



Accountability Report 2022–23

Human Rights Commission



Contents

Contents.....	1
Accountability Statement	2
Message from the Director and CEO	3
Financial Summary and Variance Explanation.....	4
Measuring Our Performance	5
#1 Goal: Advance Priority Human Rights Issues	5
#2 Goal: Modernize and strengthen the Human Rights Commission	6
#3Goal:Advance dialogue and human rights practices	8
Appendix A - Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.....	10

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Human Rights Commission for the year ended March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Human Rights Commission Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Human Rights Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Human Rights Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Human Rights Commission 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 Human Rights Commission 2022-2023 Business Plan.

Original signed by

Joseph Fraser
Director & CEO

Message from the Director and CEO

The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission remains committed to creating inclusive communities and to promoting the advancement of human rights in Nova Scotia by fostering positive, productive, and respectful relationships. In fiscal year 2022-2023, the Commission continued to deepen relationships within the communities we serve through partnership and engagement. Commission staff expanded upon the Human Rights on the Road model of information sessions, creating a series of informal Community Circles, raising awareness of the Commission's services and mandate. Youth were engaged through new partnerships, and the Commission celebrated significant human rights related dates including the annual Nova Scotia Human Rights Awards, Pride, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Mi'kmaq History Month and more.

As part of its commitment to repairing relationships and building trust with the African Nova Scotian community, the Commission staffed a full-time, permanent African Nova Scotian Liaison and Education Officer position. As another example of this commitment, the Commission collaborated with members of the African Nova Scotian community and other partners to coordinate a well-attended session at the National Black Canadian Summit highlighting significant human rights cases that addressed racial profiling of African Nova Scotians.

We remain actively engaged in collaborative work to advance accessibility and inclusion of persons with disabilities through partnerships within government and community. As well, we are strengthening our relationships within L'nu communities through greater presence and connection with groups such as the Council of Mainland Mi'kmaq. The new Wel-lukwen Award was introduced on Human Rights Day and sets the stage for ongoing recognition of Indigenous leadership.

Together with a comprehensive all-staff learning and development initiative to bolster capacity to provide trauma informed, culturally responsive and restorative services, Commission staff were trained in foundational process improvement methodologies and led a fulsome review of all work processes. Initial results of changes to how we serve the public at the intake stage have already reduced wait times and improved timelines. Continuous improvement will follow over the coming years as additional projects stemming from this work continue.

I would like to extend sincere thanks to the staff, management, and Commissioners for their contributions, and continued commitment to our shared work.

Original signed by

Joseph Fraser
Director & CEO

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

	2022-2023 Estimate	2022-2023 Actuals	2022-2023 Variance
Human Rights Commission	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
Departmental Expenses:			
Administration	836	936	100
Support Services	2,044	1,830	(214)
Total: Departmental Expenses	2,880	2,766	(114)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	0	0	0
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	8	17	9
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	8	17	9
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	25.5	22.1	(3)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u>			
Variance due to salary savings.			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u>			
Variance due to temporary vacancies			

Measuring Our Performance

#1 Goal: Advance Priority Human Rights Issues

Outcome: Communities within Nova Scotia are more inclusive

Actions:

1. The Commission will focus on addressing longstanding issues of systemic racism related to people of African descent.
2. The Commission will enhance its capacity for evidence-based decision making through advancements in data management.
3. The Commission will continue to contribute to the legislative and policy framework supporting human rights in Nova Scotia.

Performance Measures:

- The Commission is more responsive to the human rights concerns of African Nova Scotians and people of African descent.
 - The Commission partnered with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse Quebec, and the Canadian Human Rights Commission to host a panel event entitled “Setting the Bar on Human Rights: Key Cases in African Nova Scotian Communities.”
 - Partnerships with government and community organizations were fostered through collaborations to coordinate public events focused on systemic discrimination, the Human Rights on the Road series of information sessions, and the presentation of the Human Rights Awards.
 - The Commission began an ongoing partnership with the African Nova Scotian Justice Institute to provide support to community members as they navigate the services and processes of the Commission.
- Through improvements to data collection, analysis, and reporting, the Commission will begin to strengthen its ability to identify and respond to emerging issues and trends.

- The Commission identified and improved monitoring means, including system enhancements and regular reporting that have resulted in an increased ability to identify and respond to emerging trends.
- The Commission will support and contribute to the work of the Accessibility Directorate, Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives, and other government partners in legislative and policy responses to human rights issues.
 - Commission staff were actively involved with the Employment Standards Development Committee for the *Nova Scotia Accessibility Act*.
 - The Commission leveraged social media networking to amplify calls for public input on legislation advancing human rights.
 - Commission staff participated in the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Leaders Committee round table and continued to work on employment equity goals within the provincial government.
 - Re-occurring meetings were held between the Commission and the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives to increase collaborative efforts and strengthen the partnership.

#2 Goal: [Modernize and strengthen the Human Rights Commission](#)

Outcome: The Commission's capacity is strengthened

Actions:

1. The Commission will enhance its communication strategy by expanding its use of digital media platforms and community relations to promote human rights.
2. The Commission will strengthen its accountability and service delivery to the public through clear, consistent, and responsive processes.
3. The Commission will strengthen its capacity through learning and development for all staff.

Performance Measures:

- The Commission will have meaningful ongoing communication with partners and the public through a variety of forums.

- Resources were enhanced and made publicly available on the Commission’s website including an inquiry form and guided pathway of the complaint process.
- The Commission highlighted resources available to equity-deserving communities through community partnerships.
- Public trust and confidence in the Human Rights Commission will increase through accountability and transparency in processes and reporting.
 - The Commission completed a business operational analysis of its processes and developed a roadmap of improvement projects to increase process efficiency and effectiveness.
 - Commission staff were trained and received certification in Lean Six Sigma yellow belt designation to help identify and implement process improvements within all aspects of daily work tasks.
- Commission staff will demonstrate enhanced competency to provide accessible, responsive, and efficient services to Nova Scotia’s diverse population.
 - The Commission developed and implemented learning and development plans for staff on various human rights topics to lay the foundation for service delivery grounded in cultural competency, trauma informed and restorative practices. Staff participated in the following sessions:
 - Challenging Anti-Black Racism and Leading Change: An Introduction to Africentric Education;
 - Systemic Racism and White Privilege;
 - Disability and Accessibility workshop;
 - Mi’kmaw 101 Lunch & Learn;
 - Introduction to Restorative Principles;
 - Pride week learning opportunity titled “Bring your whole self to work”;
 - Kairos blanket exercise;
 - The 5th Bi-Annual Provincial Diversity Conference;
 - Toward Trauma Informed Practice.

- Recurring education sessions were established, scheduled, and standardized for Dispute Resolution related to the complaint process.

#3 Goal: Advance dialogue and human rights practices

Outcome: Leadership and innovation in the advancement of human rights

Actions:

1. The Commission will encourage the adoption of best human rights practices through ongoing research, networking, partnerships, and public engagement.
2. The Commission will enhance mechanisms to amplify voices of L'nú and African Nova Scotian communities as well as other equity-deserving communities, on human rights issues.
3. The Commission will highlight and build upon advancements in human rights work.

Performance Measures:

- The promotion of human rights will be reinforced by strengthening connections with partners such as professionals, volunteers, communities, businesses, and organizations involved in human rights work.
 - Commission staff participated in public events and partnerships to advance the dialogue about human rights across equity-deserving communities.
 - Commission staff built upon partnerships across government and community to strengthen relationships. Partnership opportunities initiated and fostered included:
 - African Nova Scotian Justice Institute;
 - Ummah Masjid Society;
 - Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaw;
 - Michaelle Jean Foundation;
 - Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia;
 - East Coast Prison Justice Society;
 - The Office of Equity and Anti-Racism Initiatives;
 - Accessibility Directorate;
 - Halifax Public Libraries;
 - Halifax Regional Municipality;
 - Cape Breton Regional Police Services.

- Increased opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard and valued.
 - Information sessions were conducted through Human Rights on the Road sessions with L’nu and African Nova Scotian communities.
 - Commission staff hosted panel discussion events with guest speakers from L’nu and African Nova Scotian communities.
 - The Commission launched a program for youth aged 12-19 in partnership with the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning. Rhythm & Rights aims to help youth explore and understand their human rights through artistic activities, using art and song writing to break down misconceptions and better understand how to self-advocate.
 - In partnership with the Sierra Leone Canadian Association, the Commission organized a community conversation “*Sharing Our Stories from Shore to Shore*” in commemoration of the theme of 2023 African Heritage Month. The discussion provided an opportunity to explore the history, challenges and connections between African Nova Scotians and the people of Sierra Leone.

- National trends will be better identified and applied to human rights concerns raised through inquiries and complaints.
 - Commission staff sought opportunities for collaboration, education, and professional development with Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies (CASHRA) partners.
 - The Commission contributed through partnerships with the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and the Cross-Canada Human Rights Education Network.
 - In commemoration of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Commission staff collaborated with partners, Halifax Regional Municipality, Halifax Public Libraries, and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation to host a panel event, “*When Communities Unite, They Will Tie Up Racism*”.

Appendix A - 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 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

Please use the following format to satisfy the disclosure obligation:

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Human Rights Commission

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