

Statement of Mandate 2015–2016



Justice



NOVA SCOTIA

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

STATEMENT OF MANDATE

FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER / DEPUTY MINISTER.....	3
DEPARTMENT MANDATE, MISSION, VISION.....	4
GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES.....	5
STRATEGIC OUTCOMES.....	7
BUDGET CONTEXT.....	9
PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	10
NOTES PERTAINING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES.....	14

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER / DEPUTY MINISTER

We are pleased to present the *2015-16 Statement of Mandate* for the Nova Scotia Department of Justice. This year, we are continuing to focus on the following priority areas:

- Improving access to justice, and
- Working together for community safety and wellbeing.

Justice becomes more accessible when Nova Scotians have accurate and timely information and services as they navigate the justice system. Our Department has been working to both enhance and expand our family justice services and programs so that people feel more confident about their ability to navigate that system. We're also working with our justice system partners to enhance efficiencies and reduce delays in our criminal courts. All of this work will continue to be a key focus for us throughout the next fiscal year.

We recognize the need to work with community, justice, and government partners in order to create the right conditions for preventing and reducing crime in Nova Scotia. Through innovative crime prevention models, we are targeting groups at an elevated risk of harm and working together to effect change.

None of the work outlined in this document would be possible without the engagement and hard work of our employees. Focusing on workplace culture and the wellbeing of our staff remains an ongoing priority.

We welcome your feedback and look forward to your support as we work together to improve Nova Scotia's justice system and make our communities healthy and safe.

Thank you.



Lena Metlege Diab
Minister



Judith Ferguson
Deputy Minister

DEPARTMENT MANDATE, MISSION, VISION

MANDATE

The Department of Justice is responsible for the administration of justice and for promoting the safety and security of Nova Scotians through justice-related programs, services and initiatives.

MISSION

The Department of Justice is committed to protecting and promoting the rights and safety of all people in Nova Scotia with efficient and responsive justice programs and services.

VISION

Nova Scotia has a people-centred justice system and the safest communities in the country.

GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

Priority: Fiscal sustainability

The justice system must be administered properly, effectively, and in a fiscally sustainable way. In 2015-16, the Department of Justice is continuing with the *Provincial Court Case Processing Project*, which focuses on proportionate responses for criminal court cases. With the *Differential Response to Conflict Program*, the Department is also continuing to triage family court cases to identify as early as possible those cases in which alternative dispute resolution mechanisms or other family justice services may be the most effective. Matching the appropriate type and level of support and resources to the appropriate court case means better service and better use of resources. On an ongoing basis, the Court Services division's *Continuous Service Improvement Initiative* will consider and implement service improvements through five integrated working groups on training, technology, judicial engagement, change management, and business process improvements.

Working collaboratively with other government departments, justice partners and community organizations to provide targeted programming is something the Department is committed to doing in both principle and practice. Establishing and maintaining strategic partnerships is a key component of many of the initiatives outlined in this document. Enhanced communication and shared coordination not only makes programs more effective, it can also mean reduced duplication and coordination costs.

Priority: Demographics and people

The Department of Justice's initiatives for 2015-16 will contribute to the province's demographic goals by reducing crime and targeting populations with an elevated risk of harm with programs based on partnerships. This will ultimately result in enhanced community and social well-being.

For example, the HUB model is a collaborative response model targeting youth and families at an elevated risk of harm. This model recognizes a traditional police response will not resolve all issues. It works to prevent and reduce crime through the development of community and justice system partnerships. There are currently eight HUB models operating in the province. In 2015-16, the Department will establish a framework for a Nova Scotia focused HUB model that meets the unique needs of our youth at elevated risk.

We are also continuing to test a public health based intervention model called CeaseFire that is designed to reduce gun violence through street level intervention and community mobilization. CeaseFire works with the highest risk youth and young adults.

We are enhancing programming for adult offenders with a variety of programs, including the establishment of an Intensive Direct Supervision Unit, and expansion of the Building Bridges program to the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility. This year, we are also improving our integration of custodial and community service delivery with the assignment of Community Corrections staff to work more closely with the four adult correctional institutions.

Priority: Education

Through collaborative partnerships with Departments of Education and Early Childhood Development, Health and Wellness and Community Services, Department of Justice initiatives will support Government's Education priority by working to address the educational needs of youth at an elevated risk of harm who are in custody and in the community. Some of these initiatives include:

- A Nova Scotia focused HUB model
- CeaseFire
- Enhanced programming for adult offenders
- Improved integration of community and custodial service delivery
- Improved rehabilitation programming for youth

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

To achieve its mandate, the Department is continuing to focus on the following priority areas this year:

Improving Access to Justice

As a departmental priority, access to justice is about timeliness of service delivery, timely access to services and information, and striving for equity in access. Delays in access can have significant impacts including case collapse, increased conflict and inefficient use of court resources. *The Provincial Court Case Processing Project* is aimed at addressing delays in criminal court matters through proportionate responses. Strategies under that project include improved intake and case management approaches.

Meaningful access to services and information means that responsive information and services are offered at the optimal time. The *Differential Response to Conflict Assessment Program* strives to meet the challenges of matching, as closely and as early as possible, existing family justice programs and services with the needs of families experiencing the family justice system. This year, assistive dispute resolution services will be expanded, enhanced and regionalized. The Department is also enhancing the Nova Scotia Family Law website this year with a series of new online services, such as:

- Online Application Kits
- Online Parent Information Program
- Online Intake
- Self-Represented Litigants' Handbook (developed in collaboration with Nova Scotia Legal Aid)

Improving access to justice also means considering the access needs of hard to reach populations. This year, the Department is engaging in a collaborative Child's Wishes Assessment pilot project to help courts to receive information about a child's wishes in the context of family separation.

To measure the impacts of these priority initiatives, the following outcomes have been developed:

- Nova Scotians have better access to justice through improved court case processing times.
- Nova Scotians have access to better information and/or services at the right time to make the right legal decision(s).

Working Together for Community Safety and Wellbeing

The Department of Justice is committed to working closely with community organizations and other justice system partners to reduce and prevent crime. The Department is making targeted investments tailored to the highest risk groups, enhancing programming for both youth and adult offenders, and better integrating custodial and community service delivery.

This work is aimed at achieving the following outcome:

- Preventing and reducing crime through the development of community and justice system partnerships.

BUDGET CONTEXT

	2014-2015 Estimate	2014-2015 Forecast	2015-2016 Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Gross Departmental Expenses:			
Administration	23,780	23,652	22,394
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	22,181	22,181	24,340
Court Services	69,778	69,772	69,199
Correctional Services	67,796	68,312	69,443
Compliance and Internal Investigation Services	169	85	0
Public Trustee	2,428	2,379	2,375
Fatality Inquiry Act	4,135	4,322	4,057
Public Safety	131,619	130,756	135,172
Serious Incident Response Team	590	591	613
Total Gross Departmental Expenses	322,476	322,068	327,593
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	-24,850	-22,913	-24,362
Ordinary Recoveries	-108,768	-109,756	-112,440
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,430	991	3,765
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,627	1,582	1,608

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Outcome: Improving Access to Justice					
SUB-OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Nova Scotians have better access to justice through improved court case processing times.	Case processing times in adult criminal court ⁱ	Base year: 2006-07 Nova Scotia: 199 days Canada: 250 days	To meet or fall below the Canadian average	Year NS Canada 2007-08 195 246 2008-09 210 230 2009-10 223 224 2010-11 228 239 ^r 2011-12 235 218 2012-13 229 ⁱⁱ N/A 2013-14 241 ⁱⁱ N/A	The Court Services division has a number of initiatives planned for 2015-16 to improve access to justice, and to better understand and reduce the current processing times for criminal cases. The Provincial Court Case Processing Project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • recommend appropriate diversion and early resolution options; • identify serious or complex cases early in the process; and • streamline appearances to reduce unnecessary adjournments. Court Services division will develop and implement an evaluation strategy that will include a measurement tool for case processing times in family law proceedings.
				Year Average # of days 2007-08 112 2008-09 121 2009-10 125 2010-11 125 2011-12 102 2012-13 109 2013-14 111	
				To meet or fall below the Canadian average elapsed time to complete an adult criminal court case.	
				98 days elapsed time to complete a youth court case.	
				TBD	
				TBD	
				TBD	
				TBD	
				TBD	
				TBD	
Case processing time in youth court ⁱⁱⁱ	120 days	98 days elapsed time to complete a youth court case.	TBD	TBD	TBD
Case processing time in family law proceedings ^{iv} .	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Outcome: Improving Access to Justice					
SUB-OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS	
				STRATEGIC ACTIONS	
Nova Scotians have access to better information and/or services at the right time to make the right legal decision(s).	Percentage of web survey respondents who agreed with the statement: <i>I am more confident I have the needed information to deal with my case.</i>	Base year: 2013-14 58.5%	5% increase over base year		<p>In 2015-16, Court Services division is improving access to justice through the following enhancements to family law programs and service delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining and enhancing the Nova Scotia Family Law website, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building Online Application Kits Creating an Online Parent Information Program Creating an Online Intake Module Collaborating with Nova Scotia Legal Aid on a Self-Represented Litigants' Handbook Engaging in a Child's Wishes Assessment pilot project to facilitate access to information about a child's wishes in the context of family separation Implementing new family law legislation under the <i>Family Law Reform Project</i>, including preparation and dissemination of public and stakeholder education materials. Continuing to expand, enhance and regionalize assistive dispute resolution services. <p>The Court Services division's <i>Continuous Service Improvement Initiative</i> considers and implements service improvements on an ongoing basis. Under this initiative, five integrated working groups are focused on training, technology, judicial engagement, change management, and business process improvements.</p>
	Percentage of web survey respondents who agreed with the statement: <i>My knowledge of family justice matters has improved based on spending time on this website.</i>	Base year: 2013-14 67.5%	5% increase over base year		
	Percentage of web survey respondents who agreed with the statement: <i>I feel better prepared for settlement or court.</i>	Base year: 2013-14 48%	5% increase over base year		

Outcome: Working Together for Community Safety and Wellbeing					
SUB-OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Preventing and reducing crime through the development of community and justice system partnerships.	Number of partnerships maintained and/or created (HUB, CeaseFire, Restorative Approaches in Schools).	Base year: 2013-14 103	132		<p>Crime prevention is the concerted effort of individuals, communities, businesses, police services and government agencies working together to address the root causes of crime. To meet this goal, the Department is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continuing to test a public health based intervention model to reduce gun violence through street level intervention and community mobilization; • continuing to test collaborative response models such as the HUB model, targeting youth and families at an elevated risk of harm; • establishing a framework for a Nova Scotia focused HUB model that brings together social professionals and community services to discuss youth at an elevated risk of harm; • expanding the reach of the Restorative Approaches in Schools initiative and building healthy relationships to reduce conflict and improve responses when conflict does occur in schools; • continuing to build stronger understanding of digital citizenship through outreach education; • partnering with other government departments and local health authorities to improve collaborative rehabilitation programming for youth; • enhancing programming for adult offenders with a focus on Aggression Replacement Training; Substance Abuse Management; Respectful Relationships; Options to Anger; the establishment of the Intensive Direct Supervision Unit; and expansion of Building Bridges program to the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility.
	Number of outreach education sessions provided by CyberSCAN team.	Base year: 2014-15	100		
	Number of gun related incidents in geographic regions where health based gun violence response model is being tested.	Base year: 2013 32 incidents	Decrease of 5% over previous year		

Outcome: Working Together for Community Safety and Wellbeing																										
SUB-OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR	TARGET	TRENDS																						
				STRATEGIC ACTIONS																						
	Availability / reach of rehabilitative programming.	Base year: 2013-14 Number of programs offered in custody and in community Adults: 398 Youth: 49	Maintain or increase number of programs offered																							
	Public confidence in Justice system ¹ .	Base year: 2005 74% of Nova Scotians have some confidence in the justice system.	Maintain / increase public confidence in the justice system	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>% of public having some confidence in Justice system</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2005</td><td>74</td></tr> <tr><td>2006</td><td>76</td></tr> <tr><td>2007</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>2008</td><td>72</td></tr> <tr><td>2009</td><td>76</td></tr> <tr><td>2010</td><td>74</td></tr> <tr><td>2011</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>2012</td><td>74</td></tr> <tr><td>2013</td><td>76</td></tr> <tr><td>2014</td><td>72</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	% of public having some confidence in Justice system	2005	74	2006	76	2007	70	2008	72	2009	76	2010	74	2011	75	2012	74	2013	76	2014	72
Year	% of public having some confidence in Justice system																									
2005	74																									
2006	76																									
2007	70																									
2008	72																									
2009	76																									
2010	74																									
2011	75																									
2012	74																									
2013	76																									
2014	72																									
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved integration of custodial and community service delivery, including the assignment of Community Corrections staff to work more closely with the four adult institutions. 																						

NOTES PERTAINING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES

ⁱ Case processing time refers to the average number of days it takes to process cases in criminal court from first appearance to final disposition. The definition of a court case includes all charges against the same person having overlapping court dates.

ⁱⁱ The data on adult criminal court case processing times are from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), *Adult Criminal Court Survey* with the exception of the data for 2012-13 and 2013-14, which is from the Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN), Nova Scotia Department of Justice. CCJS figures for adult criminal courts case processing are anticipated to be released in the second quarter of 2015-16. There may be slight differences in the volume of cases (and consequently, the average case processing times) as calculated by the CCJS versus JEIN.

ⁱⁱⁱ Youth case processing time is defined as the average elapsed time from the accused's first appearance in youth court until final disposition. Nova Scotia excludes restorative justice cases and bench warrants when calculating case processing times and reporting on the corresponding case volumes. Cases involving restorative justice are excluded because, on average, these cases take over 200 days to complete, which artificially inflates overall processing times. Bench warrants are excluded because, once issued by the Court, the Court cannot control how long it takes to have that warrant executed.

^{iv} Case processing times for family law cases is a new measure for which we will use data collected by court staff. A data collection tool is being developed.

^v The *Atlantic Quarterly Survey* provides an indication of the public's level of confidence in the justice system. Figures for this measure include respondents that indicated having "a great deal of confidence" as well as those who indicated having "some confidence" in the justice system as per the *Atlantic Quarterly Survey*.