



## **DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**STATEMENT OF MANDATE**

**FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015**

*March 24<sup>th</sup>, 2014*

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## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER / DEPUTY MINISTER

On behalf of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice, we're pleased to present the *2014-2015 Statement of Mandate*. Our vision is to live in a province where everyone feels safe and secure, and their rights are respected and understood.

To help us achieve this vision, we have identified three priority areas:

- Improving access to justice;
- collaborating for community safety; and
- focusing on employees.

Access to justice is an important issue, not only in Nova Scotia but across the country. To improve access to justice for Nova Scotians, we must work together to deliver a justice system that is timely, efficient and sustainable. We want people to have confidence in their justice system, and know that appropriate resources are available to them when they need them.

The good news is that we've already started this process. Work is well underway to enhance and expand our family justice services and programs, and to make things easier for those who navigate our justice system. We're also taking steps to address court delays on the criminal side.

Preventing and reducing crime by working with community, justice and government partners continues to be a focus. We are targeting investments for high risk groups to develop innovative and collaborative crime prevention models. A great example of this is restorative approaches in schools which teaches youth to deal with conflict more effectively.

Community safety is not limited to crime prevention. It's also about ensuring communities across the province are better prepared for emergencies. To do this, we'll build capacity for crisis readiness at municipal levels. The Emergency Management Office continually works with organizations and municipalities to develop plans that mitigate risk and proactively prepare for potential emergency events.

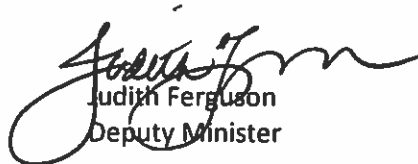
The positive initiatives outlined in this document are moving Nova Scotia's justice system in the right direction. They wouldn't be possible without the commitment and hard work of our staff. Continuing our efforts to support and build a healthy, engaged and well-trained workforce is an ongoing priority.

We welcome your feedback, and extend a sincere thank you to all who helped develop this document and to those whose hard work will be critical to its success.

Thank you.



Lena Metlege Diab  
Minister



Judith Ferguson  
Deputy Minister

## **DEPARTMENT MANDATE, MISSION, VISION**

### **MANDATE**

The Department of Justice is responsible for the administration of justice and for promoting the safety and security of Nova Scotians through justice-related programs, services and initiatives.

### **MISSION**

The Department of Justice is committed to the fair and effective administration of justice and to promoting public safety in Nova Scotia.

### **VISION**

Nova Scotia is a place where everyone feels safe and secure and their rights are respected and understood.

## GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

### **Priority: Responsible fiscal management**

Many of the Department's priorities for 2014-2015 are aimed at improving efficiencies and cost effectiveness of justice programs and services. Ensuring that justice is properly and effectively administered in a fiscally responsible way in Nova Scotia has been a focus of the Department for a number of years. The Department will continue to explore new and innovative ways to deliver services in pursuit of improved access to justice and greater efficiency. In 2014-2015 the Department of Justice will focus on proportionate responses for criminal court cases as well as triaging family court cases to identify possible alternative dispute resolution mechanisms as early as possible.

The Department will also leverage existing resources through the formation of strategic partnerships with other government departments, justice partners and community organizations to provide targeted programming. This collective approach permits for enhanced communication and coordination amongst all parties and potential cost savings with reduced duplication and coordination costs.

### **Priority: Helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential by supporting vulnerable communities – seniors, disabled.**

Ensuring our communities and homes are safe is an important step in helping all Nova Scotians meet their fullest potential. In 2014-2015, the Department of Justice will again focus efforts on collaborations that encourage community safety for all Nova Scotians including vulnerable communities.

Crime prevention efforts will focus on where they are most needed and will have the greatest impact. To do so, the Department will leverage existing resources through the formation of strategic partnerships with community organizations, other government departments as well as justice system partners to:

- Support targeted investment tailored to identifiable risk groups most likely to offend or re-offend.
- Test collaborative response models such as the HUB model, which targets at-risk youth and families.
- Expand the reach of the Restorative Approaches in Schools initiative which equips schools to respond to conflict more effectively.
- Expand the use of a collaborative practice model involving Department of Justice, Health and Wellness and Education and Early Childhood Development to offer intensive rehabilitation services for high risk young persons.
- Pilot *Rites of Passage* at Central Nova Scotia Correction Facility.

Building on the work of the Mental Health court whose mission is to enhance public safety and improve the mental health and quality of life of persons with mental disorders, which have contributed to their involvement in the criminal justice system, by assisting them to access treatment and service, the Department will continue to monitor other opportunities to support vulnerable communities.

## STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

The Department of Justice has identified three priority areas to focus on in 2014-2015 to achieve its mandate. These areas include:

### Access to Justice

As a departmental priority, access to justice has two components – the timeliness of service delivery and access to services and information. Delays in access can have significant impacts including case collapse, increased conflict and inefficient use of court resources. *The Provincial Court Case Processing Project* is a key initiative to address delays in the criminal justice system. Some of the strategies to be undertaken this year will include Crown File Ownership to ensure that cases are reviewed and prepared at the earliest opportunity as well as a focus on proportionate responses.

Accessing services and information is not limited to providing information and services, but providing them at the right time to allow people to make the right legal decision(s). *The Differential Response to Conflict Assessment Program* strives to meet the challenges of matching, as closely and as early as possible, existing family justice programs and services with the needs of families experiencing the family justice system.

To measure the impacts of these priority initiatives, the following outcomes have been developed:

- Nova Scotians have better access to justice through improved court case processing times.
- Nova Scotians have access to better information and/or services at the right time to make the right legal decision(s).

### Collaborating for Community Safety

Crime reduction and prevention are not within the sole control or discretion of the Department of Justice. Leveraging strategic partnerships and working closely with community organizations and other justice system partners will enable a more collaborative approach and better outcomes. Working with municipalities to develop capacity for crisis readiness, supporting targeted investments tailored to identifiable risk groups likely to offend or re-offend, developing a crime prevention strategy and expanding programming for offenders are some of the steps the Department of Justice is undertaking in 2014-2015 to contribute towards achieving the following outcomes:

- Nova Scotian communities are better prepared for emergencies<sup>1</sup>.
- Preventing and reducing crime through the development of community and justice system partnerships.

### Focus on Employees

Given the importance of employee engagement to the overall function and organizational health of the Department, promoting a healthy and engaged workforce will be an area of focus and important goal for the Department of Justice this year and in years to come. To help support this goal in 2014-15, the Department of Justice will be launching an employee recognition program. In addition, a new

department-wide engagement website will be leveraged to facilitate the exchange of information and an ongoing discussion about the work culture and environment with all staff across the province.

The work of the Employee Engagement Leadership Team (EELT) and Divisional Action Teams (DATs) will be ongoing in 2014-15 to support the Department's focus on employees. The EELT advises the Department of Justice's senior management team on employee engagement and is responsible for the development and implementation of goals to increase employee satisfaction and organizational commitment across the Department of Justice. Divisional Action Teams (DATs) are working to meet the unique engagement needs of their division and also support EELT department-wide activities.

The following outcomes were developed to assess progress with employee engagement:

- The Department of Justice is a safe and rewarding place to work.
- The Department of Justice staff are respected and appreciated.

## BUDGET CONTEXT

	2013-2014 Estimate	2013-2014 Forecast	2014-2015 Estimate
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
<b>Gross Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Administration	23,948	20,999	23,780
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	22,181	22,181	22,181
Court Services	64,113	67,305	69,778
Correctional Services	57,276	61,897	67,796
Compliance and Internal Investigation Services	516	455	169
Public Trustee	2,210	2,260	2,428
Fatality Inquiry Act	3,871	4,210	4,135
Public Safety	128,194	125,992	131,619
Serious Incident Response Team	584	584	590
EMO	6,908	7,121	0
<b>Total Gross Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>309,801</b>	<b>313,004</b>	<b>322,476</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
<b>Fees and Other Charges</b>	(24,514)	(23,558)	(24,850)
<b>Ordinary Recoveries</b>	(109,730)	(108,637)	(108,768)
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>1,090</b>	<b>1,430</b>
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)</b>	<b>1,568</b>	<b>1,561</b>	<b>1,627</b>



## PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Access to Justice							
OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS		STRATEGIC ACTIONS	
				<b>Year</b>	<b>Average # of days</b>		
Nova Scotians have better access to justice through improved court case processing times.	Case processing times in adult criminal court <sup>ii</sup>	<b>Base year: 2006-07</b>  Nova Scotia: 199 days Canada: 250 days	To meet or fall below the Canadian average elapsed time to complete an adult criminal court case.		<b>NS</b>	<b>Canada</b>	The Court Services division has several initiatives planned for 2014-2015 to improve access to justice, better understand and reduce the current processing times for criminal cases.  The Provincial Court Case Processing Project will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recommend appropriate diversion and early resolution options;</li> <li>• identify serious or complex cases early in the process; and</li> <li>• streamline appearances to reduce unnecessary adjournments.</li> </ul>
				2007-2008	195	246	
				2008-2009	210	230	
				2009-2010	223	224	
				2010-2011	228	239 <sup>r</sup>	
				2011-2012	235	218	
				2012-2013	229 <sup>iii</sup>	N/A	
				<b>Year</b>	<b>Average # of days</b>		
	Case processing time in youth court <sup>iv</sup>	<b>Base year: 2006-07</b>  120 days	98 days elapsed time to complete a youth court case.	2007-2008	112		
				2008-2009	121		
				2009-2010	125		
				2010-2011	125		
				2011-2012	102 <sup>r</sup>		
				2012-2013	109		
	Case processing time in family law proceedings <sup>v</sup> .	New measure					

*r = revised numbers*

Access to Justice					
OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Nova Scotians have access to better information and/or services at the right time to make the right legal decision(s).	Enhanced awareness of the options available for support and assistance with issue resolution pertaining to family law.	New measure			The Court Services division is completing an evaluation of the <b><i>Differential Response to Conflict Assessment Program</i></b> . This evaluation will provide insight as to how to best offer timely assessment in the family court system and direction to suitable family justice supports to families who are experiencing the family justice system.
	Enhanced understanding among families of the family justice system, court processes / procedures and related roles and responsibilities.	New measure			
	Parties feel better able to make informed decisions about how to resolve issues / come to agreement pertaining to family law.	New measure			

Collaborating for Community Safety					
OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR	TARGET	TRENDS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Nova Scotian communities are better prepared for emergencies.	% of Municipal Emergency Management Practitioners possessing fundamental skills. <b>Source: EMO administrative records</b>	<b>Base yr: 2013</b> 80%	90%		Building capacity for crisis readiness at the municipal level is critical to a prompt and coordinated response to an emergency. The Emergency Management Office (EMO) works hand-in-hand with municipal authorities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide assistance in planning for emergencies;</li> <li>• train Municipal Emergency Management Practitioners to ensure that they possess the knowledge and skills needed to effectively manage emergencies; and</li> <li>• assist with risk analysis and evaluation after an emergency.</li> </ul>
	Number of Municipal Emergency Management Plan Assessments establishing advanced Emergency Management capabilities.	<b>Base yr: 2013</b> 65%	90%		
	Completion of annual exercises designed to assess emergency preparedness with individual municipalities in addition to facilitating increased collaboration amongst multiple levels of government (e.g., municipal, provincial, federal and international where applicable). This would include a minimum of: 1 Executive Emergency Management Committee exercise 2 provincial Coordination Centre exercises 3 municipal exercises	<b>Base yr: 2013</b> 1	3		

Collaborating for Community Safety					
OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR	TARGET	TRENDS	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Preventing and reducing crime through the development of community and justice system partnerships.	Number of new partnerships or initiatives formed.	<b>New Measure</b>			<p>Crime prevention is the concerted effort of individuals, communities, businesses, police services and government agencies working together to address the root causes of crime. To meet this goal, the Department is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• testing a public health based intervention model to reduce gun violence through street level intervention and community mobilization;</li> <li>• testing collaborative response models such as the HUB model, targeting at-risk youth and families;</li> <li>• expanding the reach of the Restorative Approaches in Schools initiative which equips schools to more effectively respond to conflict;</li> <li>• developing a crime prevention and reduction framework which uses a targeted focus on partnerships and tailored investments;</li> <li>• building stronger understanding of digital citizenship through outreach education;</li> <li>• partnering with other government departments and local health authorities to improve collaborative rehabilitation programming for at-risk youth;</li> <li>• adapting Aggression Replacement Training (ART) curriculum with the Cognitive Skills Program for use in adult sites and community;</li> <li>• piloting Rites of Passage at Central Nova Scotia Correction Facility.</li> </ul>
	Increased availability / reach of rehabilitative programming.	<b>New Measure</b>			
	Number of outreach education sessions provided by CyberSCAN team.	<b>New Measure</b>			
	Rate of gun related incidents in geographic regions where health based gun violence response model is being tested.	<b>New Measure</b>			
	Number of schools engaged in implementing restorative approaches.	<b>New Measure</b>			
	Public confidence in Justice system <sup>vi</sup> .	<b>Base yr: 2005</b> 74% of Nova Scotians have some confidence in the justice system.	To maintain / increase public confidence in the justice system.	<b>2013</b> 76% of Nova Scotians have some confidence in the justice system.	

**FOCUS ON EMPLOYEES**

OUTCOME	MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA	TARGET	TRENDS		STRATEGIC ACTIONS
The Department of Justice is a safe and rewarding place to work.	PSC How's Work Going Survey – Engagement Score	<b>Base year: 2013</b> Engagement Index: 60		<b>Year</b>	<b>Score</b>	Providing a safe and rewarding work environment where staff feel respected and appreciated is critical to the Department's success. The following priority initiatives will be undertaken in 2014-2015. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A department-wide engagement website will be used to facilitate the exchange of information and an ongoing discussion about the work culture and environment with all staff across the province.</li> <li>• A recognition program for those individuals and teams who have made significant contribution to the work of the Department will also be initiated.</li> <li>• Ongoing work of the Employee Engagement Leadership Team (EELT), which advises the Department of Justice's senior management team on employee engagement.</li> <li>• Ongoing work of Divisional Action Teams (DATs), which are working to meet the unique engagement needs of their division and also support EELT department-wide activities.</li> </ul>
	Number of Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) reports.	New Measure				
The Department of Justice staff are respected and appreciated.	Departmental rate of absenteeism	New Measure				
	% of Justice staff who completed Respectful Workplace training	New Measure				
	PSC How's Work Going Survey (Score): "A healthy atmosphere (trust, mutual respect) exists at work"	<b>Base year: 2013</b> Score: 48		<b>Year</b>	<b>Score</b>	
				2009	57	
				2011	48	
				2013	48	

## NOTES PERTAINING TO PERFORMANCE MEASURES

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<sup>i</sup> On Friday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014, it was announced that the Emergency Management Office (EMO) would be transferred from the Department of Justice to a newly realigned Department of Municipal Affairs. As a result of this move, this outcome as well as the performance measures associated to the outcome will be transferred to the Department of Municipal Affairs for reporting with the 2014-2015 Accountability Report.

<sup>ii</sup> Case processing time refers to the average number of days it takes to process cases in criminal court from first appearance to final disposition. The definition of a court case includes all charges against the same person having overlapping court dates.

<sup>iii</sup> The data on adult criminal court case processing times are from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS), *Adult Criminal Court Survey* with the exception of the data for the most recent fiscal year which is from the Justice Enterprise Information Network (JEIN), Nova Scotia Department of Justice. CCJS figures for adult criminal courts case processing are anticipated to be released in the fall. There may be slight differences in the volume of cases (and consequently, the average case processing times) as calculated by the CCJS versus JEIN.

<sup>iv</sup> Youth case processing time is defined as the average elapsed time from the accused's first appearance in youth court until final disposition. Nova Scotia excludes restorative justice cases and bench warrants when calculating case processing times and reporting on the corresponding case volumes. Cases involving restorative justice are excluded because, on average, these cases take over 200 days to complete, which artificially inflates overall processing times. Bench warrants are excluded because, once issued by the Court, the Court cannot control how long it takes to have that warrant executed.

<sup>v</sup> Case processing times for family law cases is introducing a new measure using data collected by court staff as opposed to data reported by Statistics Canada. As a means of testing new data collection methods, two sites are currently being piloted.

<sup>vi</sup> The *Atlantic Quarterly Survey* provides an indication of the public's level of confidence in the justice system. Figures for this measure include respondents that indicated having "a great deal of confidence" as well as those who indicated having "some confidence" in the justice system as per the *Atlantic Quarterly Survey*.