



**Annual Accountability
Report for the Fiscal Year
2010-2011**

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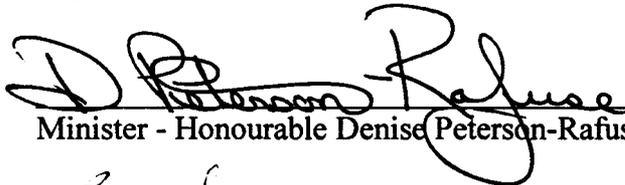
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Accountability Statement

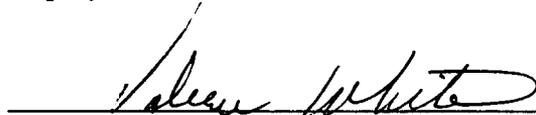
This accountability report of the Department of Seniors for the year ended March 31, 2011 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Seniors Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year 2010-2011. The reporting of the Department of Seniors' outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by the Department of Seniors management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the Department of Seniors 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 Department of Seniors' 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate.

Signatures


Minister - Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse


Deputy Minister - Kelliann Dean


CEO - Valerie White

Note: Nova Scotia Department of Seniors

The Senior Citizens' Secretariat, a committee of government ministers exists to coordinates government services and programs for seniors. The committee is chaired by Minister Denise Peterson-Rafuse.

Message from the Minister

The Department of Seniors is committed to ensuring the inclusion, well-being, and independence of seniors through the development of policies on aging and programs for seniors.

Throughout 2010 -2011 the Department's work has been guided by the goals and objectives of the Strategy for Positive Aging.

In this fiscal year, the department partnered with municipalities to help them achieve their own Age-Friendly goals. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Seniors and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities has encouraged a lot of cooperative work. A new direction was determined for the Age-friendly Communities Program this past year to help municipalities adopt strategic approaches towards developing age-friendly communities.

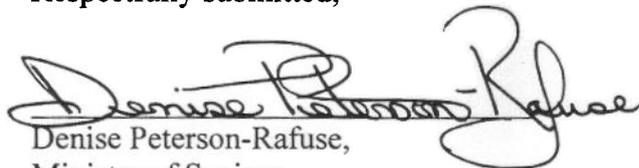
The Positive Aging Fund and Senior Safety Grant continue to leverage excellent community support and fosters safe, secure communities in which seniors can thrive and participate. For fiscal year 2010 -2011, the department supported 14 senior safety programs across the province. Grants continue to support non-profit organizations in their efforts to deliver senior abuse prevention awareness activities in support of annual World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15.

The Seniors' Safety Programs and the Age-Friendly work continues to support many outreach initiatives across Nova Scotia, making communities better for residents of all ages.

The department continues to work with federal, provincial and territorial partners at meetings and through participating in committee work. The department is leading a FPT project, 'Seniors in the Labour Force'. This work is a scan of practices, both national and international that support seniors remaining in the labour force. This work began in fiscal 2010-2011, and is ongoing in 2011-2012.

Through the Strategy for Positive Aging the department continues to focus on improving collaborative opportunities, increasing the age-friendliness of communities; improving financial security of seniors, increasing awareness of the value of older workers in the labour force and enabling seniors to live in safe and supportive living environments.

Respectfully submitted,



Denise Peterson-Rafuse,
Minister of Seniors

Chair, Seniors' Secretariat Committee of Cabinet Ministers

Financial Results

In 2010–2011, the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors had an approved budget allocation of \$1,902,000. Actual 2010–2011 expenditures totaled \$1,733,591.

The following table provides a breakdown of estimates versus actual expenditures of the Department of Seniors.

Budget Context Chart **Nova Scotia Department of Seniors**

	2010-2011 Estimate	2010-2011 Actual
	\$ Thousands	\$ Thousands
Program Expenses	1,244	1,059
Salaries and Benefits	658	674
Total Operating Costs	1,902.0	1,733
Funded Staff (FTE's)	9.00	8.19

Variance Analysis

The primary variance between the actual and the estimate is vacancy management and savings in operating costs.

Introduction

The content of this accountability report is based on the performance measures described in the 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate of the Department of Seniors. The report describes the accomplishments and progress the Department has made in meeting those performance measures. This report is intended to update the public and members of the legislative assembly on the Department's activities.

It is suggested that the Department's 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate and this accountability report be read together in order to provide a full picture of the Department's progress in key performance areas. Click here for an electronic link to Department of Seniors' website - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/seniors/> then; click *Business Plans and Accountability Reports* to find the 2010-2011 Statement of Mandate.

Overall, the Department of Seniors' goal is to advance implementation of its strategic framework the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*. The Department of Seniors has identified six Strategic Objectives to be undertaken to advance implementation of the *Strategy for Positive Aging*:

- To improve innovation and collaboration to ensure the diverse needs of seniors are met;
- To increase the age-friendliness of communities and promote active, healthy aging;
- To improve the financial security of seniors, particularly those with low and modest incomes;
- To increase awareness of the value of older workers and the economic benefits of older worker participation in the labour force;
- To enable seniors to live in safe and supportive living environments, free from danger, fear and exploitation;
- To support and promote the important work of volunteers

Performance measurement is an important component of the business planning and accountability reporting cycle. Performance measures indicate how well we are meeting our goals, objectives, or key areas of work. Therefore, in addition to its six Strategic Objectives, the Department has also identified four Core Business Areas which speak to key areas of work; these are:

- Intergovernmental, Interdepartmental and Government-Wide Collaboration and Policy Development;
- Stakeholder Consultation and Collaboration;
- Planning, Coordinating and Delivering Programs and Services;
- Communications and Information Sharing.

Since the Department's creation in September 2007, it has undergone significant changes in human resources, becoming fully staffed as recent as Fall 2010. As a result, the Department's performance measurement system is still in the early stages of development. As the system develops, new measures will be identified, existing measures will be improved, and relevant data collection instruments will be developed.

Measuring our Performance 2010-2011

Special policy agencies within government have recognized the challenges associated with developing robust measures to accurately assess the social impact of their work. As such, initiatives aimed to develop sound performance measurements were realized in the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Following this work, it was the Department of Seniors' intention to develop new measures in 2009-2010; however, the Department was not fully staffed with positions responsible for policy and program development until Fall 2010. The Department will therefore begin to revise its performance measurement system in the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

A. Consultations with Seniors and Nova Scotia Seniors' Networks.

Outcome description

*Seniors, seniors' organizations and senior-serving agencies have opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues.

*Increased awareness and knowledge of the policies, programs and services available to seniors in Nova Scotia

Measure

Satisfaction level of seniors' organizations with information provided by the department on the policies, programs, and services available to seniors and the mechanisms in place for bringing issues of concern to the attention of the Nova Scotia government.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

It tells us to what degree our stakeholders are satisfied with the opportunities they have to provide advice on policy issues. High rates of satisfaction would indicate these stakeholders feel they have such opportunities. This measure is based on self-reports through a survey administered to members of the *Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia* and through evaluation forms distributed to participants at the Spring and Fall Consultations.

Where Are We Now

The *Group of IX* reports being satisfied with the opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues. For the 2010-2011 year, 4 (67%) reported a 'high' level of satisfaction, 1 (16.5%) reported a 'medium' level of satisfaction and 1 member (16.5%) reported a 'low' level of satisfaction.

Invited participants who attend the Department's Spring and Fall consultation represent Senior Citizens' Councils, the Group of IX Seniors' Advisory Council of Nova Scotia, Seniors' Safety Programs, Community Health Boards, and other seniors' organizations. The measure utilized for 2010-2011 is based upon responses to the statement, "I had adequate opportunity to provide input, share information and discuss issues" (in order to assess level of engagement). Respondents indicated their level of agreement with that statement as 'Yes', 'Maybe', or 'No'.

At the Spring 2010 Consultation, of 24 completed evaluation forms, 23 (96%) rated their level of agreement with that statement as 'Yes', and 1 (4%) indicated, 'No'. At the Fall 2010 Consultation, of 39 completed evaluation forms, there were 35 responses to that statement. Twenty-eight (72%) rated their level of agreement with that statement as, 'Yes', 1 (2%) indicated 'Maybe', and 6 (15%) indicated, 'No'.

Where Do We Want To Be?

The target for this measure for 2010-2011 was 75% "high overall satisfaction" of *Group of IX* members' with opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues. Respondents had the opportunity to note areas for improvement and these will be taken into consideration for the 2010-2011 year.

The Department's ability to engage seniors and those working with senior-serving organizations is reflected in the 81% (average) level of agreement among attendees at the Spring 2010 and Fall 2010 Consultations that they have adequate opportunity to provide input, share information and discuss issues. This is a positive indicator of success regarding participants' level of engagement at the Spring and Fall Consultations.

B. Number and type of initiatives the Department's staff provides consultation and policy advice on.

Outcome description

*Increased collaboration with government departments and non-government organizations in the exploration and development of policies, programs and services that address the needs of seniors.

Measure

Number and type of initiatives the Department's staff provides consultation and policy advice on.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

A new measure was developed in 2009-2010 to track the 'Number and type of initiatives the Department's staff provides consultation and policy advice on'. 'Initiatives' includes projects and publications (most often completed through committee work). This revised measure speaks more directly to the Department's capacity to provide advice and consultation which is a more accurate measure of the Department's ability to impact policy.

Where Are We Now

The target for this measure was estimated at 40 initiatives per year based on 4 employees each providing advice and consultation on approximately 10 key initiatives. The actual result for 2010-2011 was 25 key initiatives.

Where Do We Want To Be?

As discussed, the Department will begin to engage in a comprehensive review and revision of its performance measurement system in the 2011-2012 fiscal year. Given this context, the Department will not reassess the target for this measure at this time.

C. Communication with Seniors and Nova Scotia's Seniors' Networks

Outcome description

*Information on programs and services for seniors is communicated in a senior-friendly format or other audience-specific format.

*Greater public awareness of the Department and its role and function.

*Increased profile among provincial government peers about the Department's role and function, and how we can benefit their planning efforts that relate to older Nova Scotians.

*Increased engagement in seniors-related initiatives of other departments

Measures

Specific measures include: number of speaking engagements; number of visits to the Department's website; number of *Seniors' News* newsletters distributed and; number of calls received on the Seniors Information Line (i.e. the Department's toll-free line).

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

Overall, this measure is intended to inform us how senior-friendly the Department's communications vehicles are (e.g. readability, layout and design). This measure also speaks to the ability of the Department to increase government and public awareness about its role and function, and the importance of planning strategically in order to seize the opportunities inherent in population aging.

Where Are We Now

It is recognized by the Department that these measures need work in order to ensure consistency of collection and relevancy of reporting results.

Where Do We Want To Be?

It was noted in the 2009-2010 Accountability Report that the Department's Communications Advisor would review existing measures and identify changes/further development during 2010-2011; this was not completed. There has been a shift in the staffing of this position. The Department's new Communications Director will focus on reviewing existing measures and identifying changes/further development during 2011-2012.

Progress on Specific Measures related to Communication with Seniors and Nova Scotia's Seniors' Networks:

Number of Speaking Engagements

What does this measure tell us?

This measure speaks to the Department's capacity to deliver key messages, on a range of topics and issues related to population aging, in order to inform its partners (other government departments, stakeholders and community members).

Where we are now?

The number of speaking engagements in 2010-2011 was 63.

Where do we want to be?

Our goal is to maintain a target of participating in 75 speaking engagements/events for each year.

Number of Visits to the Department's Website

What does this measure tell us?

This measure tells us how many members of the public seek information about programs, services and initiatives for seniors, and specifically how many choose to access this information via the internet.

Where we are now?

The total number of visits was 48,270 for 2010-2011. While this number represents an increase of 8,730 from 2009-2010, it still falls below our target of 70,000.

Where do we want to be?

Our target was set as 70,000 visits for 2010-2011. This measure needs to be re-assessed to determine a reasonable target.

Number of Seniors' News newsletters distributed

What does this measure tell us?

This measure speaks to the Department's ability to remain current about the issues that impact seniors' lives and communicate information about these issues to the senior population.

Where we are now?

It was noted in the 2009-2010 Accountability Report that in 2010-2011, the Department's Communications Advisor would work to re-establish regular publications of the *Seniors' News* newsletter and explore other vehicles of communication; this was not achieved. The Department's current Communications Director will focus on this during the 2011-2012 year.

Where do we want to be?

Distribution (number of *Seniors' News*) will be examined in 2011-2012 as part of the work to re-establish the newsletter in a format that makes sense for the Department's current communications goals.

Number of Calls on the Seniors' Information Line**What does this measure tell us?**

This measure tells us how many members of the public, particularly seniors, their family members, caregivers and care providers, seek information about programs and services for seniors. This helps inform us about which programs and services are most critical to seniors.

Where we are now?

In 2010-2011, there were 2,294 calls to the Department's *Seniors' Information Line*. This number reflects only those calls recorded by administrative staff directly responsible for answering the toll-free line; it does not include calls received by other staff.

Where do we want to be?

The target for 2010-2011 was 2,900 calls. As noted above there were 2,294 calls to the Department's *Seniors' Information Line*. This represents a decrease in the number of calls to the toll-free line from 2009-2010 (2,922) and 2008-2009 (2,796). The Department continues to promote the toll-free line as part of our efforts to provide ongoing support to more seniors. The target for 2011-2012 is 2,900.

Performance Measure: Related to the Completion of the Positive Aging Action Plan

The Action Plan for Positive Aging Committee was an interdepartmental working group tasked with overseeing the implementation of the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*. It was the intent of the Committee to produce the Positive Aging Action Plan – a comprehensive report, which would outline the progress that has been made with respect to implementing the *Strategy's* (9) goals and (190) societal actions. Although the Action Plan for Positive Aging Committee has not been active (due to limited human resources at the Department until Fall, 2010) it was intended that a summary document related to the *Strategy's* implementation would be completed by Fall 2009, and a detailed report would be developed and distributed to government and other stakeholders at the *Silver Economy Conference* in May 2010. It was recognized that the development of this summary document would require input from various Departments and community-based organizations and that the process would need to be comprehensive and strategic. Although the summary document was not released in 2009-2010, work in this area remained a priority in 2010-2011.

When the Department filled the position of Director of Corporate Strategy and Policy in July 2010, the Action Plan for Positive Aging Committee's structure and process for reporting on the *Strategy* was revisited. The Department of Seniors led two *Strategy for Positive Aging Sessions* (November, 2010 and January, 2011) with government and community partners – the purpose of

which was to: re-energize partners' commitment to the *Strategy*; capture their progress towards advancing its goals and; capture future priorities relevant to advancing its goals. The Department will release a *Progress Highlights* document to capture government and community progress towards advancing the *Strategy* in Fall, 2011.

Conclusion

The Department continues to work with seniors through information sharing and consultative processes. It is the Department's goal that by facilitating the planning, development, and coordination of policies, programs, and services for and with seniors; it can assist Nova Scotia to realize its vision, that, "Nova Scotia is an inclusive society of caring communities that supports the well-being of seniors and values their contributions" (*Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia, 2005*).