



Accountability Report 2019–20

Justice



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Accountability Report 2019–2020

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Contents

Accountability Statement.....	3
Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister.....	4
Financial Results.....	6
Measuring Our Performance	8
1. Lead Nova Scotia initiatives to ensure our province is ready to accommodate the next stage of federal policy to legalize the sale of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals when it comes into effect.....	8
2. Preventative justice as a mechanism to support the economic and social well-being of our province. Preventative Justice refers to actions and initiatives, which prevent or reduce individuals' contact with the justice system.	9
• Indigenous Justice Action Plan	9
• Develop Africentric programming	10
• Wortley Street Check report	11
• Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) Diversity Recruitment and Inclusion Strategy	11
• Correctional Services to collaborate with strategic partners to enhance education, housing, mental health and addictions services	13
• Correctional Services to extend educational programming for those reintegrating from custody to community	13
• Guns and Gangs Initiative	14
• Cyber-safety Education	14
• Additional Officer Program	14
• Desmond Fatality Inquiry	14
3. Restorative justice is an effective approach to reduce future contact with the justice system and improve victim outcomes.....	15
4. Create and enhance a continuum of programs to address Domestic Violence.....	16
• Conduct Domestic Violence Audits of Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies ..	16
• Support and participate on the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence	17
• Build stronger supportive connections between families participating in the Domestic Violence Court Program and child protection	17
• Work towards the establishment of an Atlantic Domestic Violence Homicide Review Network	17
5. Play a leadership role in the government's work on accessibility.....	18
6. Increased responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children for maintenance enforcement.....	19
• Complete implementation of new online service and technology enhancements	22

- **Continue to build on Federal and Provincial/Territorial partnerships to improve processing and enforcement of inter-jurisdictional support orders**22
- **Fine tune and improve program measures that focus on better client outcomes**22
- 7. Continue activities to reduce delays in the justice system23
 - **Reduce delay in the criminal courts**23
 - **Increase the use of video court appearances by raising awareness among participants**.....23
 - **Address the substantial increase in the number of people on remand and the overrepresentation of marginalized populations**24
- Supplemental Information and Appendices25
 - Key Facts about Department of Justice25
 - Public Interest and Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.....27

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Justice for the year ended March 31, 2020 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Justice Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department of Justice outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Justice management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Justice 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 Department of Justice 2019-20 Business Plan.

Original signed by

Original signed by

Mark Furey
Minister

Candace L. Thomas, Q.C.
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

It is our pleasure to present the Accountability Report for the 2019-20 fiscal year. The Department's work for 2019-20 continued to be guided by the goal of increasing access to justice, especially to those most vulnerable. Our work is spurred by innovation, prevention and collaboration and we continue to advance our commitments to Nova Scotians through responsive and accessible programs and services. Other priorities included addressing the overrepresentation of marginalized communities in the justice system, keeping our communities safe, and making Nova Scotia a more accessible province.

The Accountability Report highlights the work done by the Department to support its focus and goals throughout the year.

The main areas of focus over the 2019-20 fiscal year included:

- Improving access to justice, especially for those who struggle the most.
- Supporting inclusion and diversity and ensuring our justice system reflects the cultural diversity of Nova Scotia.
- Focusing on supports for marginalized communities and advancing the Indigenous Justice Action Plan as well as initiatives for African Nova Scotians. This work will contribute to addressing overrepresentation in the justice system.
- Creating and enhancing programs to address domestic violence across the province including implementation with our partners of "Standing Together: A Provincial Action Plan to Prevent Domestic Violence".
- Playing a leadership role in the government's work on accessibility including the implementation of the "Access by Design 2030" strategy.
- Investing in efforts to prevent human trafficking and providing more supports and services for victims.
- Using preventative justice as a mechanism to support the economic and social well-being of our people in our province.
- Continuing to use restorative justice as an effective approach to reduce future contact with the justice system and improve victim outcomes.
- Increasing responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children for maintenance enforcement.
- Continuing activities to reduce delays in the justice system.
- Ensuring Nova Scotia is prepared to accommodate the next stage of federal policy to legalize the sale of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals.

The work we have accomplished over the past year could not have come to fruition without the innovation, commitment and contributions of our staff. The past year saw many unprecedented challenges, and we would like to recognize how well our staff were able to adapt and continue to deliver high-quality work during COVID-19.

Department of Justice Accountability Report 2019-20

It is with sincere thanks to our employees and partners that we present the 2019-20 Accountability Report.

Original signed by

Original signed by

Mark Furey
Minister

Candace L. Thomas, Q.C.
Deputy Minister

Financial Results

Accountability Report - Financial Table and Variance Explanation

**Department of Justice
For the Year Ending March 31, 2020**

	2019-2020 Estimate	2019- 2020 Actuals	2019-2020 Variance
Program & Service Area	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
Departmental Expenses:			
Administration	23,416	23,687	271
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	26,904	26,904	0
Court Services	66,225	69,298	3,073
Correctional Services	74,769	76,495	1,726
Public Trustee	2,681	2,644	(37)
Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service	4,986	5,199	213
Public Safety and Security	151,840	150,039	(1,801)
Serious Incident Response Team	671	652	(19)
Accessibility Directorate	1,112	1,251	139
Maintenance Enforcement and Victim Services	8,834	9,896	1,062
Total: Departmental Expenses	361,438	366,065	4,627
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	1,583	1,974	391
Fees and Other Charges	22,169	21,587	(582)
Ordinary Recoveries	123,575	123,514	(61)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	147,327	147,075	(252)

TCA Purchase Requirements	2,892	2,479	(413)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,657.1	1,596.4	(60.7)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Justice expenses were \$4.6 million or 1.3 per cent higher than estimate primarily due to \$1.5 million Correctional Officer Workers' Compensation Board costs partially offset by divisional vacancy savings, \$1.5 million deputy sheriff salary pressures, \$0.8 million Provincial Policing Service Contract (RCMP), \$0.8 million head office rent increase, \$0.7 million honoraria for Presiding Justices of the Peace and Per Diem Judges, \$0.6 million court ordered reports, \$0.4 million in funding for a community-led Bail Verification and Supervision Program and youth initiative; \$0.2 million for a new body removal contract under the Medical Examiner's Office. These additional expenditures are offset by lower than anticipated expenditures for Cannabis legalization and regulation (\$1.9 million).

In the 2019-20 Business Plan, the estimate for Court Services was listed as \$75,090,000. However, this Accountability report lists it as \$66,225,000. This is because, as of April 1, 2019, Victim Services/Maintenance Enforcement Program, previously part of Court Services, became their own division.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Revenue:

Department of Justice revenue was \$0.4 million or 24.7% higher than estimate, primarily due to higher than anticipated fines for Criminal Prosecutions.

Fees and Other Charges:

Department of Justice Fees and Other charges was \$0.6 million or 2.6% lower than estimate primarily due to lower than anticipated fees and fines imposed by the Courts.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

The Department of Justice TCA variance is due to delayed project completion for Courts Security Systems Upgrade, and Courts Occupational Health and Safety Infrastructure leasehold improvements.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department of Justice FTEs were lower than estimate primarily due to vacancies.

Measuring Our Performance

Guided by the 2019-20 Department of Justice Business Plan, the Department has worked to achieve the goals and actions as outlined in the plan over the last year. These initiatives align with the overarching goals of the Department which are:

- Support access to justice especially for those who struggle most;
- A culture of innovation in effective and efficient services; and
- Support public safety, well-being and economic stability of Nova Scotians.

In addition, the Department has worked in support of the Ministerial Mandate and to advance the Government's Strategic Direction through the following seven priority areas.

1. Lead Nova Scotia initiatives to ensure our province is ready to accommodate the next stage of federal policy to legalize the sale of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals when it comes into effect.

Throughout 2019-20, the Department of Justice worked with other departments on cannabis legalization. This included monitoring and addressing any concerns from the initial legalization of cannabis in October 2018 and preparing for the second phase of products; the introduction of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals into the legal market in December of 2019.

The legalization of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals presented unique public health and safety risks and required additional public education efforts. A public education campaign was developed and launched to inform Nova Scotians of the risks around these products in December 2019. The campaign included information on the delayed effects and duration of edible cannabis, and the safe storage of cannabis to reduce accidental consumption, particularly by children and animals. The campaign also focused on informing Nova Scotians on the rules around the legal and safe storage of cannabis in a vehicle and the impacts of cannabis impaired driving. The campaign was advertised through radio, television, cinemas, outdoor (transit shelters, exterior bus boards), digital, print and on social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. In addition, the Government of Nova Scotia "Be in the Know" cannabis website was updated to provide reliable information on edibles, extracts and topicals for Nova Scotians.

Over the past year, the Department has continued to work with an interdepartmental team, working horizontally to implement provincial initiatives, clarify new rules around cannabis, implement impaired driving education campaigns, and reduce the impact of vaping health risks as it relates to cannabis products. The Department has worked to monitor the impacts of legalization and with the Department of Health and Wellness identified indicators to measure the impact of cannabis legalization within the province.

Performance Measure:

- Investments in public education and awareness continued to be a priority in 2019-2020. There were 93,739 pageviews on the novascotia.ca/cannabis website from April 2019 to March 2020. The most pageviews of 27,389, occurred in the final quarter aligning with the introduction of edibles, extracts and topicals and a ramp up in the public education and awareness campaign.

The Department has also worked to with police agencies to expand the number of trained Drug Recognition Enforcement (DRE) Officers and Standard Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) Officers throughout the province. With the training, officers are able to identify whether someone has been impaired by drugs.

Performance Measure:

- Working with Law Enforcement Agencies, training was provided to ensure additional drug expertise is available in Nova Scotia. In 2019-20, 101 (63 municipal, 38 RCMP) officers were trained in Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) and 16 (8 municipal, 8 RCMP) officers were trained as Drug Recognition Experts (DRE).
- Due to COVID-19, training was suspended for the March 2020 Atlantic Training DRE course. As a result, an additional 24 officers were unable to complete DRE training. Provinces and territories are working with the federal government to determine how this training can continue given the current public health restrictions.

2. Preventative justice as a mechanism to support the economic and social well-being of our province. Preventative Justice refers to actions and initiatives, which prevent or reduce individuals' contact with the justice system.

Throughout the past year, the Department has supported and worked on initiatives and areas of preventative justice. These include:

Indigenous Justice Action Plan

The Department of Justice has begun work to develop an Indigenous Justice Action Plan (IJAP). The Department recognizes that the development of an Indigenous Justice Action Plan must be informed by First Voice and the plan needs to be reflective of, and sensitive to, Indigenous communities. Preliminary conversations have occurred with Indigenous leaders regarding the Indigenous Justice Action Plan and the best way to engage our Indigenous communities.

Performance Measure:

- The Department has numerous initiatives underway to strengthen services delivered by the NS Justice System. For example: the Gladue and Wellness Court in Wagmatcook First Nations community; continued support of the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network (MLSN) including the Customary Law Program, the Court Worker Program and completion of Gladue reports; availability of smudges and sweat lodges in correctional facilities; and the ability to take oaths in court proceedings with an Eagle feather.
- Many of the Department of Justice staff have participated in training to enhance their understanding about Indigenous and Mi'kmaq cultures and to better appreciate the history, and societal issues facing Indigenous people, some of these courses include: Aboriginal Awareness and Perceptions training, Eagle Feather Oaths & Affirmations sessions, Kairos Blanket Exercise, L'Nu-Way Training, and Treaty Education training.
- The Department of Justice currently supports the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network's Bail Verification project; this project provides an innovative and evidence-based approach to

supervising low risk Indigenous persons in the Cape Breton area while awaiting their criminal trials.

- The Department of Justice has dedicated Aboriginal Liaison Officers who are responsible for providing assistance to Indigenous people, working with other government departments and Indigenous service providers to create a culturally based continuum of support. This includes the development and facilitating of connections to existing programs and services and reviewing existing Correctional Services programs to ensure inclusion of cultural content.
- The Department now has an Aboriginal Victim's Case Coordinator position that provides support and assistance to Indigenous victims of crime.
- In September 2019, the Department of Justice established a 4-year action plan on diversity and inclusion to provide a solid roadmap for staff, management and leadership to incorporate diversity and inclusion into the fabric of the workplace. The plan has three areas of focus: recruitment, retention and advancement; creating a culturally competent and inclusive environment; and culturally responsive programs and services.

Develop Africentric programming

In 2019-20, the Department of Justice further developed Africentric programming for our clients and staff. Some highlights:

- Working with partners in the African Nova Scotian community, Legal Services, and the judiciary, Court Services developed a program and a roster of qualified service providers to deliver African Nova Scotian Race and Cultural Impact Assessments when requested by the Court.
- Increasing the number of designated positions within the department and increasing outreach to communities to seek diverse candidates for positions (e.g., African Nova Scotian Program Officers; Cultural Liaison Officers).
- The Department of Justice increased funding to the Indigenous Blacks & Mi'kmaq Initiative at Dalhousie's Schulich Law School for the 2019-20 school year. This initiative is meant to increase representation of Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq in the legal profession in order to reduce discrimination.
- In addition, the Department of Justice hired one articling student from the IB&M Initiative in 2019-20 and provided a mentorship placement for two students participating in the Initiative.
- Enhancing cultural proficiency of Department staff through training. Additional training has been undertaken by staff to complement the mandatory Public Service Commission (PSC) training. This includes Exploring Africentric Perspectives to Address Gendered Violence; the Neuroscience of Decision-Making in the Criminal Justice System with international expert Kimberly Papillion; and Fair and Impartial Law Enforcement.
- Provided funding to communities on specific projects that support African Nova Scotians. For example, Crime Prevention Community Grants were provided to Voices of Change-East Preston; Phoenix at Mulgrave-Community and Youth Development Project; and Media Arts Program-LOVE-Halifax.
- Provided ongoing support to the work of the Criminal Justice Transformation Group (CJTG) to decrease the overrepresentation of African Nova Scotians in remand. Four working groups were established within the CJTG to focus on: bail verification and supervision; bail conditions; infrastructure for African Nova Scotians; and cultural competency.
- Under its strategy, Count Us In: Nova Scotia's Action Plan in Response to the

International Decade for people of African Descent, 2015-2024, the Province has committed to develop an African Nova Scotian justice plan in collaboration with African Nova Scotians and the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA). The plan would help to address barriers to justice faced by African Nova Scotians.

In 2020-21, the Department will begin development of the African Nova Scotian justice plan and continue to work with the community to address African Nova Scotian justice-related issues.

Wortley Street Check report

Since the release of the Halifax, Nova Scotia: Street Checks Report (“the Wortley Report”), the Department of Justice has worked to advance the recommendations that fall within its authority. The proceeding outlines a high-level summary of the key action that have been taken to date.

- The Minister’s Directive of April 17, 2019 placed a moratorium on street checks of pedestrians and motor vehicle passengers.
- The Minister permanently banned street checks on October 18, 2019.
- Supported training for police relating to cultural competency and race relations:
 - Provided police with \$100,000 to support training for law enforcement. To date these funds have been used to support police agencies to enhance their cultural competency through training modules related to ethics and accountability and racially biased policing.
 - The Department provided funding for a group of frontline police officers from across the province to attend specialized training in fall 2019, on the neuroscience of decision-making with internationally recognized expert Kimberly Papillion. Senior police leadership attended a full day training as well as the Department’s Executive team, the Public Prosecution Services, Nova Scotia Legal Aid and the Judiciary.
- Extended the timeframe for filing a complaint against a municipal police officer from six months to one year through amendments to the Police Regulations. The amendments also allow the Police Complaints Commissioner to extend the time limit for making a complaint if the Commissioner believes there are good reasons for doing so and it is not contrary to the public interest. The amendments are effective as of January 15, 2021.
- Began collaborative work on a *Know Your Rights* initiative to help all citizens of Nova Scotia know and understand their rights and responsibilities when interacting with police.

Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) Diversity Recruitment and Inclusion Strategy

The Department of Justice continued to implement the ABC Diversity Recruitment and Inclusion Strategy. Cultural Competency Training was offered to all Department of Justice ABC members to encourage a welcoming and inclusive environment on all Justice ABCs. Additional training for members who were unable to attend and new ABC members is being developed.

This year the Minister also requested Justice ABC Chairs provide an annual Accountability Report on all actions and initiatives undertaken towards improving diversity and inclusion on their respective ABCs. The reports will be reviewed to determine best practices moving forward as efforts are made to enhance diversity and inclusion on all Justice ABCs.

Performance Measure:

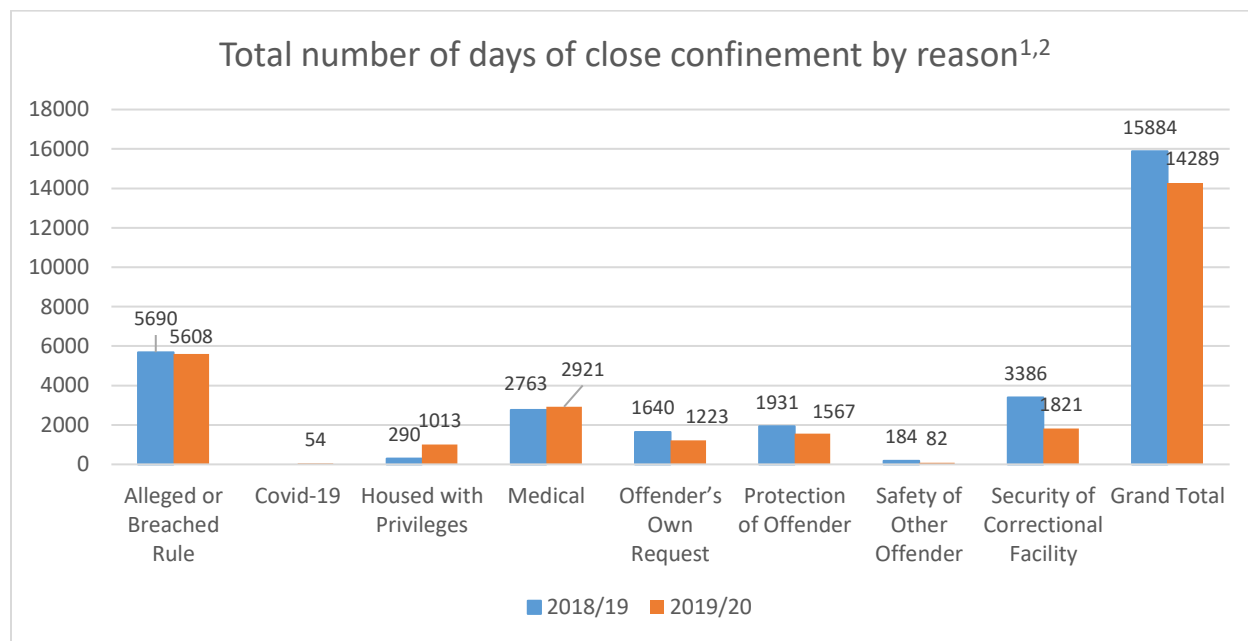
- Three cultural competency-training sessions were offered and 90% of all Department of Justice ABC members attended. Feedback collected from ABC members who attended was generally positive, particularly with respect to the content that was covered in the session and the knowledge of the trainers.

Alternatives to Close Confinement

Correctional Services has established alternatives to close confinement at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF). This has included establishing the Intensive Supervision Dayroom and the Transition Dayroom and increasing levels of service in these areas for clients. The Intensive Supervision Dayroom is for inmates who have mental health concerns and may have been held on administrative close confinement in the past. The Transition Dayroom is intended to support inmates that historically have had difficulties when first admitted to correctional facilities and would have spent time on administrative close confinement. Social workers and program officers assigned to these areas allow for increased level of service to inmates that are having difficulties adjusting to being in a correctional facility. Through the creation of these Dayrooms, extended stays on administrative close confinement have been prevented.

Performance Measure:

- The total number of days spent in close confinement by reason for confinement has decreased 10.6% from 2018-19 to 2019-20.



Source: Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN), Nova Scotia Department of Justice

Notes:

1. Data includes confinement periods where the primary reason was Medical or COVID-19.
2. Each day included in the confinement period is counted as 1 full day. A person in closed confinement for 3 hours would count as 1 day, a person in closed confinement for 12 hours, from 6 pm to 6 am the following day would count as 2 days.

Correctional Services to collaborate with strategic partners to enhance education, housing, mental health and addictions services

Correctional Services worked with a number of partners to enhance education, housing, and mental health and addictions services for clients.

- In collaboration with Labour and Advanced Education (LAE), General Education Development Testing (GED) and Pearson Vue (a company that provides online testing services), online GED testing in adult facility sites was implemented. This provided opportunity for inmates to experience success with GED testing, become familiar with the process and gain confidence to continue GED in community, if needed.
- Two teachers were recruited to teach in adult facilities, provide increased educational opportunities for inmates and promote continuation of education in the community.
- An Addictions Liaison Worker position, via Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) resumed at the Central Nova Facility.
- Worked with SchoolsPlus on training (Sexualized Exploitation of Youth) and provision of programs/services (Options to Anger & Voices).
- With the NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Nova Scotia Health Authority and Women's Wellness Within, worked to implement wellness services for women in custody at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility.

In the upcoming year, Correctional Services will be focused on collaborative community reintegration and has established a working group with government and non-profit representatives to help clients with high needs better reintegrate. In addition, there will be a High Impact Community Reintegration project in Cape Breton so that low to low-medium risk inmates can access services and supports required for success.

Correctional Services to extend educational programming for those reintegrating from custody to community

Working with the Nova Scotia Community College, investments were made in the Limitless program which helps expand post-secondary educational access for incarcerated Nova Scotians. This successful innovative program has positively impacted the lives of two individuals who were in custody and now have recently graduated and are now fully functioning within the workforce with well-paying jobs. This year, through the Poverty Reduction Blueprint, the program added a navigator and included peer support, which was particularly helpful with the onset of COVID-19 and the transition to online learning. In addition, working with Community Services led to further opportunities for additional financial support for Limitless participants when appropriate.

Also with the Nova Scotia Community College, Correctional Services is collaborating on a multi-year program for youth employment skills and strategies, to provide support for African Nova Scotian and Indigenous people in conflict with the law, called the Future is Youth Project. It is expected that this program will be launched in fall 2020.

Performance Measure:

- In 2019-20, there were 43 participants in the Limitless Program, down from 84 participants in 2018-19, but up from 21 participants in 2017-18.
 - This year, two individuals, who were in custody, successfully graduated from the Limitless Program and are now within the workforce with well-paying jobs.

- The decrease in participants this year was related to funding limitations and efforts are ongoing with Department of Community Services to support the sustainability of the program.
- 28 adults and young people in custody and under community supervision achieved their GED certification compared to 18 in 2018-19. This is an increase of 55%.
- 34 adults in custody and under community supervision completed NSCC courses in 2019-20 compared to 30 in 2018-19.

Guns and Gangs Initiative

The Guns and Gangs initiative is a source of funding received from the federal government to address violent criminal activity before it starts and provide exit strategies for youth involved in crime. A 5-year plan has been established and a diverse stakeholder committee was formed to assess new submissions for funding under the Community Crime Intervention Initiative. In addition, through this funding, support was provided to the NS Human Trafficking Unit, which is an integrated unit that uses a victim-centered approach.

Cyber-safety Education

The Department's CyberSCAN unit works to improve the cyber safety of Nova Scotians through education and enforcing the *Intimate Images and Cyber Protection Act*. CyberSCAN can help Nova Scotians by providing general cyber-safety advice. CyberSCAN also helps victims of cyber-bullying and facilitates resolution. The majority of CyberSCAN cases are resolved informally (over 80%).

CyberSCAN attends schools and provides presentations on general cyber-safety to students. They typically reach out to students in grades 8 and 9 but will give presentations as requested and will adjust their presentation accordingly. CyberSCAN has also been asked and will provide presentations for other government departments, police, universities and colleges, community groups, health care officials, Indigenous groups, and legal societies. As service models change in this upcoming year as a result of COVID-19, CyberSCAN is looking at the feasibility of offering presentations through other mediums.

Performance Measure:

- CyberSCAN made 299 presentations in 2019, up from 116 in 2018. Of these, 257 presentations were to schools.
- In 2019, CyberSCAN presented to 8,769 attendees, with 7,614 attendees being students.

Additional Officer Program

The Additional Officer Program began in 2007 and currently funds additional police officers in the province. The service delivery model is expected to be revamped and implemented in the upcoming year with a Director to be hired to provide governance and oversight over the program.

Desmond Fatality Inquiry

The Desmond Fatality Inquiry began on May 21, 2019 and the Department of Justice has provided, and continues to provide, infrastructure (building), technology, security and staffing support to the Inquiry. Working with Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR), NS Digital

Services, the Municipality of Guysborough and the judiciary, a Fatality Hearing Room was established in Guysborough. In addition to standard courtroom video-conferencing and digital recording, the Hearing Room integrated improved and new to court technologies, which allows for live streaming of proceedings, improved audio, an evidence presentation system and an electronic document management database. Court Services staff support the Hearing procedures.

The Legal Services Division is providing legal support to government at the Inquiry and the Department of Justice is providing support for the families to retain lawyers at the hearing. The Department, through Victim Services is also providing support to the families.

In 2020-21, as the Inquiry progresses, the Department will continue to provide support.

3. Restorative justice is an effective approach to reduce future contact with the justice system and improve victim outcomes

Restorative Justice (RJ) seeks to understand and respond to the impact of crime on individuals and communities, providing the opportunity to bring together those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm. The Program uses processes to address the issues, harms and needs of those involved. Plans are developed which include commitments by those who caused harm to take specific actions.

This year the Restorative Initiatives Unit focused on:

- Working with community partners to increase the use of Restorative Justice in the criminal justice system. The Restorative Initiatives unit provided a four module-training program for RJ Regional Teams and education for referral sources that outlined when RJ can be used and the advantages of using the program. The referral source training was delivered to police, crowns and judges. As a result of this work, and the launch of a renewed NS Restorative Justice Program in July 2019, there was an increase in referrals to the NS Restorative Justice program between the 2018-2019 fiscal year and the 2019-2020 fiscal year.
- Updating the Restorative Justice data requirements to assist with case management and reporting requirements. A significant overhaul and development of the Restorative Justice Information System (RJIS) has been completed.
- Working across government to support the use of restorative approaches. The Restorative Initiatives Unit supported an increasing number of government initiatives using a restorative approach. While ongoing and at different stages of development, they include the adoption of a restorative approach at the Integrated Service Delivery Committee, the use of a restorative approach to develop the Family Led Decision Making (FLDM) trailblaze, the use of a restorative approach in government human resources matters, and the use of a restorative approach to update Domestic Violence training.
- In addition, the Restorative Initiatives Unit began developing five educational training videos so the information is more widely available. In 2020-21, the Restorative Initiatives unit will be working to launch these training videos.

Performance Measure:

- There was a 37% increase in referrals to the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.

4. Create and enhance a continuum of programs to address Domestic Violence

The Department of Justice has worked to create and enhance a continuum of programs to address domestic violence by working closely with our partners. The Department worked with Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women and other departments on the *Standing Together Action Plan* to address domestic violence, including how to prevent it from happening and provide supports to those affected by domestic violence.

- Minister Furey hosted First Voice Listening sessions with survivors in eight regions across the province to better understand personal experiences in order to help improve responses and service delivery.
- Five workshops focused on improving the High Risk Domestic Violence Case Coordination protocol processes were held with police and service providers from all regions.
- A Provincial High Risk Domestic Violence Working Group was formed to provide assistance and guidance on updating High Risk case coordination protocols and information sharing processes.
- A research report exploring how to better engage perpetrators of domestic violence was completed by reviewing programs and services available to offenders.
- Best approaches to creating a culturally relevant Neighbours, Friends and Families program were explored with community partners. This is an awareness initiative designed to help neighbours, friends and families understand the early warning signs of Domestic Violence and to assist in supportive ways.
- A provincial learning service was identified for online domestic violence training modules to be accessible to external learners. RCMP Domestic Violence Police Investigation online modules were made accessible to all Nova Scotian Municipal and Military Police Services.

Conduct Domestic Violence Audits of Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies

The Department worked with municipal law enforcement agencies to conduct domestic violence audits and identify areas to improve service levels and enhance training opportunities. The audit fieldwork took place in the first quarter of 2019 and findings were presented to police agencies.

The audit recommendations were addressed through enhanced training opportunities. The Department of Justice through the Canadian Police Knowledge Network, provided access to online Domestic Violence Investigation Training for all members of police agencies within the province. The Department also provided 10 Trauma Informed training sessions and 7 one-day domestic violence training sessions throughout 2019. All efforts were made by police to ensure their members accessed this training. A training session for file review/case management was held in June 2019 for 109 members and further training is being planned in 2020 when possible. To compliment the training outlined above, RCMP and Halifax Regional Police Domestic Violence Coordinators provided ODARA (Ontario Domestic Violence Risk Assessment Training)

throughout the province for all police agencies in 2018 and 2019. This will also continue into 2020.

Performance Measure:

- The Domestic Violence compliance audits were conducted for the 10 Municipal Police Agencies.

Support and participate on the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence

The Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence is comprised of representation from four Municipal Police forces and the RCMP. The Department supports and participates on the Sub-Committee, and the Department's representative serves as Co-Chair. The Committee continues to pursue work on various initiatives that support victims through a victim centered approach as well as through training. Public Safety is in the process of developing more comprehensive Subject Matter Expert training for police, based on feedback and recommendations identified through the police community, the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Sub-Committee on Domestic Violence and the Domestic Violence audits. This training is tentatively scheduled to commence in October 2020.

Build stronger supportive connections between families participating in the Domestic Violence Court Program and child protection

The Domestic Violence Court Program is committed to ensuring stronger supportive connections between families experiencing violence and child protection through the development of policy and by holding case conferences. The Domestic Violence Court Program is committed to helping develop a 'softer landing' for families involved with the criminal justice and child protection systems. At least half of all cases in the Domestic Violence Court Program involve children; as such, these cases have, or have had, child protection involvement.

The Domestic Violence Court Program has recently developed policy to promote and guide the use of case conferencing in complex cases involving child protection.

Representatives from the Department of Community Services sit at all levels of Domestic Violence Court Program committees, including the Assessment & Action Team and Case Management Team, Working Groups, and Steering Committee. Representatives from the new NS Legal Aid Child Protection Early Advice Group have also joined the Working Group.

The Domestic Violence Court Program is a partner of the Creating Communities of Care project, led by the NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women. This partnership allows the Domestic Violence Court Program to connect women from the urban Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities with culturally relevant supports and programming. Project leaders presented at the Muriel McQueen Fergusson Domestic Violence Conference in October 2019 and at the National Domestic Violence Conference in Halifax in March 2020.

Work towards the establishment of an Atlantic Domestic Violence Homicide Review Network

The Department also worked with Atlantic colleagues to establish and implement an Atlantic Domestic Violence Review Network. The Network is meant to bring government agencies from the Atlantic region together to identify improvements to system responses, promote cross-

collaboration between government agencies and provide opportunities to hear from community agencies and individuals with lived experience. This will be the first regional network of its kind in Canada and will begin analysis of currently available data related to the occurrence, prevalence and circumstances around domestic homicide in the Atlantic region, identify best practices, and establish a baseline study of the current situation in Atlantic Canada around domestic homicide. It is expected that this work will continue into 2020-21 with the establishment of the Review Network and the adoption of the terms of reference.

5. Play a leadership role in the government's work on accessibility

The Department has continued to play a leadership role in the government's work on accessibility. The Accessibility Directorate has been working closely with community stakeholders to begin implementing the *Accessibility Act* and advance accessibility across sectors.

Performance Measure: Engage public in consultations to inform standards development

The Accessibility Advisory Board established two Standard Development Committees to provide recommendations to government on accessibility standards in the built environment and education. Committee members are community members with expertise in relevant sectors; the majority are persons with disabilities. The committees each met for 7 full-day meetings in 2019-20 and conducted two public consultations. In May 2019, 1,096 Nova Scotians participated in an online survey to provide input on issues and barriers to be addressed by the standards. In March 2020, in-person sessions were held in five communities to seek feedback on each committee's draft recommendations. A total of 235 individuals participated. Both committees are finalizing their first phase of recommendations for submission to government.

Performance Measure: Workshops and additional resources developed and delivered to public-sector bodies to assist in developing their accessibility plans

In December 2019, government prescribed entities as public sector bodies under the *Accessibility Act*, meaning they must establish accessibility advisory committees and develop accessibility plans. Municipalities, universities, the Nova Scotia Community College, and regional libraries were prescribed effective April 1, 2020. The Nova Scotia Health Authority, IWK Health Centre, Regional Centres for Education, Conseil scolaire acadien provincial, Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority, and some crown corporations were prescribed effective April 1, 2021.

In September and October 2019, seven presentations and workshops were delivered to the municipal sector, providing information and training on their obligations under the *Act*. The majority of participants agreed that the workshops increased their understanding of the impacts of barriers to participation for persons with disabilities (84%) and how to take action to prevent and remove barriers (64%). Presentations were also delivered to libraries and post-secondary institutions, and workshops are in development for these sectors. In December 2019, Accessibility Planning Toolkits were developed for public sector bodies, including for municipalities, providing a guide for establishing accessibility committees and developing accessibility plans.

In collaboration with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the Directorate continued to coordinate a Post-Secondary Accessibility Working Group with representatives from each university and the Nova Scotia Community College. In consultation with their stakeholders, this group developed a provincial post-secondary accessibility framework, to establish a shared

vision for accessibility across the sector, and to inform the development of each institution's accessibility plan. The draft framework has been submitted to the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents for endorsement.

In February 2020, the Directorate staffed the new position of Program Coordinator to continue to support public sector bodies through developing and implementing presentations, workshops and resources. This additional staffing resource has supported the Directorate's continued collaboration with municipal partners and began supporting Regional Libraries in the development of an accessibility framework, in collaboration with Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Performance Measure: Sessions delivered to stakeholders to increase awareness of Access by Design 2030.

The Accessibility Directorate continued to connect with community to increase awareness of Access by Design 2030, *the Accessibility Act*, and accessibility and disability issues. A total of 62 sessions were delivered to stakeholders, such as those from municipalities, libraries, post-secondary institutions, the private sector, and community organizations, which was a decrease of 17% from 2018-19.

The Accessibility Directorate worked collaboratively with Communications Nova Scotia to conduct an independent telephone survey to assess Nova Scotians awareness of accessibility. The majority of Nova Scotians are aware that accessibility is a human right (88%) and that Nova Scotia has an *Accessibility Act* (65%). The Accessibility Directorate also continued their partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation, to increase awareness of barriers and the importance of accessibility through the implementation of the "Everyone, Everywhere" awareness campaign in Nova Scotia through television, social media and outdoor advertising. The Directorate began work with Communications Nova Scotia on the development of a strategy for a multiyear awareness campaign to increase Nova Scotians' awareness of accessibility and the barriers that impact the participation of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

The Accessibility Directorate partnered with Communities, Culture and Heritage to invest more than \$1 million to help 41 businesses increase their accessibility through the Business ACCESSAbility Program. Projects were completed across the province and primarily focused on the built environment, assistive devices, communication and transportation, and universal design capacity building. As well, the funding supported a new initiative called the Nova Stop.Gap project. This pilot project will increase accessibility of businesses through the provision of ramps in collaboration with the Cape Breton Correctional Facility; Nova Scotia Community College, Marconi Campus; Cape Breton Regional Municipality; Dalhousie University, Planning for Equity, Accessibility and Community Health Research Unit; the John Howard Society of Nova Scotia; and the business community. The Accessibility Directorate also partnered with Communities, Culture and Heritage to invest \$1 million in 96 project lead by community groups, First Nations and municipalities to improve access to community facilities through the Community ACCESS-Ability Program.

6. Increased responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children for maintenance enforcement

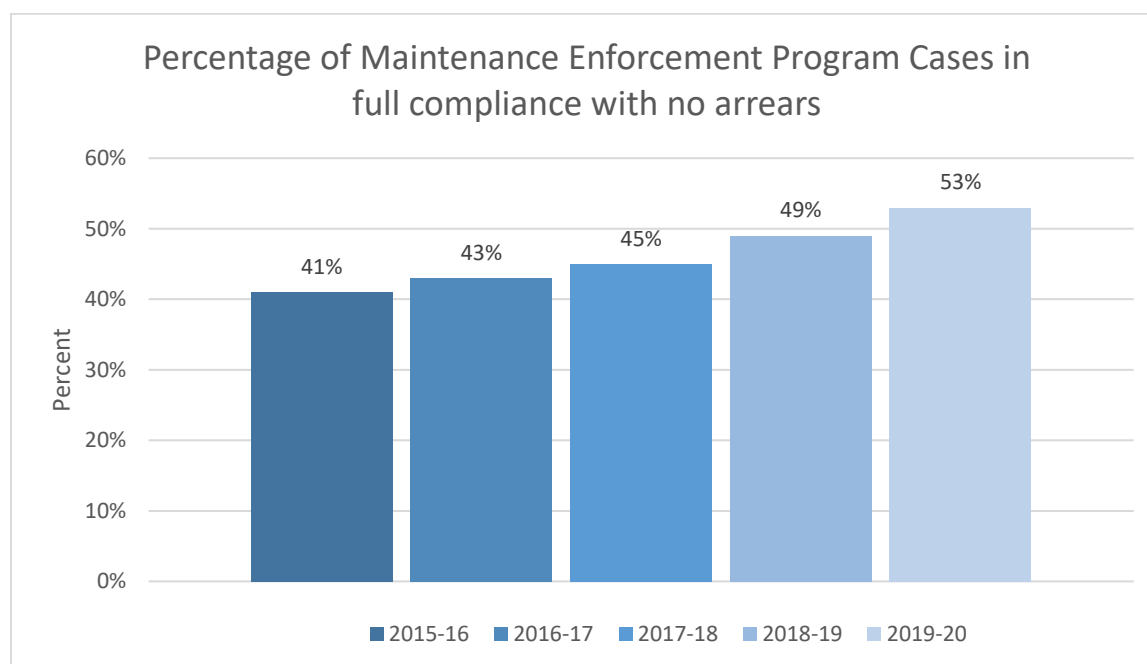
The Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) is a free service of the NS Department of Justice that helps Nova Scotians make or receive court-ordered maintenance payments when a court

order is enrolled with the program and take steps when payments are not made to enforce a maintenance order.

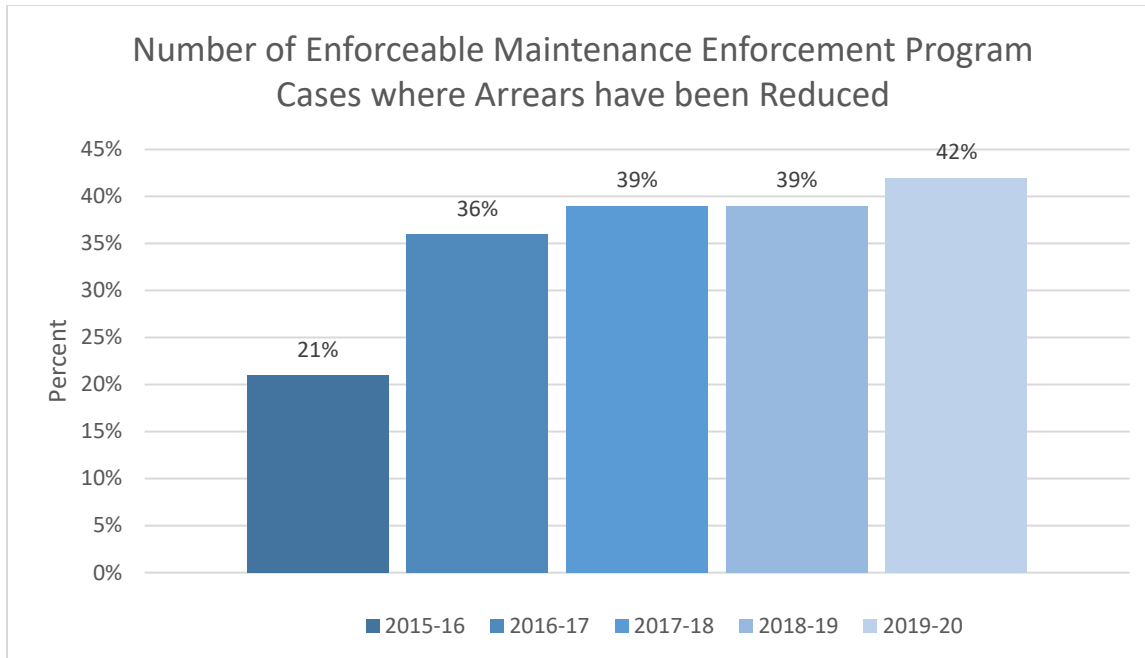
The Maintenance Enforcement Program has worked to increase responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children for maintenance enforcement. This has been done by increasing the number of cases with no money owing and reducing the amount of money which is overdue in cases where there are arrears.

Performance Measure:

- Number of Maintenance Enforcement cases in full compliance with no arrears: 53%
 - In the last year, cases in full compliance with no arrears have increased from 49% to 53%, and the amount of outstanding arrears has decreased 4.5%, indicating that more of the money owed is being paid to recipients.



- Number of Enforceable Maintenance Enforcement cases where arrears have been reduced: 42%
 - Arrears for cases managed by the Maintenance Enforcement Program are at the lowest level in 15 years.

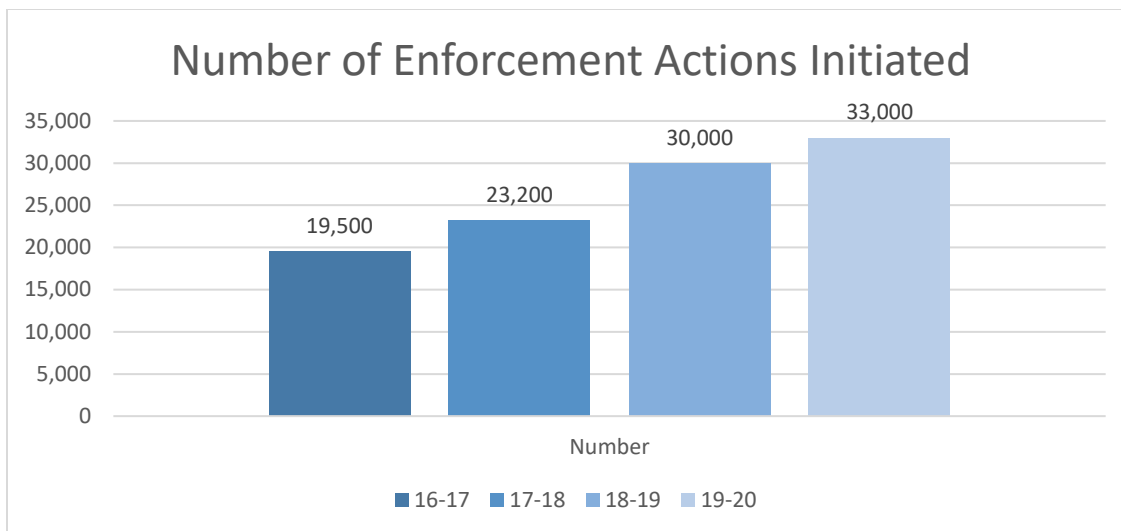


Continue to reduce arrears and increase enforcement activities, while improving client service.

With an improved focus on business targets, coordinated staff training, technology enhancements and continuous process improvement, there has been a steady increase in results and enforcement actions as noted below.

Performance Measure:

- Nearly 33,000 enforcement actions were completed in 2019-20, which is an increase of 10% from March 2019.
- The amount of outstanding arrears is the lowest in 15 years. The overall arrears have decreased 4.5% from March 2019 and decreased by 13.2% from March 2018. Payments to recipients increased by 2.9% over the previous year.



Complete implementation of new online service and technology enhancements

In April 2019, MEP rolled out the MEP Online Service. This service helps clients who are enrolled to get information about court-ordered maintenance payments for child and spousal support from their account online. It also can be used to communicate with MEP staff, update contact information and set up notifications regarding payments. Since April, approximately 4,000 MEP clients have registered for the new system via mobile, tablet devices and desktop computers. This number dramatically exceeded the program's target by 300%. Client feedback to date remains very positive and client's registration for the online service continues to grow.

As COVID-19 began, the Maintenance Enforcement Program adapted and maintained services to clients through the increased usage of online services.

Continue to build on Federal and Provincial/Territorial partnerships to improve processing and enforcement of inter-jurisdictional support orders

Nova Scotia is leading a cross-jurisdictional group to implement process and policy improvement to MEP programs across Canada, with a focus on improving turnaround times on enforcement of cases and client communications. One initiative is the standardization of the approach to handling enforcement of cases involving children over the age of majority. Momentum for these efforts continues and there is increased focus on the work that can be accomplished together across jurisdictions.

Fine tune and improve program measures that focus on better client outcomes

Through the implementation of behavioral science methods, MEP is refining the process for enrolment of clients in the Program to improve access to justice. It is hoped that this innovative approach to the enrolment process will make it easier for clients to enroll in MEP and better understand the benefits.

7. Continue activities to reduce delays in the justice system

Reduce delay in the criminal courts

The 2016 Supreme Court of Canada's decision in *R v. Jordan* set a limit of 18 months between the laying of charges and the actual or anticipated end of a trial in provincial court and 30 months in the Supreme Court. The Department of Justice through the Criminal Justice Transformation Group, comprised of senior leaders from the Department of Justice, the judiciary, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, the Criminal Lawyers' Association, the Public Prosecution Services of Nova Scotia and Canada, and police continues to explore innovative approaches to address delay in criminal courts.

Performance Measure:

- At the end of 2019-20 the number of cases above the thresholds established in *R v. Jordan* had been reduced by 22%, compared to the baseline of January 2017.
- COVID-19 is having an impact on the work of the courts as public health directions are followed. Courts continued to operate but initially postponed jury trials, heard matters by telephone and video and adjourned all non-urgent proceedings. These measures have impacted the timelines of many hearings and as the Courts adjust to working during COVID-19, the timelines may continue to be impacted.

Increase the use of video court appearances by raising awareness among participants

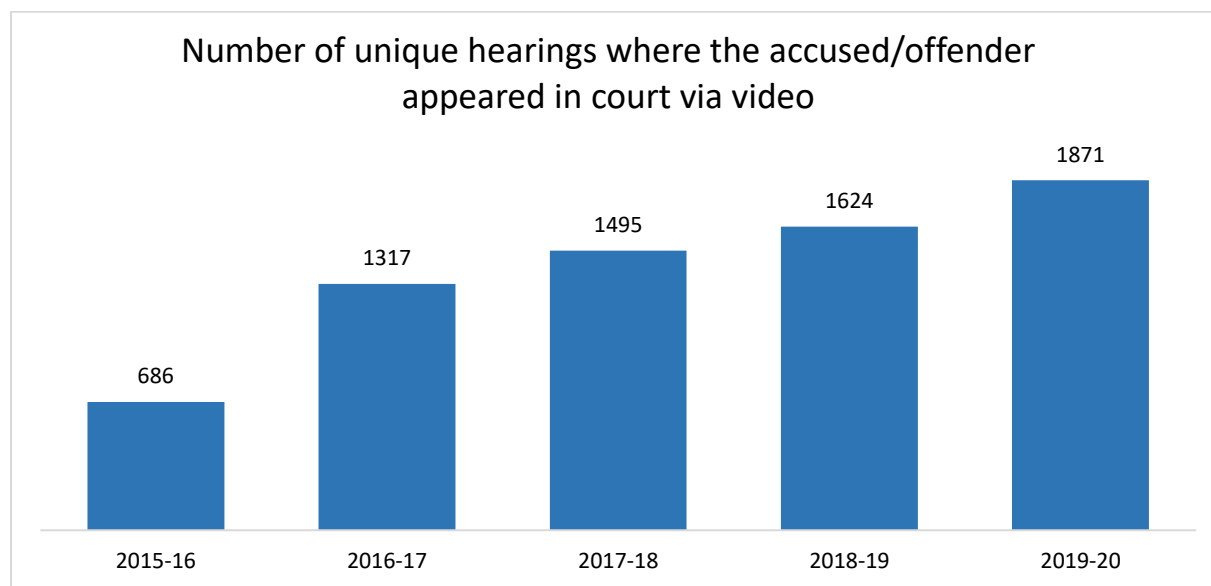
Improving access to video-link appearances for people in custody is a priority for the Department of Justice. Access to video improves access to justice and reduces delays. In 2019-20, Court Services made additional investments in equipment and introduced options to allow Nova Scotia Legal Aid and the private bar to access video conferencing equipment to arrange private meetings with their clients in custody by video to review disclosure. In addition, with the technical support of the Department of Justice, Nova Scotia Legal Aid has undertaken a pilot project to make use of compatible software to allow them to meet with clients in custody from their offices.

Court Services continues to improve technology in courtrooms. New digital recorders and mixers were purchased and are being installed in courtrooms across the province. This new equipment will enable improved audio sound in courtrooms.

During COVID-19 there has been increased use of video-conferencing equipment in courtrooms to allow for virtual court appearances. In addition to the use of existing video-conferencing equipment to support remote appearances, Court Services has worked closely with NS Digital Services and the judiciary to create 22 virtual courts so that selected Supreme Court (General Division and Family Division) matters can be heard remotely. Virtual Court uses technology so that matters can be heard entirely remotely by telephone, video-conference or Skype to protect lawyers, court staff and judiciary.

Performance Measure:

- Efforts to increase the number of appearances by video of persons in custody were again successful in 2019-20. Between April 1, 2019 and March 31, 2020, there were 1,871 unique hearings where the accused/offender appeared in court via video. This is an increase of 15% from 2018-19 and an increase of 173% from the base year of 2015-16.



Address the substantial increase in the number of people on remand and the overrepresentation of marginalized populations

Indigenous and African Nova Scotian accused are overrepresented in the province's remand admissions. Indigenous adults represent 6% of the province's population but 13% of adults admitted to remand in 2019-20. African Nova Scotian adults represent 2% of the province's population but 10% of adults admitted to remand in 2019-20.

Indigenous females are overrepresented in remand admissions to a greater extent than their male counterparts. In 2019-20, Indigenous females represented 23% of female admissions to remand while Indigenous males represented 11% of male admissions.

The Criminal Justice Transformation Group is working to address the overrepresentation of both Indigenous and African Nova Scotians on remand. Working groups were established to explore issues that impact racialized participants in the justice system, including bail monitoring, release conditions, and the cultural proficiency of the justice sector. Chaired by the Chief Judge of the Provincial Court with a keynote by the Deputy Minister of Justice, a symposium was held for over 100 justice sector and community-based participants at Saint Mary's University to explore bail supervision options.

Supplemental Information and Appendices

Key Facts about Department of Justice

The Department of Justice consists of approximately 1,600 employees (FTEs) and is responsible for the administration of justice and for promoting the safety and security of Nova Scotians through justice-related programs, services and initiatives.

The Department is responsible for over 170 different Acts and 100 different Regulations.

The Department provides services through six Divisions, the Restorative Initiatives Unit, and the Accessibility Directorate:

- **Accessibility Directorate:** responsible for implementing and administering Nova Scotia's new *Accessibility Act* with the goal to ensure Nova Scotia is accessible by 2030.
- **Restorative Initiatives Unit:** has a mandate to support and advance restorative initiatives in the Province. The unit is anchored by the Restorative Justice Program for youth and adults across the province.
- **Correctional Services:** responsible for improving public safety and security through effective community and custody-based case management, rehabilitation, and supervision of remanded persons or sentenced offenders.
 - Operates four adult correctional facilities, and one youth centre, and
 - 22 Community Corrections offices throughout the province.
- **Court Services:** responsible for improving access to justice and improving public safety and security through support to the judiciary and the administration of Nova Scotia's Courts at 24 sites in 18 communities across the province:
 - Civil law court services;
 - Criminal law court services;
 - Family law court services; and
 - Sherriff Services - focuses on the safety and security of the judiciary, court staff, the public, and persons in custody. There are Sheriffs across the province, numbering over 200 in total.
- **Legal Services:** responsible for providing a full range of legal advice and services to support government operations and help government achieve its corporate priorities while ensuring the administration of public affairs is carried out in accordance with the law:
 - The Division represents government in legal proceedings, except prosecutions. This includes formal litigation on behalf of the Crown before all levels of courts in the Province, the Federal Courts and the Supreme Court of Canada.
 - The Division has extensive experience with legal issues that uniquely affect the Crown and offers a full range of commercial, administrative and legislative advice.
 - The Division is also home to the Registry of Regulations.
- **Maintenance Enforcement and Victim Services:** responsible for improving access to justice for families by registering, collecting and enforcing court orders or agreements registered with the court for child and spousal support. Victim Services is responsible for four Regional Offices and operates four core programs which aim to reduce the harmful impact of crime on victims.
- **Policy & Information Management:** responsible for supporting the Minister, Deputy Minister, Senior Management and all divisions through four sections.
 - Policy, Planning & Research (PP&R) provides policy advice, research, statistics and evaluation services, and leads the business planning process.

- Legislation and Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Relations supports and advises on all aspects of the departmental legislative agenda; FPT committees and working groups; and manages the appointment process for the Department's agencies, boards and commissions.
- Records Management administers the departmental records management program and provides guidance to the Courts of Nova Scotia in relation to their records management program.
- The Facilities Group manages accommodation requirements including capital construction, leasehold acquisition, leasehold renovation and building maintenance projects.
- Public Safety and Security: responsible for public safety initiatives in the province, including oversight, governance and advice to police, private security services and firearms license holders, as well as enforcement of community safety processes and security intelligence management services.

Public Interest and Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

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

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* (PIDWA) 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 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 the Department of Justice.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2019-2020
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	N/A
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A