



Accountability Report

2018–2019

Service Nova Scotia



© Crown copyright, Province of Nova Scotia, July 2019
Accountability Report 2018–2019
ISBN 978-1-55457-983-9

Contents

- Accountability Statement2
- Message from Minister and CEO3
- Financial Results4
- Measuring Our Performance5
 - Priorities.....5
 - Core Responsibilities.....6
- Supplemental Information and Appendices8
 - Interesting facts about Service Nova Scotia8
 - Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*9

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Service Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2019 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Service Nova Scotia Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of Service Nova Scotia's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Service Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia 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 Service Nova Scotia 2018-2019 Business Plan.

Original Signed By

Hon. Patricia Arab
Minister

Original Signed By

Joanne Munro
Deputy Minister

Message from Minister and Deputy Minister

It is our pleasure to present the Accountability Report for the Office of Service Nova Scotia. This document reports on the Office's activities as outlined in our 2018-19 Business Plan.

There are about five million client interactions each year with Service Nova Scotia. It is one of government's main client-facing channels delivering a range of programs and services to citizens. Through its work and commitment to Nova Scotians, Service Nova Scotia is contributing to the province's economic growth.

The Accountability Report is our opportunity to highlight for you some of our innovative and transformational accomplishments over the past year. This includes the progress we are making on modernizing the four registries and reducing red tape for our citizens and businesses. It also highlights our work with Communications Nova Scotia and the Department of Internal Services to advance the digital program to make it easier for people to access government programs and services. Service excellence for all our clients underlines absolutely everything that we do.

The team at Service Nova Scotia delivers an extensive list of programs and services efficiently and effectively. They are innovative, collaborative and creative. We work together to build a stronger Nova Scotia.

Original Signed By

Honourable Patricia Arab
Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

Original Signed By

Joanne Munro
Deputy Minister, Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services

Financial Results

Office of Service Nova Scotia			
	2018-19 Estimate	2018-19 Actual	2018-2019 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
CEO Chief Executive Office	387	354	(33)
Strategy and Corporate Services	10,402	11,904	1,502
Client Experience	38,882	40,272	1,390
Program Modernization	30,688	29,146	(1,542)
Total: Departmental Expenses	80,359	81,676	1,317
Ordinary Revenue	719,545	703,742	(15,803)
Fees and Other Charges	8,560	8,247	(313)
Ordinary Recoveries	1,525	437	(1,088)
Total: Revenue, Fees, And Recoveries	729,630	712,426	(17,204)
TCA Purchase Requirements	3,718	2,148	(1,570)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	654.5	640.6	(13.9)

Departmental Expense Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia expenditures were \$1.3 million 1.6% higher than estimate, primarily due to increased reserve for impaired fines \$2.8 million and Summer students of \$0.4 million offset by reduced Petroleum Product Volume Tracking project of (\$1.2) million and net operating expenses \$0.7 million.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia's revenues were (\$17.2) million or (2.4%) lower than estimate, primarily due to decreased Motive Fuel Taxes (\$9.0) million, Tobacco Tax (\$8.4) million, Tax on Private Sales of Used Vehicles (\$2.5) million, delayed Petroleum Product Volume Tracking project (\$1.2) million, and net other revenue (\$0.5) million, offset by increases in Vehicle Registrations \$2.6 million Corporate Capital Tax \$1.8 million.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia's Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were (\$1.6) million or (42.2%) lower than estimate due to project timing of deliverables being revised and change cash flow requirements.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (13.9) FTE's.

Measuring Our Performance

The annual Accountability Report for the Office of Service Nova Scotia (SNS) reports on the progress achieved in meeting the outcomes, commitments and targets outlined in the 2018-19 Business Plan. SNS tracks service standards and progress on key initiatives that support Government's priorities using a balanced scorecard comprised of internal and external key performance indicators and service standards.

Priorities

By placing an emphasis on investing in technology, continuous improvement and governance to support program and service excellence Service Nova Scotia supports government priorities and strives to provide the highest quality services to the citizens and businesses of Nova Scotia.

Accomplishments

Registries Transformation

- Continued the government-led, multi-year transformation of the major registries - Land, Joint Stock Companies, Motor Vehicle and Vital Statistics - to improve service for all registry clients. Significant project milestone activities were completed during the 2018-19 fiscal year to move the project forward;
- Commenced the implementation stage of the modernization of the Registry of Joint Stock Companies (RJSC) and Vital Statistics Registry. Both registries are expected to be fully operational during the up-coming fiscal year;
- Work is well underway on the registries of Motor Vehicles and Land with the next phase for both expected to commence in the next fiscal year.

Enhancing Digital Services

- In collaboration with the Internal Services Department and Communications Nova Scotia, Service Nova Scotia developed a Nova Scotia Digital Strategic Action Plan for the transformation of digital services across government to make it easier for people to do the things they need to do with government;
- In collaboration with the Internal Services Department, determined high-level requirements for key digital program platform offerings (i.e. Digital Identity, Payment, and Notification services) to advance these common foundational offerings;
- Continued to support partnering programs and departments on their digital transformation initiatives. Highlights include delivering an Online Dealer Service to make it easier for car dealerships to have a car titled and an Online Ticket Lottery Permit Service to make it easier for community groups or individuals fundraising to apply for a lottery permit.

Reducing Red Tape

- Continued to work closely with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to better serve the citizens and businesses of Nova Scotia, and through service

enhancements and process improvements across the Office's programs and services, helping exceed the government's \$25 million burden reduction target;

- Introduced legislation to lower the burden on starting new businesses in Nova Scotia. This included SNS adopting a new service standard to lower the time to incorporate a business to 3 days, setting incorporation fees to the lowest in Canada, and waiving business registration fees for businesses incorporated in another province or territory.

Delivering for Nova Scotians

- Continued to modernize the delivery of the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP), including policy enhancements and improvements to the digital experience – making it faster and easier for clients to apply, check the status of their application, and receive their rebate. This year HARP assisted over 41,000 clients;
- Service Nova Scotia supported the Department of Justice (DOJ) in ensuring the legal market for cannabis is well-regulated, with the health and safety of Nova Scotians being highest priority. SNS continues to support issues including emerging products in the legal marketplace.

Core Responsibilities

In addition to our commitment to provide excellent services to Nova Scotians every day, SNS accomplished the following during the 2018-19 fiscal year:

- Continue our Client Experience Commitment that we are respectful, fair, responsive and inclusive of everyone interacting with Service Nova Scotia. This commitment is posted in every public-facing SNS service location;
- Rolled-out telephone hearings across the province to help resolve residential tenancy disputes as part of on-going changes to modernize the Residential Tenancy program and enhance government support for both tenants and landlords in Nova Scotia;
- Introduced the ability to apply online for ticket lottery permits, making it easier and faster to organize fundraising events for sport teams, legions, religious organizations and other non-profit groups;
- Helped advance the Open Government initiative by increasing the cumulative number of new datasets from SNS to 61;
- Awarded silver level certification in the Excellence, Innovation and Wellness Standard from Excellence Canada, a non-profit organization;
- Continued to improve the client experience at Access Nova Scotia Centres, including improving infrastructure and adopting more efficient operational processes;
- Continued our efforts to modernize legislation, to ease burden where possible while also ensuring the public is protected, as well as to ensure a better reflection the people we serve and ensure better inclusion of all Nova Scotians. Examples of this included, but are not limited to, strengthening oversight of funeral homes, introducing a new gender identity option for birth certificates, and amending the Marriage Act to better reflect the needs of Nova Scotians;

- Deployed the Citizen and Business Feedback Strategy, collecting information on our services from those we serve to inform decision-making related to service excellence, program excellence, Red Tape Reduction, and public protection.

Performance Measures

Measure	Target FY 18/19	Results FY 18/19
Percentage of in-person clients at Access Nova Scotia centres served within 20 minutes	80%	84%
Percentage of Government of Nova Scotia contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	70%	70%
Annual percentage increase in online transactions	5%	5.2%
Percentage of digital uptake for online vehicle permit renewal services	40%	38%
Percentage variance of period 10 budget forecast to year-end actuals	<2%	1.65%

Supplemental Information and Appendices

Interesting facts about Service Nova Scotia

- Service Nova Scotia has over 60 datasets on the Government of Nova Scotia Open Data portal. Examples of information include popular baby names, active condominium corporations, fishing license vendors and provincial gaming activity;
- More than 1,000,000 clients were served at 13 Access Nova Scotia Centres and seven Registry of Motor Vehicle Offices;
- The Government Contact Centre, administered by SNS, answered over 350,000 calls;
- SNS issued 218 Chase the Ace lottery licenses during the 2018-19 fiscal year;
- SNS also conducted 9 tobacco seizures in 2018-19, which netted 8,117 cartons of illegal cigarettes;
- SNS continues to support Halifax Connects, a not-for-profit initiative organized to assist Halifax's most vulnerable citizens access basic services and support every September, helping under-served members of our community obtain photo identification cards and birth certificates.

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 Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the 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 counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by Service Nova Scotia.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2018-2019
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A