information			
Ordinary Revenue	-	-	-
Fees and Other Charges	-	-	-
Ordinary Recoveries	-	(93)	(93)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	-	(93)	(93)
TCA Purchase Requirements	-	-	-
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	192.4	184.4	(8.1)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation: Variance is due to temporary vacancies and operational efficiencies including rent savings attributable to a lease reduction.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation: Variance is due to a recoverable salary from Public Services and Procurement Canada for OH&S and Learning Centre course recoveries.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation: N/A

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation: Variance is due to temporary vacancies.

7.0 Report on Disclosure of Wrongdoing

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of this Act is:

- a. A contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b. A misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c. An act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d. Directing or counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing

During fiscal year 2016-2017, the Public Service Commission received 0 disclosures of wrongdoing.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2016-2017
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A