



Accountability Report

2023–24

Service Nova Scotia



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Accountability Report 2023–2024

ISBN 978-1-77448-663-4

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Service Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2024, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of Service Nova Scotia outcomes includes estimates, judgements, 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 2023-24 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Original signed by:

Hon. Colton LeBlanc

Joanne Munro

Minister

Deputy Minister

Measuring Performance

Service Nova Scotia (SNS) is committed to meeting its mandated priorities and supporting other Government Departments and Offices to achieve their strategic objectives through its role as a key enabler across government.

In May 2023, the new Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions (CSDS) was formed. SNS's 2023/24 Accountability Report will reflect items from the 2023/24 Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services Business Plan that are the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia. The remaining items from the business plan will be included Cyber Security and Digital Solutions (CSDS) 2023/24 Accountability Report.

Contributing to Nova Scotia's "Action for Health" Strategic Plan

- Improved access to care for Nova Scotians and supported health care modernization by partnering with the Department of Health & Wellness (DHW) and the Department of Seniors & Long-Term Care (SLTC):
 - Continued to support DHW with the expansion of the telehealth program as well as the secure delivery of accessible and equitable virtual care
 - Continued to work with SLTC to plan and executed a procurement process for the expansion and renovation of long-term care facilities
- Continued to work with Build Nova Scotia, Department of Public Works (DPW) and Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSH) to plan and execute equipment procurement for the expansion and renovation of health care facilities.

Encouraging Student Apprenticeships in the Tender Application Process

- Continued to develop processes to direct public sector entities to consider certification and inclusive apprenticeship in all sectors, and incorporate these apprenticeships in tenders' evaluation criteria,
- Ensured that minimum targets for percentage of hours worked by apprentices in skilled trades were properly implemented as part of our workforce development, and
- Identified workforce needs in the construction sector and executing the expansion of workforce development for construction projects.

Program and Legislative Modernization

- Continued the multi-year Registries Transformation and Modernization Initiative. Initiated planning for the Land Registries Modernization Project. Vital Statistics implemented a new vendor-supported software system, in keeping with other provincial jurisdiction, to enable more modern record keeping, document retention, and improvements in application processes. Registry of Motor Vehicles Project entered execution phase (with DPW and CSDS).
- Pursued amendments in the Sustainable Procurement Policy that require public sector entities to consider best value by attributing factors, in addition to purchase price, to select a supplier that includes life cycle cost, supplier capacity to meet criteria in the procurement process, and sustainable procurement considerations. Sustainable procurement means a procurement process that considers the environmental, economic, and social factors related to the procurement of goods, services, or construction.
- Amendments included the Directive for the Favourable Treatment of Nova Scotia Businesses. The Local First Policy grants a 10 percent advantage to local businesses competing for government contracts under the Canada Free Trade Agreement (CFTA) thresholds (\$33,400 for goods, and \$133,800 for services)
- Modernized the *Vital Statistics Act's Birth Registration Regulations* to eliminate the legal barriers and reduce the financial barriers for same sex female persons seeking to add to their families using a known donor.
- Continued implementing the multi-year initiative of the Trunked Mobile Radio 2 network fleet radio replacement. To date 1,500 of the 7,300 radios have been deployed and another 1000 are ready for deployment. This initiative will help maintain the effectiveness of public safety agencies, first responders, and Public Works providers.
- Supported government in responding to over 3,300 access to information requests and provided leadership in government-wide privacy breach responses and support to the Department of Justice in the review of privacy and access legislation.
- Continued our collaboration with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness (ORASE) in developing and measuring red tape reduction initiatives including a reduction of regulatory burden on businesses by \$785,000 and savings of 6,700 citizen hours.
- Launched a new International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA) management system. IFTA carriers use an online portal to complete tax filing, reducing time and burden to business.
- Continued to support Nova Scotia's regulated petroleum marketplace with ongoing collaboration and consultation in alignment with federal and provincial low-carbon initiatives.

2023-24 Key Facts and Figures

- Responsible for over 40 Acts, 60 Regulations, and 28 Corporate Policies.
- Responsible for facilities management of 30+ locations across the province.
- 653,055 calls were answered by the Provincial Contact Centre.
- 1,214,398 Registry of Motor Vehicle (RMV) clients served, and 2,025,603 RMV transactions processed.

- 48,120 RMV knowledge tests conducted (27,231 online); 39,632 online driver license renewals and 274,373 online vehicle permit renewals. Increase in online transactions did not remove pressure from in-person services at access centres as overall transaction volumes increased.
- Business Registration Unit (BRU) answered 20,000+ calls, issued 206,431 rebates, issued 244,086 permits, validated 171,392 Registry of Joint Stocks and Companies (RJSC) registrations, and serviced 20,019 service requests.
- 4,604 Marriage Licenses processed.
- 257, 699 land documents & plans processed and/or registered.
- Over 80% of information for SNS online programs and services available in the French language.
- Approximately 30,000 words translated into French language for SNS, CSDS (Cyber Security & Digital Services) and DMAH (Department of Municipal Affairs & Housing).
- Trunked Mobile Radio 2 (TMR 2): 14,500 Radios, 20,000 Users, 99.98% system reliability.
- 61 telecommunications towers owned / maintained by the Province of Nova Scotia.
- 228,000+ calls for service handled by Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre.
- Responded to 25 disruptive events, including 2 wildfires and 21 significant weather events.
- Managed 30 insurance policies with premiums of \$2M.
- Processed close to 2,000 insurance claims.
- \$14.19B payments issued.
- 129,000+ low & middle-income households helped with heating costs.
- 19,000+ low-income seniors assisted with property taxes.
- Responded to 396 consumer complaints.
- 396 tenders were posted for high value goods/services/construction.
- 685 contracts established for high value goods/services/construction.
- 90% of staff undertook accessibility-related training courses.
- 3,316 requests for information under the FOIPOP Act completed.
- Over 400,000 pages of documents reviewed for release under FOIPOP.
- 102 Privacy Impact Assessment checklists completed.
- \$22.8M in debt recovered.
- 15,000+ field inspections related to alcohol and tobacco licensing.
- Monitored and inspected generation of \$430M in revenues from the Fuel, Tobacco, and Vape product wholesalers.
- Reviewed and approved \$140M in rebates for the Your Energy Rebate Program (YERP) – the provincial program that provides a rebate equal to the provincial portion of HST charged on residential energy usage.
- Oversight of the Province’s Fraud Reporting Services, which is a key method where employees can safely report fraudulent activities.

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
Programs and Services	2023-2024 Estimate	2023-2024 Actuals	2023-2024 Variance
Senior Management	548	588	40
Corporate Services	11,325	11,087	(238)
Government Services	33,891	58,461	24,570
Internal Audit	2,923	2,908	(15)
Financial Services	14,612	13,451	(1,161)
Citizen Services	34,452	39,217	4,765
Procurement	10,110	9,351	(759)
Program Modernization	45,508	114,042	68,534
Total - Departmental Expenses	153,369	249,105	95,736
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	614,908	644,787	29,879
Fees and Other Charges	9,032	9,386	354
Ordinary Recoveries	9,681	10,128	447
Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries	633,621	664,301	30,680
TCA Purchase Requirements	2,279	1,045	(1,234)
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	1,006.0	987.8	(18.2)
Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia 2023-24 expenses were \$95.7 million or 62.4 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$68.1 million in grants for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program expansion, \$9.8 million for trails repair mainly due to July flooding, \$7.5 million for volunteer public safety providers access to trunked mobile radios, \$2.8 million for credit monitoring and identity theft protection related to a global cybersecurity breach, \$2.1 million for insurance claims and premiums, \$1.3 million for Shubenacadie Radio Communications Centre incremental costs, and \$1.3 million for Property Tax Rebate for Seniors for increased applications.			
Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia 2023-24 revenue were \$30.7 million or 4.8% higher than estimate primarily due to \$22.3 million increase in Motive Fuel Tax, \$3.5 million Levy on Private Sales of Used Vehicles, and an increase of \$4.9 million for other ordinary revenues and fees.			
TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services Tangible Capital Asset purchases were \$1.2 million or 54.1% lower than estimate primarily due to multi-year project cashflow adjustments.			

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services Provincially Funded FTEs were 18.2 or 1.8% lower due to continued transition of the department and filling vacancies.

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 Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2023-2024
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
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