



Accountability Report

2023–24

Public Service Commission



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Accountability Report 2023–2024

ISBN 978-1-77448-663-4

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1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia (N.S.) Public Service Commission (P.S.C.) for the year ended March 31, 2024, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the N.S. Public Service Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by N.S. Public Service Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of N.S. Public Service 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 N.S. Public Service Commission 2023-24 Business Plan.

Public Service Commission

(Original Signed By)

Minister Twila Grosse

(Original Signed By)

Commissioner Melissa MacKinnon

2.0 Introduction

Each day, P.S.C. employees work to ensure that the province has the human resources (H.R.) required to manage, create, and deliver excellent, high-quality programs and services to Nova Scotians. The work of the P.S.C. supports welcoming and inclusive workplace cultures, employee mental health and well-being, and integral H.R. programs, policies, practices, and technological infrastructure. All these elements uphold the development of a provincial workforce that is ready to take on our most pressing priorities as a Province. In 2023-24, the department continued to align its work with both the priorities of the N.S. Government and the P.S.C.'s vision for a diverse and inspired public service. The progress to nearly all the goals set out in the business plan can be attributed to improvements in internal collaboration, implementation of digital solutions, collaboration with partners such as the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism and the Accessibility Directorate, and client collaboration from many departments.

3.0 Measuring Performance

This section of the accountability report restates the priorities and performance measures outlined in P.S.C.'s [2023-24 Business Plan](#) and demonstrates our progress and achievements for this fiscal year.

3.1 Talent attraction, development, and retention

Progress on Initiatives/Activities:

- Address emerging H.R. trends through departmental H.R. planning support, corporate strategy development, and communications, and establish culturally responsive and equitable talent acquisition and H.R. practices, including development of a recruitment of Indigenous Peoples hiring guide for the Province of Nova Scotia (P.N.S.).
 - Completed the Office of the Auditor General's Diversity & Inclusion in the Public Service recommendations.
 - Supported H.R. planning across departments, providing advice from across the P.S.C.
 - Began to implement the 2022-23 Employment Systems Review recommendations.
 - Developed Indigenous Recruitment Guidelines (to launch in fiscal year 2024-25).
- Enhance outreach and engagement activities to support recruiting and retaining talent, and hire and retain a diverse provincial workforce, including younger workers and employees from equity-deserving groups.
 - Advertised positions and conducted outreach recruitment with 4 equity deserving communities: Wije'winen Indigenous Career Fair; Black, Indigenous, People of Color Atlantic Career Fair; Immigrant Settlement Association of Nova Scotia Onsite Networking Event; and, Indigenous Employment Officer Session. Attended 10 in-person/virtual job fairs in Nova Scotia universities and colleges, and local career fairs.
 - Received 147,358 job applications from our job postings (28% increase from last year). Of those job applications, 40% self-identified as employment equity candidates (2% increase).
 - There were 3,964 job offers accepted (11% increase). Of those job offers accepted, 32% were accepted by individuals who self-identified as employment equity candidates.

- Hired or re-hired 1,364 younger workers (7% increase). Of the younger workers 28% were employed on a permanent basis (12% increase).
- As of March 31, 2024, 22% of employees were aged 35 years or younger (16% increase).
- Continue offering a suite of virtual/online and in-person training and development opportunities for provincial employees and improve professional development and career advancement practices.
 - Offered over 40 e-learning modules (10.8% increase from last year).
 - Offered 184 instructor-led virtual or in-person training sessions (12.2% increase) with 3,707 participants (10.4% increase).
 - Leadership, management or professional development programs had 410 participants (9.9% increase).
 - Provided 1-1 Career Support for 88 clients (51% increase).
 - Developed/offered new courses including organizational change, neurodiversity, accessibility, workplace violence, leading virtually, job competition process, and more.
 - Initiated a Leadership Development Program Review.

3.2 Welcoming and inclusive workplace cultures

Progress on Initiatives/Activities:

- Update and revise H.R. policies to foster safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive workplaces.
 - In process, in collaboration with the Office of Equity & Anti-Racism and departments.
- Provide training and education to support the P.N.S.' equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (E.D.I.A.) efforts and increased E.D.I.A. knowledge and skills for all employees.
 - Employees completed 19,429 E.D.I.A. e-learning modules, a 55% increase from last year.
 - 724 employees participated in in-person E.D.I.A. courses.
 - Worked in partnership with Employee Networks, Accessibility Directorate, and L'nu Affairs to prepare new and updated educational opportunities such as Treaty Education and accessibility training.
- Improved collaboration and partnerships with provincial departments and offices to address E.D.I.A. outcomes in alignment with the All Together Strategy and the recommendations from the review of the provincial employment systems.
 - Worked with Employee Networks and partners like the Accessibility Directorate to prepare and update new and innovative educational opportunities that address systemic racism and inequities such as Treaty Education and accessibility training.
 - Hosted an E.D.I.A. Assembly for leaders across departments and Employee Networks.

3.3 Employee mental health and well-being

Progress on Initiatives/Activities:

- Continue to prioritize the programs and services of the Office of Workplace Mental Health (O.W.M.H.) and increase mental health literacy to help support healthy and safe workplaces for employees facing mental health challenges.

- Permanently establishing O.W.M.H. as of April 1, 2025.
 - Results of engagement sessions show 90% of participants reported value to their mental health, 94% reported learning ways to support mental health and well-being, and 79% felt better able to seek help because of these programs.
 - Built six new Peer Support programs in partnership with Employee Network and department teams (now 8 programs serving over 1,000 employees).
- Monitor and review employee wellbeing supports (including the Employee & Family Assistance Program (E.F.A.P.), and absence management programs) and review and improvement of programs offering support to employees facing health challenges.
 - E.F.A.P. was accessed by 15.97% of employees.
 - LifeSpeak, a service offering immediate and confidential access to online information, was accessed 3,279 times.
 - The Short-Term Illness Support Program continued to facilitate the earliest safe return to work from an absence and reduced the requirement for medical notes, reducing the burden on physicians.
 - O.W.M.H. provided support to over 180 managers and employees. Post-service evaluation surveys show 79% of users had better mental health and 42% found the service resulted in avoiding a work absence.
- Decrease workplace health and safety incidents that negatively impact employee health and wellness and continue to develop and implement Workplace Health and Safety prevention practices to support a workplace culture of health and safety.
 - Enhancements to the safety incident management system resulted in a 20% increase in proactive reports and a 7% increase in workplace incidents.
 - There was a 20% increase in managers attending Occupational Health & Safety training.

3.4 Client-focused, modernized approaches to H.R. services

Progress on Initiatives/Activities:

- Develop responsive H.R. systems that improve client experience (e.g., records digitization, continuous improvement of H.R. information systems, an updated analytics platform, and advancements in data literacy for the P.S.C.) and improve data literacy amongst P.S.C. employees and leaders.
 - Worked with cross-departmental partners to design and support digital client experiences and Systems Application and Products Modernization Program activities.
 - As of March 31, 2024, 60% of paper employee personnel records have been scanned.
 - Implemented a job description management system.
 - Implemented a new feature to enable the automatic deduction of benefits premiums from employees' bank accounts while on an unpaid leave of absence.
 - Continued work on an updated analytics platform, Tableau (to launch in June 2024).
- Provide effective internal communication services that increase provincial employees' understanding of and engagement in corporate H.R. policy, programs, and services and refine

internal communication processes, tools, and services to support public service employee engagement.

- Continued to manage and improve information shared on employee websites The.H.U.B. (approximately 240,000 site visits) and My.H.R. (65,337 site visits).
 - Coordinated the Internal Communications Network.
 - Participated in the National Internal Communications Network.
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- Continue to develop and use a departmental Strategic Measurement Framework to further support evidence-informed approaches to decision-making within the P.S.C.
 - Completed the Strategic Measurement Framework and its key H.R. metrics continue to be analyzed through P.S.C. analytics tools, such as internal dashboards and infographics using a new Tableau Server.
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- Enhance performance measures and metrics for our H.R. systems, policies, services, and tools.
 - Launched the Self Identification application to gather intersectional workforce data and determine gaps (30% of government employees have participated).
 - Shared results of the 2022 How's Work Going? survey with departments.
 - Continue to maintain 3 datasets on the Open Data Portal (Absenteeism, Employee Engagement, and Pay Scales).

4.0 Financial Results

Departmental Expenses Summary			
(\$ thousands)			
Programs and Services:	2023-2024 Estimate	2023-2024 Actuals	2023-2024 Variance
Client Service Delivery	6,439	6,891	452
Employee Relations	3,534	3,836	302
Office of the Commissioner	409	538	129
People & Culture	5,160	4,835	(325)
Corporate Services	6,351	5,239	(1,112)
Total: Departmental Expenses	21,893	21,339	(554)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	-	-	-
Fees and Other Charges	-	-	-
Ordinary Recoveries	10	107	97
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	10	107	97
T.C.A. Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (F.T.E.s)	187.4	180.8	(6.6)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u>			
Actual expenses were \$554 thousand lower than Estimate primarily due to vacancy savings.			
<u>Revenues, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u>			
Actual recoveries were \$97 thousand higher than Estimate primarily due to recoverable salaries and higher than anticipated enrollment in Learning and Development courses by external clients.			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (F.T.E.s) Variance Explanation:</u>			
FTE variance due to temporary staff vacancies.			

5.0 Report of Disclosure of Wrongdoing

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 N.S. Public Service Commission in 2023-24:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2023-2024
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A