



Accountability Report 2022–23

Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives



Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives (OEA) 2022-23 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives outcomes necessarily include estimates, judgments, and opinions by *Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives* management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives 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 *Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives 2022-23 Business Plan*.

Original signed by

Department /Public Service Office

Minister Brad Johns

Minister Pat Dunn

Deputy Minister Candace Thomas

Mandate and Office Overview

The mandate of the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives (OEA) is, in collaboration with partners and communities, to create a whole of government approach to identifying and addressing systemic racism, hate and inequity and achieving equitable and anti-racist outcomes that improve the economic and social wellbeing of all Nova Scotians. All Ministers in the Nova Scotia government are responsible for contributing efforts to support this work.

The Minister of OEA is responsible for the following items in his mandate letter:

- Continuing to work with partners and communities to help lead and support government's anti-racism initiatives and promote equity,
- Working to identify and address systemic racism and inequity in government policy, legislation, programs and services,
- Helping government and communities improve social and economic well-being for all people within the province and creating greater access to opportunities and resources,
- Building relationships with marginalized communities to help inform government,
- Creating equity impact assessment tools to guide decision-making processes that support anti-racism, accessibility, gender equity, social equity and inclusion in government budgets, policies and programs,
- Overseeing the Land Titles Initiative (LTI) and providing faster results for residents who need clear title to their land, and
- Working with partners and communities to develop processes to collect, measure and report data that helps inform and support equity.

Measuring Our Performance

In 2022/23 OEA took a number of actions led by community engagement including:

- **Provincial equity and anti-racism strategy**—development of a provincial equity and anti-racism strategy based on community feedback and in collaboration with departments and offices throughout government. The strategy will be finalized and released by July 31, 2023.
 - As per the Act, the strategy will include:
 - actions and initiatives to support underrepresented and underserved communities in the province,

- definitions of specific types of racism and hate in the province that were written with community through community engagement,
 - a health equity framework, and
 - a plan to develop actions on psychological health and safety in the workplace.
- **Land Titles Initiative (LTI)** – continued to accelerate the clearing of land titles resulting in the issuance of 30 certificates in the past 15 months compared to seven in the past three years (2018-2021).
 - Increased LTI’s legal services capacity, in partnership with the Department of Justice (DOJ), by utilizing private law firms.
 - Created regulations in July 2022 to govern the work of the LTI Commissioners and appointed three LTI Commissioners to help resolve land disputes. Preparations are underway to prepare the Commissioners for their important roles.
- **Equity impact assessment tool**—continued work on the development of a tool to ensure Government’s commitment to equity and anti-racism is reflected in our budgets, policies and programs. The tool will be informed by community feedback and highlights the importance of intersectionality and social equity. OEA will be providing training to policy staff across government in 2023/24 as the final step before implementation.
- **Equity audit and evaluation process**—continued work on the development of a process to assess the impacts of existing programs and services on underrepresented and underserved communities. The process is being designed with the flexibility to be changed and applied in ways that best fit the needs of community in each equity audit and evaluation assessment.
 - OEA continues to work with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development to finalize an equity evaluation of the Individual Program Plan process within the education system.
- **Equity dashboard**—continued work on a dashboard to measure government’s progress towards equity and anti-racist outcomes.
 - OEA has been developing and coordinating access to reliable, usable and comparable data and evidence regarding systemic hate, inequity and racism.
 - The dashboard will be one of the key tools used by OEA to increase public accountability for government’s progress in relation to identifying and addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism.
- **Equity and Race-Based Data Collection & Responsible Use**—continued development of an equity and race-based data standard for the collection and responsible use of equity and race-based data in government, to be embedded in regulations under the Dismantling Racism and Hate Act.

- OEA will be working to finalize and implement the data standard across government. The use of this data will be incorporated into the development of equitable and anti-racist policies.
 - OEA supported DHW in implementing the collection of race-based data in the health system.
- **Community Network**—continued work to establish a network to create meaningful, sustained connection with underrepresented and underserved communities in the province. The network will be a shared space where communities can connect with one another and with government to share in identifying and addressing systemic hate, inequity and racism.
- **Panel on Environmental Racism**—continued work with the Department of Environment and Climate Change and communities to establish a panel to address environmental racism and submit recommendations to government in 2023 as required by the *Environment Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.
- **Accessibility**—continued to implement OEA’s plan to support the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan including specific actions to support persons with disabilities. OEA’s plan includes ensuring our workplace is inclusive, welcoming and barrier-free. The plan ensures all team members at all levels have engaged in appropriate and required training. The plan also commits OEA to continually consider how it best supports all employees who live with disabilities.

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
	2022-2023	2022-2023	2022-2023
Programs and Services	Estimate	Actuals	Variance
Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives	4,803	3,903	(900)
Total - Departmental Expenses	4,803	3,903	(900)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Recoveries	—	—	—
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	24.0	19.6	(4.4)
Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:			
The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives expenses were \$900 thousand or 18.7 per cent lower than the estimate primarily due to a reduction of \$708 thousand in Professional Services, \$620 thousand in salaries due to temporary vacancies, and \$477 thousand for operational expenses.			
These decreases were partially offset by \$900 thousand in support for The African Nova Scotia Decade for People of African Descent Coalition and pilot programs for Crown Law Symposium.			
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:			
Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (19.6) FTE's.			

Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

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

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

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

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

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

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

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing. (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A