



Moving Toward Equity

Employment Equity and Diversity
in the Nova Scotia Public Service



2019–2020

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Moving Toward Equity:

Employment Equity and Diversity in the Nova Scotia Public Service 2019–2020

Nova Scotia Public Service Commission

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Message from Minister

As the minister responsible for the Public Service Commission, I am pleased to present the 2019-2020 Moving Toward Equity report for the Government of Nova Scotia. As government, we endeavor to embrace the changing population of the Nova Scotia public service through our commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace that is representative of the people we serve.

March 2020 marked the launch of All Together: An Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service. With a focus on leadership accountability, leadership development, barrier identification, and measurement this corporate strategy provides a framework for departments to ensure we have a diverse and inclusive public service where all employees can succeed and thrive.

We encourage employees to participate in the various diversity committees and employee networks that exist in government. These employee-led and executive-championed networks provide opportunities for idea exchange, broader education and awareness, and personal and career development, particularly in key areas of leadership and strategic thinking.

While we are proud of the progress we have made, there is much more work to do and change to come. I want to thank the individuals, committees, departments, agencies, and employee networks for their enthusiasm and commitment to this important priority.



Tony Ince, Minister
Public Service Commission

Introduction

The Government of Nova Scotia Employment Equity Policy supports government's goal of being a workforce that is representative of the population it serves. In Nova Scotia, employment equity efforts seek to achieve equitable representation of four designated employment equity groups: Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, African Nova Scotians 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 government is committed to minimizing the systemic barriers to employment and advancement that are experienced by members of equity-seeking groups.

Although this is a 2019-2020 report, it is our responsibility and important to acknowledge that we are not as far as we would like to be in dismantling the systemic barriers that still exist for our employees. The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to providing a workplace that is free of discrimination, is culturally competent, and values diversity, strives to be inclusive for inclusion, and provides equitable opportunity.

Organizations that are more diverse and inclusive support greater employee engagement and enhanced productivity. This report provides an update on the government's actions and activities toward achieving employment equity in the public service during the 2019–2020 fiscal year.

Demographic Information



Nova Scotia Population

Nova Scotia's population grew by 11,895 residents, or 1.24 per cent, reaching a high of 971,395 as of July 1, 2019.

Nova Scotia's labour force decreased by 2,400 in July 2019 to 498,900, meaning those who were 15 years of age and over.

Designated Groups

The Province of Nova Scotia's Employment Equity Policy defines Indigenous or Aboriginal people as persons who identify themselves as status Indian, non-status Indian, Inuit, or Métis.

Statistics Canada defines Aboriginal identity as including persons who reported being an Aboriginal person, that is, First Nations (North American Indian), Métis, or Inuit; and/or those who reported Registered or Treaty Indian status, that is, registered under the Indian Act of Canada; and/or those who reported membership in a First Nation or Indian band. Aboriginal peoples of Canada are defined in the Constitution Act, 1982, section 35 (2) as including the Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada.³

Racialized persons are defined as those who self-identify as being other than Aboriginal people and who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour, according to the Government of Nova Scotia's Employment Equity Policy.

The Employment Equity Policy defines persons with disabilities as persons who identify or believe that an employer or potential employer is likely to consider that the workplace environment may create a barrier. These barriers must be due to a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, psychiatric, or learning impairment whether or not the disability can be seen/recognized by others. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognizes the right of persons with disabilities to work on an equal basis with others. This includes the right to the opportunity to gain a living by work freely chosen or accepted in a labour market and work environment that is open, inclusive, and accessible to persons with disabilities.

¹ This figure was taken from the Finance and Treasury Board website for daily statistics. <https://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20190930008> ² This figure was taken from the Finance and Treasury Board website for daily statistics. ³

The most current language uses the term “Indigenous” with the understanding that it is a broad term encompassing many distinct groups and sovereign nations within Canada.

Women in occupations or positions where they are under-represented in the workforce are considered a designated group.

The table below outlines the percentages of people in the Nova Scotia labour force who identified as a member of one of the four designated employment equity groups, according to statistics collected by the federal government.

Designated Group	Nova Scotia's Labour Force
Indigenous People	5.6%
Visible Minority (including Black)	6.5%
Black ²	2.4%
Persons with Disabilities (ages 15–64)	9.9%
Women	49.1%

<https://explorecareers.novascotia.ca/persons-disabilities#:~:text=Nova%20Scotia's%20employment%20rate%20for,place%2C%20out%20of%20ten%20provinces>

⁴ National Household Survey (NHS), 2011.

The Nova Scotia Public Service

As of March 1, 2020, there were 11,766 active employees. Note that this count excludes employees working with outside agencies, MLAs, judges, and board members.

Normally, when we speak of positions in government, we speak in terms of full-time equivalencies (FTE). The FTE estimates are a financial measure of what government is spending on staffing. The 2019-2020 FTE estimate for government was 10,364. The FTE estimates show the total number of approved funded positions each department has to meet for its business plan objectives in the coming year. For the purpose of this report, we also use the number of FTEs to better understand who is working in government. It is important to note several people may occupy one FTE position. For example, three seasonal employees who each work four months equals one FTE.

Government Workforce Census

The table below outlines the representation of the four designated employment equity groups based on those who completed the 2018 census. The Count Yourself In! workforce census was voluntary and employees could choose not to complete the survey or not to self-identify as a member of a designated group. This has been identified as a limitation and updated methods of data collection are being discussed.

Designated Group	Nova Scotia Public Service (2018)
Aboriginal people	3.6%
Racialized persons (including Black)	8.6%
Persons with disabilities	11.8%
Women	54%*

**This number is a representation of women in the Nova Scotia public service but does not reflect specific under-represented roles, data for which is currently unavailable.*

Source: Count Yourself In! workforce census – 2018. Refer to the appendix for definitions. 2.6 per cent of those who self-identified as black also identified as African Nova Scotian.

The following table compares the Nova Scotia labour market availability of designated groups to the representation of these groups in the Nova Scotia public service. Data is based on information collected in the *Count Yourself In!* workforce census.

Group	Nova Scotia Labour Force	Nova Scotia Public Service
Indigenous	5.6%	3.6%
Black	2.4%	4.4%
Immigrant/newcomer	6.1%	8.7%
Persons with disabilities	9.9%	11.8%
Women	49.1%	54%

Indigenous people continue to be under-represented in the public service. Recruitment and Hiring Guidelines for hiring Indigenous persons have been in development, and we continue to work with the Indigenous communities to help remove the barriers and to increase Indigenous representation in the Nova Scotia Government. Government continues its work with our Mi'kmaq partners on important initiatives, such as Treaty Education.

The federal government does not collect labour force statistics on African Nova Scotians and racialized persons (including Black) specifically, so it is not possible to draw a direct comparison to determine equitable representation. Senior leadership and management in the public service lacks representational diversity from certain designated groups, including African Nova Scotians and racialized persons. Strategies to address career progression have included targeted leadership development training, talent management programs, and increased engagement with African Nova Scotians and racialized persons employees.

While there does not appear to be under-representation of persons with disabilities in the Nova Scotia public service, there is still considerable work to do to achieve equitable representation at the manager and senior leader levels. Work continues with our partners at the Accessibility Directorate, Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network (NSDEN), and other departments to ensure an accessible, inclusive work environment for employees and potential employees with disabilities.

Although many departments demonstrate proportional gender representation or a greater representation of women, there are some departments where women are under-represented. Transportation Infrastructure and Renewal, Municipal Affairs, and Lands and Forestry are predominantly male-represented departments, ranging from 60 per cent to 85 per cent male. Regarding staff distribution, NSGEU's membership is 61 per cent female, while only 5 per cent of CUPE's membership is female.

Immigrants make up 6.1 per cent of the Nova Scotia labour force and 8.7 per cent of the public service. While we don't have accurate data, there is a lower percentage of racialized employees in manager and senior leadership roles, which would include immigrants and newcomers.

Workplace Culture – Employee Survey Results

How's Work Going? (HWG) is a survey conducted every two years by the Public Service Commission to measure employee engagement. Employees are asked questions relating to their job, well-being, opportunities, and leadership. In 2019, 67% of all employees responded to the HWG survey (this includes permanent, term, and contract employees). The following are some notable results:

- 61% feel that their department implements meaningful activities and practices that support a diverse workplace
- 11% feel they have experienced discrimination in the previous 12 months (15% in 2017). Discrimination is reported as being based on disability, age, and sex.
- 77% of employees feel they are treated respectfully at work (71% in 2017)
- 84% of employees feel that their managers treat them with respect (79% in 2017)

The survey results provide a reflection of how employees view their work environment and give departments the opportunity to identify deficiencies so they can work toward increasing engagement with employees. Survey results provide a high level aggregate of what employees are feeling in the workplace, and further investigative work may be required to broaden our understanding of employees' experiences.

Departmental Initiatives

The Government of Nova Scotia is committed to being a workforce that is free of discrimination, values diversity, and is representative, at all job levels, of the designated employment equity groups: Aboriginal people, African Nova Scotians and other racialized persons, persons with disabilities, and women in occupations or positions where they are under-represented. Members of the designated groups have historically faced barriers to employment and career advancement in all sectors. The Employment Equity Policy aims to improve representation of designated groups within the public sector at all levels.

The following section provides highlights of employment equity efforts and initiatives at the department level.

Communications Nova Scotia

- In partnership with procurement services, Communications Nova Scotia (CNS) is applying a diversity and inclusion lens to our supplier list. Suppliers can now self-identify as belonging to one or more employment equity groups when applying through the onboarding process.
- CNS continues to award diversity bursaries to post-secondary students on an annual basis. The application process challenges young people to think creatively about diversity and inclusion. Three winners were recently selected, receiving a \$1,500 bursary for continuing their education (increased from \$1,000 last year).
- CNS have had some recent success filling positions through the Public Service Commission's "youth opportunities" pool. CNS made six "youth Opportunity" hires in 2019-2020. Moving forward, we will continue to try to fill positions with young talent when/where it makes sense to do so.
- CNS continues to use government's annual Career Fair to connect with a wider range of young Nova Scotians. CNS held 14 competitions in 2019-2020, with almost one-third of the finalists identifying themselves as belonging to one or more designated employment equity groups. CNS also used the Public Service Commission's "youth opportunities" pool to fill six co-op and intern positions in 2019-2020.

Department of Community Services

- The department prioritized 14 African Nova Scotian employees to participate in the PSC's Leadership Development Program in 2019. The department will continue to invest in these employees by providing them with experiences that will augment the learning they gained from the Leadership Development Program they are enrolled in.
- The Department is committed to listening to the voices of youth who have been in care of the Minister of Community Services and acting on their views to improve services for other children and young people. A Youth Round Table was created that acknowledges young people's right to have a genuine voice in decision-making processes that affect their lives.
- The department took the initiative, through a strong partnership with front line African NS staff, to create the Because We Matter initiative in partnership with the Association of Black Social Workers. Through this work, the department has developed recommendations to respond to gaps and issues in relation to diversity and inclusive behavior in the workplace and racism and microaggressions experienced by African Nova Scotian employees.
- The department is in discussions with Dalhousie Social Work program to develop an Afrocentric focused program to encourage more African Nova Scotians to consider a career in government.
- Since 2019, the department designated several casework supervisor positions and three senior leadership positions: the Director of Strategic Policy and Decision Support, Project Director for the Enterprise Project Delivery Unit, and a manager position in the Western Region.

Department of Justice

- The Diversity Lead position was created in October 2019. Along with being a member of the Senior Management Team, this position is responsible for the implementation, tracking, and monitoring of the Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Additionally, they provide leadership and education on diversity and inclusion issues.
- In collaboration with Mi'kmaq leadership, the department is currently determining the best approach to engage community in the plan's development.
- The Department of Justice is developing a culturally responsive and sensitive Indigenous Justice Action Plan with the goals of creating a justice system that meets the needs of Indigenous persons.

- The department has a long-standing relationship with the Schulich School of Law Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq Initiative (IB&M). The Department gains the unique perspective of the students and an opportunity to forge further connections with the IB&M Initiative. Beginning in 2020, government's investment in this program is \$350,000 annually.
- In October 2019, the department released the 2019–2023 Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. Within this plan are three commitments:
 1. Recruitment, Retention and Advancement,
 2. Culturally Competent and Inclusive Work Environment, and
 3. Culturally Responsive Programming and Services.
- The department will continue to work in collaboration with the Public Prosecution Service, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network, Tripartite Forum, Criminal Justice Transformation Group, community and others on further building of the Department's first Indigenous Justice Action Plan and developing an African Nova Scotian Justice plan.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

- The Executive Director of Mi'kmaw Services is meaningfully contributing to the work of the department and promoting system changes that will lead to nurturing the well-being and achievement of staff and Nova Scotia students.
- The Executive Director African Canadian Services position as part of the expansion of Senior Leadership is providing system leadership to operationalize Nova Scotia's commitment to an inclusive and equitable process for Black students.
- Maintain Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) Lead Team, composed of representatives from all branches of EECD.
- Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) and Early Childhood Development & Pre-primary Branches had immigrant work placements through the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia's (ISANS) Professional Practice Program. Immigrants gain Canadian work experience, networks, and local references, while the department gains international experience and skills.
- The EECD CRP Lead Team held a CRP professional learning session after the 2018 provincial session for staff and administrators in November 2019 with Dr. Hollie and his Centre for Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning (CCRTL) Team. Dr. Hollie delivered hands on system level planning sessions to help staff and administrators establish CRP approaches and mindsets.

Department of Agriculture / Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture

- The Department of Agriculture will continue working with the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, African Canadian Services Branch, and the Manager of Indigenous Services at Dalhousie Faculty of Agriculture to bridge attraction and recruitment gaps among African Nova Scotians and the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq.
- The department worked with First Nation communities on potential developmental projects, and to gain an understanding of their communities and interests. Departments continued to encourage applications to Agencies Boards and Commissions (ABCs) from diverse individuals.
- Given the rural locations of both Departments, challenges in recruiting have been identified. In addition, traditional educational requirements of departmental positions are likely limiting candidates from consideration unnecessarily. Our planning will determine what accommodations might be possible to increase interest and support recruitment.
- Eleven of 35 accepted job offers (31%) were self-identified employment equity candidates, with one in a management position. Five of ten individuals (50%) hired in Fisheries & Aquaculture self-identified employment equity candidates. One designated management position was advertised in 2019-2020, as well as one staff position.

Department of Labour and Advanced Education

- Use of a policy and planning toolkit that links staff to resources to ensure diversity and inclusion are consciously considered in the policy development process. These resources include guides to using gender-based analysis and applying both health and social equity policy lenses. The toolkit also provides resources for effective and respectful engagement with Aboriginal communities and persons with disabilities.
- The Corporate Policy and Services (CPS) Branch undertook several Labour Market studies for underrepresented groups, including the Indigenous population, African Nova Scotians, and Immigrants in the labour market across the province. Additionally, the branch has worked with the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration on two initiatives over the 2019–2020 fiscal year, focusing on Immigrants and opportunities for Immigrants in the Nova Scotia labour market.

- The Higher Education Branch focused on ensuring the needs and perspectives of diverse populations are reflected in its work with Nova Scotia's publicly funded post-secondary education institutions. The new five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the province and the universities was implemented in 2019–2020 and includes a commitment to work toward shared priorities. These priorities include partnerships with Nova Scotia's Mi'kmaq and Indigenous people.
- In 2019–2020, with impetus from the PSC's Talent Review Process, Executive Leadership Team met individually with all of Labour and Advanced Education's (LAE) managers at an EC 11 level or above who identify as diverse to identify their career goals and the development needed to reach them. LAE is waiting on next steps on Talent Review from the Public Service Commission.
- Through an intentional focus on diversity and many partnerships with equity seeking groups and communities such as East Preston Empowerment Academy, Immigrant Services Association Nova Scotia, and the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Advisory Committee, Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency has grown the participation of women and diverse apprentices from 4% in 2015–2016 to over 15% in 2019–2020.

Department of Lands and Forestry

- Hosted an onsite talk by Quentrel Provo, the founder of "Stop the Violence, Spread the Love," in celebrating the 2020 African Heritage Month. This was a successful partnership among three departments: Lands and Forestry, Energy and Mines, and Environment. To enable other departments to participate concurrently, the talks was also offered as a webinar. The podcast on theHUB received 164 views to date.
- Hiring Manager Project. Data on diversity and employment equity hiring practices are collected and charted quarterly based on "Recommendation to Hire" letters filled out by hiring managers and reported to Executive Team.
- The annual planning, which is rotated every year, took place in the Lunenburg office in May 2019. Participants including the diversity committee members and field staff in the Western region enjoyed the interactive seminars on intercultural workplace and conflict resolution that were provided by Paul Pickering of Immigrant Services Association Nova Scotia at no charge.

Department of Municipal Affairs

- Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing supported the FOCUS Women's Leadership School for Women as well as partnered with Dalhousie University to offer an online session on citizen engagement with attention to the African Nova Scotian community and their contribution to local politics.
- In June 2019, the responsibility for Housing Nova Scotia transferred from the Department of Community Services to the department of Municipal Affairs. The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing was formed on June 6, 2019. The Department is in the midst of this transition, including reorganizing of its divisions and integration of its senior management teams.

Nova Scotia Environment

- All entrances to Nova Scotia Environment Halifax offices are now equipped with accessible, barrier-free doors, including the executive boardroom in the Minister's suite.
- NSE has three designated positions.
- In 2019, the Diversity Committee completed a department-wide survey to determine how staff felt the department was doing with respect to diversity and inclusion; questions included.

Office of the Premier/Executive Council Office/Office of Strategy Management

- The offices continue to partner with New Leaf Enterprises and continue to employ an individual with a disability on a casual basis. This partnership allows for the individual to acquire skills and knowledge in a business environment through practical exercises and hands-on experience.
- Managers will be encouraged to access qualified applicants in the Diversity Talent Pool to fill casual positions (when possible).
- Managers will continue to monitor the master training plan to ensure all new employees complete mandatory training courses including Respectful Workplace Training and Diversity Training within the first twelve months of hiring.

Public Service Commission

- All Together: An Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion was officially launched in Marh 2020. The PSC's Corporate Diversity and Inclusion team has been supporting and advising leaders across government in implementing the strategy at the department level. We are focused on building knowledge and capacity within our own PSC workforce to better support departments in their diversity and inclusion efforts.

- This past year, the PSC Diversity Council held their first Diversity and Inclusion Days from November 12–14, 2019. During these three days they had guest speakers, a trade show, and several workshops on a variety of diversity and inclusion topics. These topics ranged from unconscious bias training, a blanket exercise, storytelling, and cultural events.
- The PSC participated in a Corporate Talent Management process in which the EC 11 level and above from the four equity groups were invited to participate. This is an effort to address the gap in diverse representation at leadership levels as well as the existing systemic barriers to career development faced by equity-seeking employees.
- A review of recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers is underway to ensure that content reflects topics specific to the recruitment, selection and hiring of persons with disabilities into the public service of Nova Scotia.

Office of Service Nova Scotia and Department of Internal Services

- Effective July 2019, Vital Statistics introduced new options for gender identity on our birth certificates and the option to not display the sex field or indicator. These additional options are also available on drivers' licenses, Health Cards, and NS ID Cards. These changes were introduced with support and input from the 2SLGBTQ+ community.
- A prayer room was established on the 5th floor, Provincial Building to facilitate team members who need to pray during work hours.
- In 2019–2020, SNS-IS' Contact Centre and Collections Services (CCCS) division worked with ISANS Professional Practice Program, which connects employers and immigrant candidates for six-weeks professional opportunities. CCCS provided multiple opportunities for work experience for new Canadians. Some participants have gone on to full-time employment with government.
- SNS-IS partnered with Excellence Canada to complete Our Excellence Journey – Silver, a nationally-recognized Excellence Innovation and Wellness standard. SNS-IS met the standards required by Excellence Canada to receive Silver level certification in May 2019. For the standard specifically addressing diversity: Policies for diversity and inclusion are well understood as reflected in daily practice, SNS-IS scored full marks.

- Citizen Services division, which delivers client-facing services across multiple channels and employs over 500 team members, has a director with special responsibility for overseeing diversity and inclusion targets and initiatives. The division is currently implementing a recruitment and selection strategy to ensure the team better reflects the communities served by specific Access Centres.

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

- As part of the work to reduce barriers and encourage a diverse and inclusive workforce the department has developed the following programs:
 - ISANS work placements (Engineer program)
 - Aboriginal recruitment program
 - Working relationship with Women's Unlimited organization
- Department's efforts to engage underrepresented diversity groups and connect them with industry involved in the Cape Breton Hospital Modernization Project. The Executive Director of Building Project Services, staff, and other government partners have been engaging diverse communities in Cape Breton to bolster the trades workforce that is required to fulfill the labour needs for the Project. Wording in contracts has changed to encourage inclusion of local work forces from local indigenous communities.
- The department is dedicating resources for a position focused on diversity and inclusion. This individual will be a key advisor, departmental spokesperson and provide subject matter, expertise, advice and support on a wide range of diversity related and engagement issues across the department. Assessing and developing competencies for Diversity and Inclusion will be part of strategic planning processes.

The Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage

- Count Us In: Count Us In - Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024) was launched in September 2019. A Deputy Minister's committee on African Nova Scotians was created to monitor the Count Us In actions.

- The Land Titles Initiative: This initiative helps residents in eligible communities to receive clear title to their property (Land Title Clarification Act) and migrate their property to the new land registry system (Land Registration Act). The ANSA Community Navigators coordinate and provide service to affected African Nova Scotians and assist them through the claims process. As of January 31st, 2020, more than 300 applications have been received and over 90 land parcels have been cleared.
- The CCH Business Plan is aligned with the Culture Action Plan. Two of the plan's six themes are specifically focused on diversity: Promote Mi'kmaw Culture and Advance Cultural Diversity. In addition, many initiatives falling under the other themes deliver programs that enhance and support diversity.
- CCH hired a Director of Community Outreach and Inclusion in July 2019. This position participates on both Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to provide an equity, diversity and inclusion lens on programs, policies, and decisions within the department. The position is leading the creation of a CCH diversity plan, in collaboration with CCH staff and committees.
- Two new funding programs were created at Arts Nova Scotia. The Mi'kmaq Arts Program supports the development and continuation of Mi'kmaq art forms and the Access Support Program was created as a supplement to applicants who self-identify as deaf or living with a physical or mental disability.

Department of Finance and Treasury Board (FTB)

- FTB created a new employment equity tracking sheet and user guide, which will be attached to every Recommendation to Hire. This new tracking sheet will enable the department to create a baseline of how many self-identified employment equity candidates apply to competitions, how many are interviewed, and how many are ultimately hired to help identify where gaps may exist.
- A mandatory government training tracking process has been created and implemented. Each area of the department is responsible for updating their tracker.
- FTB arranged for the Office of Workplace Mental Health (OWMH) to facilitate the Working Mind for Managers and Supervisors in fall 2019. Based on the December 2019, mandatory training data, 78% of managers have completed this course while 23% of non-management staff have completed the course.

Department of Intergovernmental affairs

- The department added works from Indigenous and minority artists in the gift bank. The Order of Nova Scotia selection committee is a model of diversity including representation from Indigenous, African Nova Scotian and Acadian communities. Public events, such as ONS Investitures, always include a range of expression from the varied cultural influences in the province and a recognition of diversity.

Department of Seniors

- The department is engaging stakeholders and creating partnerships to support Nova Scotians to grow old in safe, healthy, and age-friendly communities. This includes awarding funding to support planning and local projects that lead to more age-friendly and inclusive communities by addressing physical activity, well-being and social isolation among older Nova Scotians.
- Strengthen the Seniors' Safety Program (SSP) and expand its reach across the province to address the safety concerns of older adults by promoting education and awareness of senior abuse, crime prevention, and safety and health issues.
- The department is conducting research and providing policy advice to government on matters related to aging and our aging population.

Employee Networks

A number of employee-driven networks have been established across government to support diversity and inclusion in the public service. Active participation in these groups provides opportunities for professional development in leadership, presentation skills, communication, teamwork, strategic thinking, budgeting, and event planning. The networks are supported by executive champions and diversity advisors. The following is a list of their accomplishments in 2019–2020.

GoverNEXT

- Sponsored three network members to attend the 2020 Public Policy Forum (originally was to be held in person in Toronto, now being held virtually).
- Sponsored professional development opportunities for members: two members to attend the IPAC National Conference in Winnipeg, two members to attend the New Public Servants Conference in Toronto, and seven members with IPAC memberships.

- Partnered with NSDEN to collaborate and rotate the Holly Bartlett Memorial Award between the two networks. This award was created in remembrance of Holly Bartlett, an employee of the Nova Scotia Public Service and vice-chair of GoverNEXT until she passed away in 2010.

Immigration Newcomer Network (INN)

- Development of a Business Plan, including the approval of an annual budget (supported by our DM Champions).
- Hosted a Resume Writing Workshop, facilitated by April Howe.
- Immigrants working for GOVNS/Diversity Champion videos added to TheHUB.
- Hosted a lunch and learn event for INN members to learn about the All Together Strategy and to learn about recruitment priorities of the Office of Immigration.

Nova Scotia Disability Employee Network (NSDEN)

- From May 31 to June 6, the NSDEN celebrated in collaboration with the Accessibility Directorate, disability organizations across the non-profit sector, and the Public Service Commission, the Government of Nova Scotia's first National AccessAbility Week for public servants.
- NSDEN hosted two first-voice lunch and learns featuring public servants who shared their experiences of living with invisible disabilities. Some of the disabilities discussed included mental illness and learning disabilities.
- The NSDEN co-chairs completed a series of Executive Leadership Team meetings where they presented on the network and ways to make government more accessible and inclusive for employees. In addition, several presentations were given by NSDEN Co-chair, Renée Savoie, to various government departments to raise awareness about service animals.
- The NSDEN hosted an event, featuring a first-voice panel discussion where public servants living with disabilities across different backgrounds shared their stories. In addition, the event highlighted public accessibility initiatives happening across government in various departments.

African Canadian Women in the Public Service

- Efforts to reset the foundation of African Canadian Women in Public Service (ACWPS) leadership, with new members, through Governance PD for the members of ACWPS Executive.
- Strategic Review, with REAL Evaluation services through NSHRF, to prepare for new three-year strategic plan.
- ACWPS re-established the monthly newsletter to inform, celebrate, and connect with members. A new format for the newsletter was discussed and is to be introduced in 2020. March Black Summit – bursaries made 10 seats available to members – the event was cancelled due to COVID.

Pride Nova Scotia

- Drag Me to Pride BBQ hosted by Rouge Fatale and Farrah Moan. Persons were invited to join the Pride Nova Scotia Government Employee Network as we mark one month to the Pride flag raising and two months until Pride! June 27th 2019.
- Annual Flag Raising. Celebrating June 28 which marked 50 years since the Stonewall Riots in the U.S., which became the cornerstone of the 2SLGBTQ+ (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, questioning, and asexual) rights and human rights movement around the world.
- July 20th 2019 – Pride Parade
- January 31st 2020 – Lunch and Learn with Halifax Pride

Black Men's Network

- Hosted a strategic planning session with April Howe, Executive Director, People and Culture, leading the session. The network has outlined its vision, strategic goals and plans for implementation.
- Membership of the network has grown tremendously from the beginning of this fiscal year.
- The Network has two new co-chairs – Gyasi Symonds and David Okaekwu – charged with the responsibility of driving the network forward with the support of task team committee members.
- The group is working on community-based initiatives to support Black men interested in joining the public service.

L'nu Network

- The L'nu Network is working on re-energizing the network. Planning sessions are being held to discuss the way forward.

Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Unit

In March 2020, the PSC officially launched the corporate strategy, *All Together: An Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service*. The strategy focuses on the four priority areas of leadership accountability, leadership development, barrier identification, and measurement. The Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Team has been working closely with departments, providing strategic counsel on the implementation of the strategy at the department level. Departmental consultation includes an overall climate assessment and presentation of workforce data, guidance on employment equity goal setting, and support with implementation and action planning, including employment systems review and barrier identification work.

Most departments have completed the initial assessment phase and some have already established employment equity hiring goals, including the departments of Justice, Community Services, and Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services. Other departments are presently embarking on the goal-setting process, including Agriculture, Fisheries and Aquaculture, Health and Wellness, Public Service Commission, Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, Lands and Forestry, and Finance and Treasury Board.

On the training front, the team has assembled and trained a roster of trainers from within the PSC and other departments to support greater access and delivery of mandatory diversity and inclusion training for all employees. The team has also developed a version of the diversity and inclusion training tailored to leaders. This training is already being offered.

The team continues to support initiatives such as Treaty Education, Truth and Reconciliation calls to action, Anti-Black Racism efforts and Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent, the work of the Accessibility Directorate, and the planned implementation of GBA+, a social equity lens to be applied to all policy and program development across government. The team also continues to provide advice and support to all the employee diversity networks.

Anti-Racism Initiatives

In addition to the diversity and inclusion work within the corporate strategic mandate, departments have recognized the need for a more intentional and focused response to the current Anti-Racism and Black Lives Matter movements. Now more than ever, government and leaders within government have a responsibility to create concrete change. Many departments have engaged in strategies to raise awareness, improve knowledge, create supports, and take action against racism and systemic discrimination.

The PSC has embarked on a few anti-racism projects with a focus on:

- Emphasizing leadership accountability.
- Strengthening anti-racism content in current formal learning programs, such as mandatory diversity training and Leadership Development curriculum.
- First voice discussion forums, such as a panel discussion with government leaders on anti-black racism.
- Self directed on-line learning available to all government employees on topics such as micro-aggressions, unconscious bias, and White privilege.

Conclusion

Creating an environment where all public service employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging is important. A diverse and inclusive public service allows us to deliver high-quality programs and services in a way that reflects the needs of all Nova Scotians. More than ever we understand the importance of creating an environment where all public service employees feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.

The government continues its commitment to having a workforce that is inclusive, culturally competent, free of racism and discrimination, values diversity, and is representative, at all levels, of the population it serves. Having more women in underrepresented positions, immigrants, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, African Nova Scotians, and other racialized persons at every level of the public service brings a range of diverse perspectives, fueling innovation and progress.

The 2019–2020 fiscal year helped reaffirm the government's commitment to diversity and inclusion through departmental and network accomplishments and the actioning of the All Together corporate strategy.

While there have been many achievements to date, we also acknowledge there are barriers that remain and hinder employment and advancement in the public service for equity-seeking individuals.

The 2020–2021 fiscal year will focus on impacts, senior leader accountability, and systemic changes to ensure all public servants and Nova Scotians feel included and supported by the Government of Nova Scotia.

Appendix

Corporate Diversity and Inclusion Definitions

Indigenous peoples

Persons who identify themselves as First Nation (status and non-status), Métis, or Inuit.

Persons with disabilities

Persons who, for the purposes of employment, identify themselves or believe that an employer is likely to consider that the workplace environment may create a barrier due to a long-term or recurring physical, mental, sensory, hearing, neurological psychiatric or learning disability.

African Nova Scotian

A Nova Scotian who chooses to declare African ancestry, regardless of how long they have lived here and regardless of how much African ancestry they can declare.

Immigrant

Persons residing in Canada who were born outside of Canada, excluding temporary foreign workers, Canadian citizens born outside Canada, and those with student or working visas.

Racially Visible Persons

Persons, other than Aboriginal people or African Nova Scotians, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-White in colour.

