

Accountability Report

2016–2017

Service Nova Scotia
July 2017

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Office of Service Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2017 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Service Nova Scotia Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of Service Nova Scotia's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Service Nova Scotia management.

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

Original signed by

Hon. Geoff MacLellan
Minister

Original signed by

Joanne Munro
Chief Executive Officer

Message from Minister

I am pleased to present the Accountability Report for the Office of Service Nova Scotia for April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017. It is our opportunity to highlight what has been achieved over the past year as we work to meet the needs of our clients and the public good through a culture of excellence. I hope you will take the time to read the report in its entirety to fully appreciate our accomplishments to date and to learn how we are making a positive impact on Nova Scotians.

Service Nova Scotia delivers a range of programs and services to citizens. There are approximately five million client interactions each year. The programs and services range from issuing birth and marriage certificates and driver's licenses, and administering the Heating Assistance Rebate Program to reducing red tape to help business owners establish and grow their companies and ensuring the rights and obligations of landlords and tenants are protected. The work we are leading to move more government programs and services into the digital world means we are helping to make it easier and faster for Nova Scotians to access the information they want and need.

The more than 700 civil servants who work at Service Nova Scotia are committed to providing our clients with excellent service. This includes:

- serving 81 per cent of people who visit Access Nova Scotia Centres within 20 minutes of arriving.
- answering 66 per cent of calls to the contact centre within 20 seconds.
- changing the *Residential Tenancies Act* to introduce telephone hearings so it is more convenient for both property owners and tenants to access hearings.
- introducing an online application option for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program to make it easier and quicker for people to apply for, and receive, their rebate. Applicants are also able to check the status of their rebate online instead of checking over the phone.
- changing the liquor licensing regulations to allow restaurant patrons to order up to two alcoholic drinks without ordering food. The change is helping restaurants to stay competitive, while continuing to ensure the sale and consumption of alcohol is safe and responsible. It is all part of our work to reduce red tape for business owners.

As proud as we are of our accomplishments this past year, we are very much looking forward to the coming year and the innovative and transformational work we will do to ensure every client's experience with Service Nova Scotia exceeds their expectations.

Original signed by

The Honourable Geoff MacLellan
Minister, Service Nova Scotia

Message from CEO

As CEO of Service Nova Scotia, I am pleased to join Minister MacLellan to introduce our 2016-17 Accountability Report. I am very proud of what staff have accomplished this past year. They continue to focus on innovative ways to deliver better service while always keeping the best interests of Nova Scotians top of mind.

The initiatives outlined in our accountability report are examples of the work we are doing to improve services to Nova Scotians. We are committed to be more client-focused, efficient and effective in how we deliver our wide range of programs and services. From taking steps to cut red tape for the business community and advancing our work to modernize the registries delivered by Service Nova Scotia, to delivering more government programs and services online, Service Nova Scotia is having a positive impact on the lives of Nova Scotians.

In the Spring of 2017, based on our March 2017 submission, we were awarded Excellence Canada's Excellence Innovation and Wellness Standard, Bronze-level. This is a progressive, integrated management system built to enable organizations to achieve their quality objectives. It is all part of "Our Excellence Journey" which supports Service Nova Scotia becoming a public-sector leader in service and program design.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the incredibly hardworking and dedicated staff of Service Nova Scotia. Each and every member should be proud of the contribution they have made to our many successes over the past year. I continue to be impressed with their passion for innovation, team work and collaboration.

As we look forward to the new year, we will continue our focus on service excellence and modernizing the programs and services we deliver. We have developed a strategy map with solid outcomes and performance measures that will allow us to continue to be accountable to Nova Scotians for the work we are doing. To learn more about our initiatives for 2017-18, I encourage you to read our business plan <https://novascotia.ca/sns/reports.asp>. To learn more about how Service Nova Scotia can help you, visit <https://novascotia.ca/sns>.

Original signed by

Joanne Munro
CEO, Service Nova Scotia

Financial Results

Office of Service Nova Scotia			
	2016-17 Estimate	2016-17 Actual	2016-17 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
CEO Chief Executive Office	379	403	24
Strategy and Corporate Services	11,048	10,787	(261)
Client Experience	39,045	41,009	1,964
Program Modernization	29,480	25,518	(3,962)
Total: Departmental Expenses	79,952	77,717	(2,235)
Ordinary Revenue	725,905	712,819	(13,086)
Fees and Other Charges	8,764	8,462	(302)
Ordinary Recoveries	2,402	372	(2,030)
Total: Revenue, Fees, And Recoveries	737,071	721,653	(15,418)
TCA Purchase Requirements	5,884	1,087	(4,797)
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	652.0	636.6	(15.4)

Departmental Expense Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia expenditures were \$2.2 million or (2.8%) lower than estimate, primarily due to delayed Petroleum Product Volume Tracking project of \$1.9 million and net grant, operating and temporary salary savings of \$0.3 million.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia's revenues were \$15.4 million or (2.1%) lower than estimate, primarily due to reduced Motive Fuel Tax \$13.2 million, Tobacco Tax \$5 million, delayed Petroleum Product Volume Tracking project \$1.9 million offset by increases in Tobacco and Motor Vehicle Act Fines \$3.1 million, Passenger Vehicle Registrations \$2 million, Other Fees \$0.3 million and net Miscellaneous recoveries of \$0.1 million.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

Service Nova Scotia's Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were \$4.8 million or (81.5%) lower than estimate due to project timing of deliverables being revised and change cash flow requirements.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (15.4) FTEs.

Measuring Our Performance

The annual Accountability Report for the Office of Service Nova Scotia (SNS) reports on the progress achieved in meeting the outcomes, commitments and targets outlined in the 2016-17 Business Plan. SNS tracks service standards and progress on key initiatives that support Government's priorities using a balanced scorecard comprising internal and external key performance indicators.

Priorities and Outcomes

Service Nova Scotia priority: Support government priorities through the achievement of high standards of service excellence in our interactions with the people of Nova Scotia. We will leverage innovative technologies to achieve sustainable delivery of programs and services and reduce red tape.

Accomplishments

- Continued to focus on red tape reduction and modernization of legislation, programs and services, contributing directly to the creation of a climate for private-sector and social enterprise growth. In 2016/17, Service Nova Scotia completed 13 red-tape reduction initiatives, including initiating changes to several pieces of legislation, and continued to work closely with the Office of Regulatory and Service Effectiveness to better serve the citizens and businesses of Nova Scotia.
- Supported government's goal to innovate and achieve sustainable delivery of public services by creating a Transformation Initiative to guide the modernization of the registries of Joint Stocks, Land, Motor Vehicles and Vital Statistics. In December 2016, a Request for Proposals was issued to replace the system supporting the Registry of Joint Stocks, and the initiative will continue into 2017-18. Work has also been initiated to support the modernization of the other three major registries.
- Expanded the delivery of government programs and services in new and innovative ways. In 2016/17, an online application option for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) was introduced, as well as a Business Startup Bundle to support entrepreneurs across the province. Service Nova Scotia also continued work to understand the needs of Nova Scotians and building services to meet these needs to ensure the best outcomes for citizens and government.

Core Responsibilities

Service Nova Scotia priority: Deliver on our core responsibilities to achieve the highest quality program outcomes, make it easier to interact with government, continually improve our processes, and make Service Nova Scotia a great place to work.

Accomplishments

- Introduced a change to the *Residential Tenancies Act* to introduce telephone hearings, providing more convenient access to hearings for both the property owners and tenants;
- Amended the *Cemetery and Funeral Services Act* and the *Embalmers and Funeral Directors Act* to enable the sale of insurance in funeral homes to fund pre-arranged funeral plans;

- Continued to identify and partner with members of the MUSH Sector as well as other Maritime provinces to optimize debt collections, including on-boarding three new clients this fiscal year;
- Helped advance the Open Government initiative by increasing the cumulative number of new datasets from Service Nova Scotia to 36;
- Continued to support 211, which connects Nova Scotians to a full range of nonemergency social, health, and government services in their communities. Service Nova Scotia is the primary funder and the lead on managing the Government's relationship of the 211 initiative;
- Service Nova Scotia continued to modernize our processes and procedures through ongoing quality improvement initiatives, completing multiple Lean Six Sigma projects and developing a Lean Framework to be introduced across the organization;
- Enabled successful charitable fundraising throughout Nova Scotia by developing and administering an effective Chase the Ace policy to ensure conduct of these gaming activities is done with honesty and integrity;
- A vendor was secured to implement new Registry of Motor Vehicles photo card central issuance system with Atlantic jurisdictions, which will make provincially issued identification more secure and prevent identity theft. Implementation is on track for 2017/18;
- Continued on-going efforts to improve the services we deliver as part of our commitment to provide better client service and positive experiences to Nova Scotians across all channels.

Performance Measures

Measure	Baseline FY 14/15	Target FY 16/17	Results FY 16/17
Annual percentage increase in debt collection	0.58%	3%	11.3%
Cumulative number of Service Nova Scotia open data sets available online	n/a ¹	20	36
Percentage of in-person clients at Access Nova Scotia centres served within 20 minutes	72%	80%	81%
Percentage of Government of Nova Scotia contact centre calls answered within 20 seconds	46%	70%	66%
Number of red tape reduction initiatives completed	10	10	13
Annual percentage increase in online transactions	n/a ²	5%	6.4%
Percentage of digital uptake for online vehicle permit renewal services	32%	40%	36%
Percentage variance of period 10 budget forecast to year-end actuals	1.53%	<2%	1.1%

Notes:

¹ Last actual (baseline) is zero as the initiative was not yet implemented.

² Baseline data not available due to change in calculation and tracking.

Supplemental Information and Appendices

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

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

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

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

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

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

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

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2016-2017
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A