

**Nova Scotia Department of Justice  
Business Plan**

**2006-2007**

May 5, 2006

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## **Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister**

It is our privilege to share the details of the Department of Justice's annual business plan. As the agency responsible for the administration of justice in the province, we have significant responsibility to Nova Scotians.

We know a strong justice system runs relatively unnoticed – and yet is essential to any well-functioning and democratic society. This business plan will help people understand our priorities and will also help track our progress towards meeting those priorities.

For this year's planning cycle, we asked our management staff to consider priorities that will drive progress in four key result areas: addressing the social causes of crime, engaging staff, engaging partners, and improving business processes. You will read about the results of those efforts in the pages that follow.

We also continued to meet with our justice partners to discuss issues of concern and to identify shared priorities for the coming year, which are also reflected in this year's plan.

Our plan is ambitious and we are fortunate to have talented and very dedicated employees to carry out this work. We continue to count on the commitment of our employees, the support of our partners and the confidence of Nova Scotians. A sincere thanks to all who have helped develop this plan and a note of appreciation for your contributions to building a strong and effective justice system in Nova Scotia.

Murray Scott, M.B.  
Minister

Douglas J. Keefe, Q.C.  
Deputy Minister

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**1. Mission**

The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to excellence in service to the people of Nova Scotia.

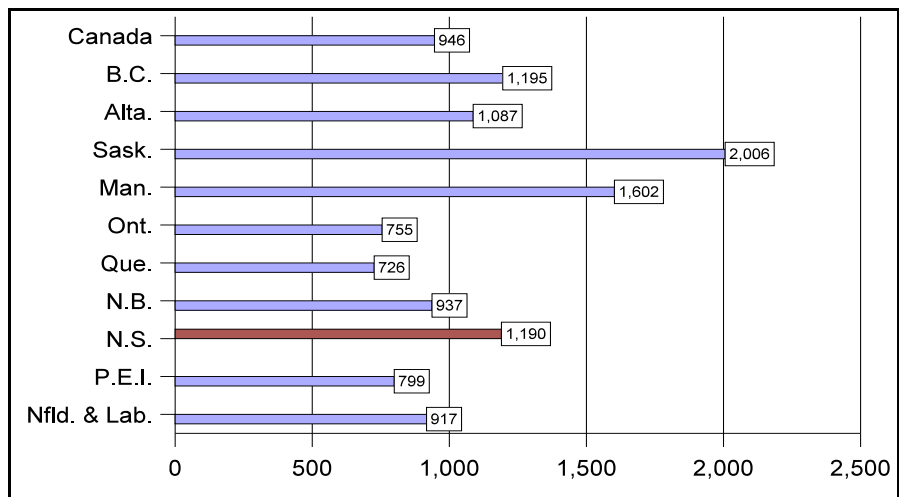
**2. Planning Context**

The following provides a summary of significant initiatives and circumstances that have influenced planning for 2006-2007:

*Increasing crime and victimization rates*

Crime in Nova Scotia is garnering attention, in part by reported increases in rates of violent crime and violent victimization, as well as by the public perception of increasing risk of crime and victimization for the public. Statistics show that Nova Scotia's overall crime rate increased 4% between 1999 and 2004. This was driven mostly by increases in violent crime (up 15%) and other *Criminal Code* offences (up 10%). Property crime decreased 4% during the same time period.

Between 2003 and 2004 (the last year for which statistics are available), there was a 2% increase in the overall crime rate in Nova Scotia. In that same year, property crime increased by 7%, violent crime decreased by 1%, and there was a 2% decrease in other *Criminal Code* offences, such as mischief and disturbing the peace. It is too early to tell whether the decline in violent crime and other *Criminal Code* offences is the beginning of a downward trend or an annual fluctuation.



*Violent crime rate per 100,000 population, 2004*

*Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Uniform Crime Reporting Survey*

The figure on the right compares violent crime rates in Canada and the provinces in 2004. In that year, Nova Scotia ranked fourth highest nationally at 1,190 per 100,000, and highest in the Atlantic Provinces. As noted

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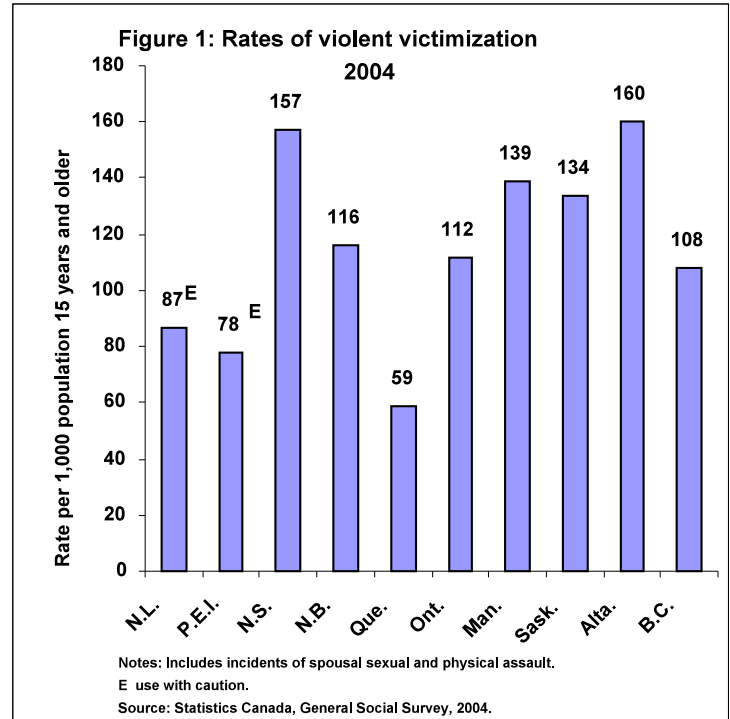
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above, Nova Scotia's violent crime rate declined by 1% over 2003. Within the violent crime category, the number of sexual assaults dropped by 9% and physical assaults by 2%. The decline in violent crime rates might have been larger had it not been for a 19% increase in the number of robberies in 2004. In 2003, robbery rates increased 11% over 2002. Thus, in a two-year period, robbery rates in the province increased by 30%.

Furthermore, according to the General Social Survey (GSS), the violent victimization rate<sup>1</sup> in Nova Scotia increased 65% between 1999 and 2004. In 2004, Nova Scotia noted the second highest violent victimization rate in the country (157 per 1,000 Canadians), and the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) of Halifax (229 per 1,000) had the highest violent victimization rate in the country. The national rate was 106 per 1,000. The GSS records respondents' personal account of criminal victimization incidents, capturing information on crimes that have been reported to police, as well as those that have gone unreported.

*Impact of crime*

These increases are cause for concern, not only for the justice system but for all aspects of Nova Scotia society. There is the obvious concern for personal safety; fear alone, however low the risk, impairs our quality of life. But there is also an economic cost. Crime is a burden on the economy that falls disproportionately on the poor. It is estimated that about \$235<sup>2</sup> million is spent on the administration of justice (including policing, courts, legal aid, corrections and public prosecution) in Nova Scotia each year, and the cost is climbing. For example, in 2004, the total amount expended on policing in Canada totaled \$8.8 billion dollars, a 3% increase over 2003.



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<sup>1</sup> In Canada, there are two primary sources of data on the prevalence of crime: victimization surveys such as the GSS on victimization, and police-reported surveys such as the Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Survey. These two surveys are very different in survey type, coverage, scope, and source of information. In particular, the GSS is a sample survey, which in 2004, sampled about 24,000 individuals aged 15 years and older. The sample is weighted so that responses represent the non-institutionalized Canadian population aged 15 years or over. In comparison, the aggregate UCR survey is a census of all incidents reported by police services across Canada. While the GSS captures information on 8 offences, the UCR survey collects data on over 100 categories of criminal offences. Perhaps the most striking difference between the two surveys is that the UCR survey records criminal incidents that are reported to the police and the GSS records respondents' personal accounts of criminal victimization incidents.

<sup>2</sup> The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics reported that approximately \$235 million was spent on administering justice in Nova Scotia in 2002/2003 (the latest figures available). Since the figure was published, NS detected a possible under-reporting for that year, which would affect overall justice spending.

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This represents the eighth consecutive annual increase and amounts to \$276 per Canadian. In Nova Scotia, total expenditures on policing were \$130.5 million, with a cost of \$140 per Nova Scotian.

Spending on justice does not include the cost of social and educational programs that indirectly attempt to prevent crime through human development. Nor does it include the hidden costs of economic loss and forgone benefits. Consider the small business that fails because its neighbourhood is perceived to be unsafe, or the countless decisions people make about whether to visit, go to university or relocate to Nova Scotia.

*Increasing focus on building safe communities*

Safer, stronger communities are our first priority. There are two ways to do this: through law enforcement and enhanced social development. Although we may debate the best route, in truth, we have to do both: respond to crime and the conditions that create crime.

The department is responding to crime in close cooperation with our partners in the justice system. Recent initiatives include a \$6 million investment over four years to improve practical, on-the-ground intelligence. This initiative is focusing on marijuana grow operations; illegal use of prescription drugs; smash and grab tobacco rings; the sale of illegal drugs; electronic fraud; murders linked to bike gangs; and border security. We have also introduced the *Safer Communities and Neighborhoods Act*, which will empower Nova Scotians to seek community safety orders to shut down criminal activities that adversely affect their neighbourhoods.

Initiatives such as these and the new ones we are proposing in 2006-2007 will see even closer cooperation between our justice partners and the larger social systems.

*Action to address youth crime*

The department is working to address youth crime with some existing and new initiatives. We are pursuing a four-pronged approach, which includes:

- (1) Legislative measures: we continue to push for changes to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (Canada) to give our courts greater discretion to order “out-of-control youth” to be held in custody;
- (2) Enforcement: in partnership with law enforcement and the Public Prosecution Service, strengthen efforts to bring criminals to justice and to enforce court orders which release youth back to the community;
- (3) Offender supervision and support: update programs for youth in custody and under community supervision; consider extending restorative justice to 10 and 11 year olds through a Restorative Justice Program for Children under age 12 in conflict with the law; and explore a non-residential attendance centre for youth in the Halifax area; and
- (4) Crime prevention: overall strategy to prevent youth from engaging in criminal activity and to provide them with hope and opportunity.

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Youth crime is also the subject of a public inquiry ordered by Government following the release of a 16-year-old youth from court two days before he stole a vehicle and crashed into a car killing Theresa McEvoy. The Department of Justice will lead Government's response to recommendations arising from that inquiry.

*Study to examine long case processing times*

Another area of concern is case processing time. We have among the longest adult court processing times in Canada. For example, in 2003-2004, mean elapsed times in adult courts were longest in Quebec (326 days), followed by Ontario (214 days) and Nova Scotia (213 days). Concerning youth court, Nova Scotia had the longest mean elapsed time at 175 days, followed by Manitoba (166 days) and Alberta (159 days). Looking at the Nova Scotia situation, it's important to take into account Crown or court cases referred to the Restorative Justice Program. In those cases, charges are subsequently withdrawn or dismissed once the youth has successfully completed the program, and this could partially explain why Nova Scotia appears to have longer case processing times. A study is currently underway to review workload volume and case complexity.

*New initiatives to improve offender supervision*

We have begun new initiatives to improve the supervision of offenders, including electronic monitoring, and partnerships with police and the Public Prosecution Service to improve surveillance and enforcement of conditional sentence violations. In Canada, the use of incarceration in adult court remains stable, while orders for probation and conditional sentences have grown and fines have declined. In 2003-2004, prison was the most serious sentence<sup>3</sup> handed down in 36% of adult court cases where there was a conviction. Probation was the most serious sentence ordered for 30% of convicted cases, followed by fines (26%). A conditional sentence, introduced in 1996 as a sentencing option, was the most severe sentence in 5% of convicted cases. Sentencing patterns vary across the country, with Nova Scotia (23%), New Brunswick (24%) and Saskatchewan (24%) reporting the lowest incarceration rates in 2003-2004.

*Working in partnership*

Balancing enforcement enhancements with efforts to reduce the underlying causes of crime requires the participation of many partners. On this front, the departments of Justice and Community Services are working with their partners on a safer, stronger communities initiative, initially focusing on those areas experiencing high crime rates and significant socio-economic challenges. We are also developing a drug strategy with Nova Scotia Health Promotion and

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<sup>3</sup>. Those convicted could face multiple sentencing options, i.e. prison followed by probation and a fine; these statistics report on the most severe and/or most serious sentence handed down.

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Protection, and continue to address spousal/intimate partner violence with Community Services, Health, the Public Prosecution Service and community partners.

At the national level, provincial and territorial ministers have been unanimous in expressing concern and demanding action on gun violence, organized crime and limiting the use of conditional sentences for serious and violent offences. In 2005, a unanimous resolution from provincial/territorial ministers also called for an immediate federal commitment to civil legal aid services and a return to 50-50 cost sharing for criminal legal aid. Fair and timely access to justice is a fundamental principle that must be upheld through legal aid. Nova Scotia has a long-standing commitment to legal aid for our poorest citizens, with the department spending some \$14 million each year to support public access to legal aid.

*Planning ahead to ensure policing needs are met*

Nova Scotia and other Canadian jurisdictions are working to prepare for the end of a 20-year contract with the RCMP for policing services. The current multi-million-dollar agreement expires in 2012. While that may seem like a long way off, we need to work now to identify and prepare for Nova Scotia's policing needs in 2012 and beyond. With respect to police workload, in 2003 (latest figures available), there were 50 criminal incidents for every police officer in Nova Scotia. This is higher than the national average of 43 criminal incidents per officer. Trends in the number of incidents per police officer generally follow the trends in crime rates. Police are also reporting increasing case complexity, with increasing amounts of time being spent on preparing for court rather than catching perpetrators.

*Moving forward with legislative initiatives*

We continue to work on legislative initiatives, including the new *Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act*, and proposed legislation to address privacy concerns arising from a review of the ramifications of the *U.S. Patriot Act*. The new *Correctional Services Act* and Regulations will come into force on July 1, 2006, providing a modern framework for the delivery of correctional services. The *Police Act* and Regulations were proclaimed on January 1, 2006 and will require ongoing facilitation to continue enhancing policing governance in all communities across Nova Scotia. There are also increased demands for significant reform of the private security legislation in light of outdated legislation regulating the industry, expanding roles for private guards and investigators, the absence of standards, and uneven industry coverage.

*Human resource strategy*

Human resource initiatives have always been a critical aspect of annual business planning within the department. In this planning year, our management team was introduced to government's overall Corporate Human Resource Plan at a fall 2005 planning session, where links were made between corporate goals and departmental initiatives. The department's Human Resource unit also held a planning session with a view to developing a long-term strategic plan aligned with corporate efforts.



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The priorities identified for the 2006-2007 fiscal year that are linked to corporate human resource goals are:

- A comprehensive, sustainable Healthy Workplace Strategy for employees is underway at Justice, in support of being a safe and supportive workplace. The project is a collaboration between the department and the Public Service Commission, Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection, the Atlantic Health and Wellness Institute, Pfizer Canada Inc., AstraZeneca Canada Inc., and Sun Life Financial.
- In addition to health and wellness initiatives, the above-noted strategy will include training programs to meet operational and career development needs, helping the department make a difference through a skilled, committed and accountable public service.
- Occupational health and safety reviews are planned, with a particular focus on Correctional Services and the Provincial Firearms Office.
- Employee recognition initiatives and internal communications efforts, such as a redesign of the intranet site, have also been identified as priority areas for action, in keeping with corporate efforts to be a preferred employer.
- In support of diversity, we have developed an affirmative action plan. Efforts are underway to develop an internal tracking system to collect and analyze diversity data. The department also continues to implement an action plan in response to an Employment Systems Review of Correctional Services, which examined policies and practices in recruitment, hiring, selection, retention, career development, promotion, discipline and termination. We are also supporting French language training for employees, and a departmental representative participates on the Public Service Commission's Diversity Roundtable.
- On the learning front, the department's Justice Learning Centre continues to facilitate training for staff and justice partners. Domestic violence training continues to be a major focus. The learning centre is also developing a curriculum for "bias-free" policing.
- Various divisions have also identified specific human resources priorities for the upcoming fiscal year. For example, Legal Services is planning to initiate a mentoring program and training initiatives for its staff. Correctional Services is also introducing a mentoring program and a comprehensive menu of core training, including a frontline supervision course. Policing and Victim Services will be focusing on career development training for victim services staff.

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In the upcoming year, efforts will be made to further develop this section of the business plan in keeping with guidelines issued by the Public Service Commission. This will include developing an overview of key HR demographics and context data, establishing specific objectives and actions associated with each of the corporate goals, and articulating outcomes.

### **3. Strategic Goals**

This section outlines the high level strategic context that frames our annual planning processes. Priorities and activities are designed to contribute to achieving the vision and strategic directions outlined below.

**Vision:** Nova Scotia is a place where people and their rights are respected. Justice will provide leadership in partnership with others to build a province where:

- citizens trust the justice system
- people are and feel safe and secure
- disputes are effectively and sensitively resolved
- access to justice processes are timely and affordable
- communities actively participate in the justice system
- diversity is valued and respected

**Strategic directions:** The following strategic directions are broad themes for change over the next three to five years, which are consistent with the mission and clearly tied to our vision.

1. **A justice system that is properly administered and cost effective**, with a focus on increasing transparency and accountability around decisions concerning the cost and effectiveness of the justice system; well-trained, well-motivated staff who are well deployed; mechanisms to achieve consensus and improve cooperation regarding common issues, strategies and measures; promoting more use of cost-effective vehicles, where appropriate; ensuring efficient operations; and providing cost-effective justice services.
2. **There is public confidence in the justice system**, with a focus on improving public perception of courts, corrections and policing; achieving satisfactory understanding regarding how the justice system works and how decisions affecting people are made; demonstrating that we prioritize and manage our resources well; simplifying, streamlining and integrating all justice processes, where appropriate (includes being effective through collaboration by having a justice system that is fully integrated with itself and with other social institutions); and improving our ability to help clients meet their own needs.
3. **People are and feel safe and secure**, with a focus on effectively capturing and communicating relevant statistics and public safety initiatives; facilitating and communicating joint initiatives amongst justice partners to create and increase public

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awareness of safety initiatives; delivering a range of community- and custody-based correctional programs and services based on the highest standards; and improving access to federal funds for crime prevention initiatives and youth justice.

- 4. People make constructive choices**, with a focus on educating people about all legal options available to resolve disputes; increasing the likelihood of appropriate legal sanctions for illegal behaviour; giving people information and skills to make constructive choices and encourage them to make constructive choices; increasing the number of disputes resolved in a manner that is appropriate and timely, using processes the public finds acceptable; making compliance with law easier; and developing and promoting programs that encourage change in offender behaviour and attitudes.

Our strategic directions support each other. A properly administered and cost-effective justice system will ensure public confidence, and people with confidence in the justice system feel more safe and secure. They also have the confidence to make constructive choices and to explore and use appropriate dispute resolution methods.

Our efforts are advancing the Nova Scotia government's priorities, which include: health promotion and protection; youth, families and communities; community safety; economic development and infrastructure; environment and energy – green and sustainable.

As noted earlier in the planning context section, safer, stronger communities are our first priority, with new initiatives proposed to respond to crime and the conditions that create crime. Our efforts to improve public safety and reduce the harmful impact of crime can also reduce the demand for health services. Protection of personal and property rights through principled decision making underpins all economic activity. A safe Nova Scotia also stimulates the economy because people prefer to live in a place where they feel safe.

#### **4. Core Business Areas**

Our department effectively manages daily operations of the justice system through a number of core business areas as outlined below.

##### ***Oversight, governance and advice to police, private security services and firearms license holders***

Improving public safety and security through:

- policing services, including acting in advisory role to all police services and managing contracts with the RCMP and First Nations Policing, and strengthening policing initiatives through the development of standards and training in partnership with stakeholders;
- partnering with a broad public safety community to contribute to and/or facilitate initiatives which improve public safety;
- crime prevention initiatives to reduce and/or prevent crime in partnership with communities;
- regulation of private security services, including licensing companies and individuals engaged in the private security industry; and
- administration of the licensing provisions of the federal *Firearms Act*, including licensing firearms owners/businesses, designation and inspection of firing ranges, and delivering firearms safety courses.

##### ***Provision of assistance to victims of crime***

Reducing the harmful impact of crime on victims by:

- working with justice partners and the community to develop and implement policies and programs that address the needs of crime victims;
- providing direct services for victims through four core programs: the Provincial Victim Services Program, Criminal Injuries Counselling Program, Victim Impact Statement Program, and Child Victim/Witness Program.

##### ***Principled dispute resolution mechanisms***

Improving access to justice and improving public safety and security through:

- civil law court services, including court administration and management, small claims adjudication, other civil law adjudication, probate law adjudication, and bankruptcy law adjudication;
- criminal law court services, including court administration and management, security and transport of prisoners to and from court, Restorative Justice for diverting offences involving youth, and criminal law adjudication (Justice of the Peace); and
- family law court services, including court administration and management, monitoring and enforcing payment of support orders, and family support services.

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The department operates 45 courthouses and other facilities throughout the province. Court administration is managed through 14 justice centres, with four located within the Halifax Regional Municipality and the others located in: Bridgewater, Yarmouth, Digby, Kentville, Truro, Pictou/New Glasgow, Amherst, Antigonish, Port Hawkesbury and Sydney. The division also manages the Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP), with eight offices across the province. Payment and enrolment processing is centralized in Dartmouth.

***Correctional services***

Improving public safety and security through:

- community-based corrections, including adult diversion measures, court information, offender supervision, and reintegration programs and planning; and
- custody-based corrections, including facility operations and reintegration programs and planning.

The department operates five adult correctional facilities in Amherst, Antigonish, Dartmouth, Sydney and Yarmouth; one youth correctional facility in Waterville; and a small satellite youth detention facility for overnight accommodation in Sydney. The department also operates 22 community corrections offices. They are located in: Amherst, Antigonish, Bedford, Bridgewater, Dartmouth (2), Digby, Glace Bay, Halifax, Kentville, Liverpool, Middleton, New Glasgow, North Sydney, Port Hawkesbury, Shelburne, Spryfield, Shubenacadie, Sydney, Truro, Windsor and Yarmouth. There are approximately 10,000 court-ordered admissions to Correctional Services on an annual basis.

***Legal services to government***

Promoting the lawful administration of public affairs through:

- litigation services, including representation of the Crown and its agencies before courts and tribunals, and supporting alternative dispute resolution;
- solicitor services, including legal advice to the Crown and its agencies, corporate counsel services, drafting regulations and legislation, law reform and legislation support, and client education;
- Registry of Regulations and the Royal Gazette: The Registry of Regulations maintains, publishes and consolidates all regulations, ensures public access, publishes the Royal Gazette, and is responsible for reviewing and editing all regulations submitted to Cabinet to ensure they meet the established standards for form and draftsmanship; and
- tribunal member education with respect to different aspects of administrative justice.

***The proper administration of justice in the province in partnership with others***

Improving public safety and security and promoting lawful administration of public affairs by:

- providing legal representation to qualified applicants, with priority for matters involving the liberty and civil rights of individual clients and for matters involving the integrity and protection of an individual's family through Nova Scotia Legal Aid;

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- conducting, through the Office of the Medical Examiner, investigations into all deaths due to violence, undue means, culpable negligence and sudden unexplained deaths, and providing documentation, including cause and manner of death;
- providing trustee services for incompetent adults/infants and missing persons through the Office of the Public Trustee; and
- coordinating administration of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)*.

Core business areas are supported by the following functions:

***Human Resources*** continues to design and implement systems and processes that contribute to a properly resourced workforce, including recruitment and retention programs, occupational health and safety, wellness, compensation/classification, payroll/benefits administration, and training and staff development. We are also actively involved in government-wide initiatives, including a Corporate HR Strategy, an HR Strategy for HR Professionals, and project E-merge, which will improve payroll and benefit administration. Through the Justice Learning Centre, the department continues to: offer and/or launch new training in areas such as performance management, leadership development, Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN), sheriff officer training, facilitation and conflict resolution; pursue joint initiatives such as domestic violence education, including hosting forums that encourage system-wide thinking and collaboration; and promote respectful workplace, wellness and communication strategies to help employees make constructive choices. We also continue to develop operational training, including a focus on policies and procedures orientation, safety, security and programming.

***Information Management*** leads the development of information solutions in the justice system with an emphasis on integration, efficient operations, access, transparency, and better data for social and business decisions. Functions and services include infrastructure maintenance and support, business applications support, policy, planning and research, records and file management, legal/justice library holdings, management of the department's FOIPOP application process and government-wide FOIPOP advisement, and website development.

***Finance and Administration*** provides strategic financial leadership and expertise to the Department of Justice. We continue to ensure all accounting/budgeting/procurement functions are performed in a timely and accurate manner.

***Communications*** prepares an annual strategic communications plan. The plan outlines internal and external communications activities to support the department's goals and objectives, and promote public understanding of the justice system. Communications support includes issues management, communications planning, speech writing, publications, bill briefings, media relations, events, media conferences, Internet content, and communications support for federal/provincial/territorial meetings.

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## **5. Priorities**

The department's annual priorities are presented under each strategic direction:

**Strategic Direction #1: A justice system that is properly administered and cost effective:** We want our justice system to be recognized as the most properly administered and cost effective in Canada. To realize this vision, we must use resources in the most innovative and adaptive ways, with the following priorities identified for 2006-2007:

- a. Constructing and managing facility infrastructure initiatives: Justice is one of the largest tenants in government, occupying highly-specialized space. Major undertakings in 2006-2007 include:
  - starting construction of the Lunenburg County Justice Centre and the Yarmouth Justice Centre;
  - renovating the New Glasgow Justice Centre; and
  - developing proposals to upgrade or replace aging correctional facility infrastructure in Northern Nova Scotia.
  
- b. Engaging staff with programs and training to address their needs, with the objectives of attracting and retaining the right person, in the right place and in the right job for the appropriate length of time, and engaging in effective communications to ensure work is performed efficiently and effectively. Please refer to the Human Resource Strategy section beginning on page five for a summary of 2006-2007 priorities.
  
- c. Developing and implementing an internal communications plan to promote effective communication across the department, provide more opportunities for staff input, and ensure all employees are aware of and involved in corporate initiatives and priorities.
  
- d. Improving operational effectiveness to continually assess the value of existing programs and services, including funding, staff, infrastructure, technology and business processes; and to take innovative action within reasonable risk to achieve our vision and mission. Priorities include:
  - court administration efficiencies, with a focus on developing on-line accounting, updating court services manuals and introducing digital recording across the province;
  - establishing audit services capacity, with an initial concentration on revenue/fee collection in field offices and the operation of trust accounts in Court Services and Corrections; and
  - continuing to strengthen and expand operational planning throughout the department by engaging staff at all levels of the organization.

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- e. Negotiating federal, provincial and territorial (FPT) agreements focusing on youth justice, exchange of services with Correctional Services Canada, legal aid, Supreme Court (Family Division) expansion, and RCMP policing.
- f. Responding to recommendations arising from an evaluation of the *Domestic Violence Intervention Act*.
- g. Improving internal information processing and sharing, including:
  - enhancing electronic document handling and records management through a shared directory initiative and a modernization of the Standard for Operational Records (STOR) system; and
  - identifying information system improvements across justice partner organizations through a permanent Information Management (IM) Forum.
- h. Building institutional capacity to better support partnership relationships.

**Strategic Direction #2: There is public confidence in the justice system:** We want the public to value the rule of law and trust the justice system. To help realize this vision, the department must be open and accountable for its actions. This confidence in law makes a significant contribution to the social and economic well-being of Nova Scotians. To help build that confidence, the department will undertake the following priorities in 2006-2007:

- a. Representing the government before the Nunn Commission, which is leading a public inquiry into the release of a youth who was later charged and convicted in the death of Theresa McEvoy of Halifax. The final report, including findings and recommendations, will be made public. The department will also lead government's response to recommendations arising from the inquiry.
- b. Undertaking research, assessment and evaluation initiatives to support justice policies, programs and services, including:
  - a court case processing study and an examination of remands to better understand why both are increasing;
  - developing a snapshot of offenders in custody and under community supervision;
  - assessing progress in the province-wide implementation of the High-risk Domestic Violence Case Coordination Protocol Framework;
  - assessing implementation of governance training to police boards and identifying gaps to strengthen public accountability in policing; and
  - examining court processing options for cases of spousal/intimate partner violence from a cross-jurisdictional perspective.



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- c. Completing implementation of a self-audit process to be undertaken by police agencies to enhance the department's auditing responsibilities with respect to municipal police agencies.

**Strategic Direction #3: People are and feel safe and secure:** We work with many partners, including police boards, the Tripartite Aboriginal Justice Forum, Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC), Ombudsman's Office, and non-governmental agencies to develop safer communities. We know we need to initiate and strengthen relationships to collectively use resources to move forward key justice initiatives, programs and policies. In 2006-2007, we will focus on the following priorities:

- a. Taking action in response to youth crime, with the following activities planned:
- continuing to push for changes to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (Canada), following a Federal/Provincial/Territorial (FPT) Ministers direction to review pre-trial detention and custody provisions;
  - informing the development of early intervention methods to prevent youth crime by distributing results of a research study that provides a statistical profile of youth crime and explores risk and protective factors;
  - establishing additional information-sharing protocols with school boards for youth under correctional supervision;
  - implementing a new program model for the Nova Scotia youth facility in response to custodial sentencing patterns of the YCJA;
  - investigating the establishment of an attendance centre for youth offenders; and
  - considering expansion of the Restorative Justice Program for youth under 12.
- b. Improving the supervision of offenders, including:
- implementing an Electronic Monitoring pilot for offenders in Halifax Regional Municipality, including testing the technology and program model to assess whether to move beyond a pilot;
  - completing regulations to enable proclamation of the *Correctional Services Act*; and
  - tightening processes used in conditional sentencing, including developing a tool to enable courts to assess candidates' suitability for conditional sentencing, and strengthening partnerships with the Public Prosecution Service and police to improve response to house arrest provisions. These initiatives will result in better screening before a person is placed on conditional sentence, better surveillance through a corrections/police partnership and better enforcement of violations.

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- c. Addressing Nova Scotia's future policing needs:
- preparing a strategic plan to address the future policing needs in the province. A 20-year contract with the RCMP for provincial police services expires in 2012; and
  - assessing and using mechanisms to obtain strategic input from policing and public safety stakeholders through annual meetings of the Police Leadership Forum.
- d. Strengthening public safety and security policies and procedures, including:
- assessing the effectiveness of the province's Public Safety Anti-terrorism (PSAT) initiative, which is helping to ensure horizontal information sharing, provincial readiness and coordinated action across organizations involved in public safety and security; and
  - determining appropriate levels of court security.
- e. Initiating private security reform, including developing a discussion paper and launching a consultation process to further modernize and strengthen standards within the private security industry.
- f. Helping build safer, stronger communities by performing an environmental scan of crime in Nova Scotia, and facilitating consultations and partnerships to help address the social causes of crime. Justice and Community Services are working on a safer, stronger communities initiative with an initial focus on areas experiencing high crime rates and significant socio-economic challenges. The Deputy Ministers' Leadership Committee on Family Violence will continue as a vehicle to enable enhanced collaboration among Justice, Community Services and Health, helping to strengthen government's response to family and spousal/intimate partner violence. We will also help develop a drug strategy with Nova Scotia Health Promotion and Protection.
- g. Proactively addressing privacy issues:
- introducing legislation to address privacy concerns arising from a review of the ramifications of the *U.S. Patriot Act*;
  - testing and implementing a new corporate privacy impact assessment tool; and
  - implementing a privacy policy.
- h. Discussion paper concerning possible pawn shop, buy-sell and second-hand businesses legislation: a discussion paper will be released in May 2006 with responses to be received until July 2006, after which the department will consider whether legislation should be introduced and, if so, what it should cover.

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**Strategic Direction #4: People make constructive choices:** We want Nova Scotia to be known as a place where rights are respected and protected and where disputes are resolved in a variety of principled ways. To help realize this vision, the department will undertake the following priorities:

- a. Improving public access to information, with the following initiatives planned:
  - improving access to French language services, including implementing a new *Contraventions Act* agreement;
  - supporting self-represented litigants with information materials; and
  - providing web-based access to court services.
  
- b. Implementing expansion of the Supreme Court (Family Division) province wide, subject to federal legislation and funding.
  
- c. Developing additional programs for offenders, with an emphasis on education and spiritual services in facilities.
  
- d. Implementing a new pre-sentence report format to assist in sentencing.
  
- e. Undertaking studies on youth and adult recidivism to assess how the system is promoting offender accountability, responsibility and rehabilitation.

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**6. Budget Context**

	<b>Estimate 2005-2006 (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>Forecast 2005-2006 (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>Estimate 2006-2007 (\$ thousands)</b>
Gross Expenses	210,506	219,426	224,202
Net Expenses	107,847	104,527	116,467
Salaries and Employee Benefits	81,386	83,811	89,373
Funded Staff (FTEs)	1,375.7	1,357.6	1,420.6

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**7. Performance Measures**

We introduced new measures in the 2005-2006 business plan to better link outcomes with strategic directions, and to reflect a broader departmental and societal approach than the program-type measures we had tracked in previous years. During the data collection phase, some measures and proposed targets required further refinement, with these changes reflected below.

Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
<b>Strategic Direction: A justice system that is properly administered and cost effective</b>				
Cost-effective justice services	Provincial costs of providing justice services, including corrections, courts, policing, chief medical examiner, legal aid and public prosecution  <i>(Please note: figures exclude federal and municipal contributions)</i>	Spending \$96,321,162 in 2004-2005  Per capita contribution: \$102.74 for 2004-2005  Average provincial spending over last five years: \$89,506,230 (2000-01 to 2004-05)  Average rate of growth in spending between 2000-01 to 2004-05: 4.65%  Average rate of growth in NS GDP between 2000-01 to 2004-05: 4.92%	Average rate of growth in spending less than average rate of growth in Nova Scotia Gross Domestic Product (expenditure-based)	Effectively manage daily operations of the justice system through a number of core business areas as outlined in this plan and act on priorities identified under this strategic direction
Leverage funds through partnerships with federal justice partners	Federal funds leveraged by the department for justice initiatives	\$11,829,716 (2004-2005)	Maintain/increase efforts to leverage federal funds	Negotiate FPT agreements, including legal aid, community tripartite, provincial policing and youth justice; facilitate the creation of joint initiatives among justice partners

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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Assist government departments and agencies in achieving their objectives by providing effective legal services	Client satisfaction with legal services	Survey now underway to establish benchmark data	Maintain/increase in client satisfaction	Litigation and solicitor services
Fair and accessible family, civil and criminal justice system	Case processing times in family, civil and criminal courts	Efforts are now underway to gather benchmark data on the family/civil side with anticipated reporting in the 2005-2006 Accountability Report	Eight weeks to meet with a conciliator	Effective court administration and management
		Criminal <b>2003-2004:</b>  Adult Criminal Court NS: Median time (days): 120 Canada: Median time (days): 110  Youth Criminal Court Nova Scotia: Median time (days) 113 Canada: Median time (days): 85	Meet the Canadian median elapsed time to complete a case in criminal court	

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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
<b>Strategic Direction: There is public confidence in the justice system</b>				
Improved knowledge of, and confidence in, the justice system	Public knowledge of, and confidence in, the justice system	<p>Over half of respondents indicated they were somewhat (45%) or very familiar (9%) with the justice system; another 34% indicated they were not very familiar, while 12% indicated they were not at all familiar (CRA Atlantic Quarterly Survey 2005)</p> <p>Two-thirds of respondents indicated they had some confidence (62%) or a great deal of confidence (12%) in the justice system, while 17% indicated they had not much confidence and another 9% indicated they had no confidence at all (CRA Atlantic Quarterly Survey 2005)</p>	Maintain/increase public knowledge and confidence in the justice system	Outreach and education initiatives

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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
<b>Strategic Direction: People are and feel safe and secure</b>				
Safer communities	Overall crime rate Overall violent victimization rate	<p>Crime statistics (2004) Total <i>Criminal Code</i> (excl.traffic): NS: 8764 per 100,000 pop. Canada: 8051 per 100,000 pop.</p> <p>Total crimes of violence NS: 1190 per 100,000 pop. Canada: 946 per 100,000 pop.</p> <p>Total property crimes NS: 3894 per 100,000 pop Canada: 3991 per 100,000 pop.</p> <p>Other <i>Criminal Code</i> NS: 3680 per 100,000 pop Canada: 3114 per 100,000 pop.</p> <p>Violent victimization rate (2004): NS: 157 per 1,000 population National: 106 per 1,000</p> <p>Household victimization rate (2004): NS: 232 per 1,000 households National: 248 per 1,000 households</p>	Reduce rates below the national average	Continue working with justice partners on policing standards, supporting community-based initiatives that prevent crime, working inter-departmentally to address the social causes of crime, and increased offender supervision



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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
	Public perceptions of safety in the home; public perception of safety in the neighbourhood	<p>Two-thirds of respondents (76%) indicated they were not at all worried (49%) or not very worried (27%) about safety from crime when alone at home in the evening; 21% indicated they were somewhat worried, while only 2% indicated they were very worried (CRA Atlantic Quarterly Survey 2005)</p> <p>Two-thirds also indicated they felt very safe (34%) or reasonably safe (40%) when walking alone in the neighbourhood after dark, while 13% indicated they felt somewhat unsafe or very unsafe (5%) (CRA Atlantic Quarterly Survey 2005)</p>	Maintain/increase perceptions of safety in the home and in the neighbourhood	

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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
Safe and secure facility operations	Major incidents within facilities defined as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• purposeful damage to property in excess of \$5,000</li> <li>• unnatural death occurred</li> <li>• an aggravated assault has been committed by an offender against another person resulting in an admission to hospital</li> <li>• a disturbance of four or more offenders, over a protracted period of 60 minutes or longer, and: (a) necessitating the hold or call back of staff with an expenditure of more than \$1,000 or (b) exceeding the resource capacity of the facility, requiring emergency police services to respond to the identified threat</li> <li>• a hostage taking</li> </ul>	Definition has been refined with collection of data beginning in April 2006	To be determined	Enhanced facilities design and operation, staff training and offender supports
	Escapes from facilities/escapes from staff while being escorted in the community; and escapes from sheriffs' custody	<b>Facilities/staff escapes:</b> 2004-2005: 6  <b>From sheriff's</b> 2004-2005: 0	0	

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Outcome	Measure	Data	Target	Strategic Actions to Achieve Target
<b>Strategic Direction: People make constructive choices</b>				
Offender accountability	Conditional release violations	Efforts are now underway to capture this data, with anticipated reporting in the upcoming Accountability Report	TBD	Electronic monitoring and partnerships with police and public prosecution services
Reduction in youth and adults who re-offend (recidivism)	Percent of incarcerated young offenders who re-offend within one year	<b>2002<sup>4</sup></b> : 66%	50%	Restorative Justice, Centre 24-7, Intensive Support and Supervision, and other programs designed to reduce recidivism among youth
	Percent of incarcerated adult offenders who re-offend within one year	Staff are participating in recidivism working group with the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), which is working to develop an accurate definition of recidivism; NS is working to ensure provincial data is included when pilot begins	To be determined	Reintegration programs and planning
Effective use of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms	Percentage of family cases that reach consent order through conciliation/mediation	% of family cases reaching full or partial agreement at conciliation stage: 35% of cases (2004-2005)	45% of cases	Educational initiatives and support to inform decision making and to encourage constructive choices

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<sup>4</sup>This figure refers to offenders who were incarcerated in 2002 and who subsequently re-offended within one year of release.

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**Appendix A**

**Department of Justice Organizational Chart**

