

BUSINESS PLAN

2024-25



NOVA SCOTIA
HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION

Human Rights Commission

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Budget 2024-25: Business Plan
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Contents

- Message from the Director and CEO..... 1
- Mandate 2
- Core Responsibilities and Services for 2024-2025 3
 - #1 Goal: Galvanize Transformative Change Through Education and Empowerment 3
 - #2 Goal: Increase Access and Remove Barriers to Justice 4
 - #3 Goal: Build Internal Capacity to Achieve Long-Term Success..... 5
- Budgetary Context 6

Message from the Director and CEO

As polarized world views, escalating international violence, poverty, and a national housing crisis continue to divide and challenge us, the universal principles enshrined in human rights law have the power to unite us.

For generations, systemic discrimination has disadvantaged L'nu, Nova Scotians of African descent, people with disabilities, and members of other marginalized communities. This has resulted in disproportionate impacts during times of economic hardship and social uncertainty. Increasing population growth, without the proper safeguards in place, threatens to compound historic wrongs. As we work to address our current challenges, Nova Scotia must reconcile our past by committing to substantive change in the ways we engage with and respect one another.

In fiscal 2024-25 the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission will cultivate a collective commitment to human rights through greater engagement with communities to advance education and understanding of our responsibilities to one another. We will honour our origins, challenge systemic inequities and prejudice, support L'nu communities in having their treaty rights acknowledged, and follow the examples of leaders from African Nova Scotian communities who continue to fight for human rights protections.

The Commission will continue to improve our operations and service to clients by deepening our knowledge and application of restorative approaches and trauma-informed service delivery, ensuring our processes are not only more efficient, but more human-centered.

We believe that human rights are fundamental to creating safe, equitable communities and to protecting the inherent dignity of all people. We are proud of the work we do and committed to creating a culturally responsive environment with staff who are equipped with the knowledge and understanding required to do this critical work.

Sincerely,

**Original signed by
Joseph Fraser
Director and CEO**

Mandate

The Human Rights Commission has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in December 2012. The Commission is mandated by the *Human Rights Act* to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The specific duties of the Commission are set out in the Act. The Commission has the responsibility of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Act. In addition, it develops public information and education programs in the field of human rights to advance the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to age, race, colour, religion, creed, ethnic, national or Aboriginal origin, sex (including pregnancy and pay equity), sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, family status, marital status, source of income, harassment (including sexual harassment), irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, association with protected groups or individuals, political belief, affiliation or activity, gender identity or gender expression.

The Commission is further mandated to conduct and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights, and also works with government by advising and assisting its departments and agencies in regard to human rights.

The Commission reports, as required, to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice on its business and activities, and also considers, investigates, or administers any matter or activity referred to the Commission by the Governor in Council or the Minister of Justice.

Core Responsibilities and Services for 2024-2025

#1 Goal: Galvanize Transformative Change Through Education and Empowerment

Outcome: Expansion of access to human rights resources

Actions: Cultivate a collective responsibility to advance human rights

1. Transform reconciliation into “reconciliACTION” to forge a path forward together with L’nu communities.

Input: Implement a framework to guide the Commission’s work with L’nu communities which promotes equity, inclusivity, and respect.

Performance Measure: Confidence from L’nu communities in the Commission’s work will grow, demonstrated by participation in our community engagement initiatives.

2. Build relationships of trust with African Nova Scotian communities.

Input: Strengthen collaboration and partnerships with African Nova Scotian communities.

Performance Measure: Increased engagement with communities of African descent reflected in all aspects of the Commission’s work.

3. Support and maintain a culture of inclusion, equity, and dignity for the diverse communities of Nova Scotia, including persons with disabilities and the 2SLGBTQI+ community.

Input: Promote inclusivity through strengthened relationships, engagement, and collaboration with community.

Performance Measure: Various representative groups will be engaged, and partnerships will be nurtured.

#2 Goal: Increase Access and Remove Barriers to Justice

Outcome: Expanded equitable justice for Nova Scotians

Actions: Ensure fair and just access to dispute resolution

1. Safeguard access to justice.

Input: Ensure restorative, reliable, consistent, and trauma-informed approaches to addressing disputes.

Performance Measure: The Commission's processes continue to reflect and prioritize culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and restorative principles.

2. Increase data collection for informed decision-making.

Input: Expand data collection to accurately identify obstacles, monitor progress, and make informed decisions.

Performance Measure: Data collection will be more relevant in identifying trends.

3. Ensure timely, fair, and effective access to processes, information, and resources.

Input: Improve services that are impartial, inclusive, participatory, responsive, and respectful.

Performance Measure: Accessible and reliable services will be refined to increase barrier-free access and responsiveness.

#3 Goal: Build Internal Capacity to Achieve Long-Term Success

Outcome: A culture of learning and collaboration

Actions: Provide opportunities for growth that are relevant and adaptable

1. Ensure clarity and consistency in service delivery through internal training and development.

Input: Build the skills and knowledge Commission staff need to ensure service delivery is accessible, culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and restorative.

Performance Measure: Cultural proficiency, restorative and trauma-informed practices of Commission staff continue to be refined.

2. Enhance the efficiency of processes by identifying and implementing improvements.

Input: Continue to identify and implement process improvement projects.

Performance Measure: The provision of services will be more efficient.

3. Strengthen operational monitoring to increase public accountability.

Input: Improve quality and consistency of services while reducing errors, delays, and process waste.

Performance Measure: Public trust and confidence in the Commission will increase.

Budgetary Context

Departmental Expenses Summary			
(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2023-24</u>	<u>2024-25</u>
	Estimate	Forecast	Estimate
Gross Program Expenses	2,997	2,997	3,044
Ordinary Recoveries	8	13	16
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>	25.5	23	26.5
Department Funded Staff			

Note:
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1