Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 2012-2013

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Accountability Statement

This accountability report of the Department of Seniors for the year ended March 31, 2013 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 2012-2013. 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’ 2012-2013 Statement of Mandate.

Signatures

Minister – Honourable Denise Peterson-Rafuse

Deputy Minister – Kelliann Dean

CEO – Valerie White
Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

The Department of Seniors is committed to ensuring the inclusion, well-being, and independence of seniors through good policy development and diverse programs and services.

Throughout 2012-2013, the Department’s work continued to be guided by the *Strategy for Positive Aging in Nova Scotia*. Through this strategy, the Department focuses on improving collaborative opportunities, increasing the age-friendliness of communities; improving the financial literacy 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.

To ensure that the work is relevant the Department works with seniors to make sure there is thoughtful information sharing and consultation. This past fiscal year the Department consulted with various stakeholders who had the opportunity to shape the agenda for the 2013 Silver Economy Summit. The Department regularly consults with seniors, seniors’ organizations and senior-serving agencies to provide advice on public policy issues and thereby increase their awareness about the policies, programs and services available to seniors in Nova Scotia. As well, the Department’s staff provided policy advice on various initiatives to other departments and community-based organizations. This collaboration ensures better development of policies, programs and services that address the needs of seniors. In addition, the Department collaborates with peers across the country on shared seniors’ issues such as older workers and aging in place (including living arrangements). This past fiscal year, Nova Scotia hosted the 14th Meeting of Federal, Provincial and Territorial (F/P/T) Ministers Responsible for Seniors.

The Department of Seniors will continue to advocate for seniors through policy development and direct services in order to make life better for families.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise Peterson-Rafuse,
Minister of Seniors

Kelliann Dean,
Deputy Minister, Department of Seniors
Financial Results

In 2012–2013, the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors had an approved budget allocation of $1,871,000. Actual 2012–2013 expenditures totaled $1,748,106.

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

**Budget Context Chart**

**Nova Scotia Department of Seniors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2012-2013 Estimate</th>
<th>2012-2013 Actual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$ Thousands</td>
<td>$ Thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Expenses</td>
<td>1,147.8</td>
<td>950.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salaries and Benefits</td>
<td>723.2</td>
<td>797.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Operating Costs</td>
<td>1,871.0</td>
<td>1,748.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funded Staff (FTE's)</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Variance Analysis**

The primary variance between the actual and the estimate is savings in operating costs and reduction in professional services.
Introduction

The content of this accountability report is based on the performance measures described in the 2012-2013 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 2012-2013 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 2012-2013 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 four 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 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;

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 four 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.

It was stated in the Department’s 2011-2012 Accountability Report that the Department will begin to revise its performance measurement system. The Department recognizes the critical importance of engaging in strategic planning prior to exploring the development of performance measures and will continue strategic planning work in the 2013-2014 fiscal year. Once a solid strategic plan is in place, the Department will be better positioned to review existing performance measures, and develop new measures and relevant data collection instruments.
Measuring our Performance
2012-2013

Special policy agencies within government have recognized the challenges associated with developing robust measures to accurately assess the social impact of their work. As the Department continues to develop its performance measures in fiscal 2013-2014 it will endeavor to develop measures that accurately capture the value and social impact of its work. The following measures were outlined in the Department’s 2012-2013 Statement of Mandate.

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 target for this measure for 2012-2013 was 75% “high overall satisfaction” of Group of IX members’ with opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues. For the 2012-2013 year, 10 responses were received from the Group of IX regarding their level of satisfaction with the opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues as follows: 3 (30%) reported a ‘high’ level of satisfaction; 7 (70%) reported a ‘medium’ level of satisfaction and; 0 members reported a ‘low’ level of satisfaction. Due to the fact that in 2012-2013 the Department did not meet the target of 75% ‘high overall satisfaction’, the Department will engage with Group of IX to discuss how they currently perceive their opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues and how it could be improved.

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
2012-2013 is based upon responses to the statement, “I had adequate opportunity to provide input 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 2012 Consultation, of 41 completed evaluation forms, there were 40 responses to that statement — 38 participants (95%) rated their level of agreement with that statement as ‘Yes’, and 2 indicated, ‘Maybe’. At the Fall 2012 Consultation, of 26 completed evaluation forms, there were 26 responses to that statement — 26 participants (100%) rated their level of agreement with that statement as, ‘Yes’. The average level of satisfaction among participants in the Spring 2012 and Fall 2013 Consultations (that they have adequate opportunity to provide input, share information and discuss issues) is 97%.

Where Do We Want To Be?
Respondents to the Group of IX survey had the opportunity to note areas for improvement and these will be taken into consideration for the 2013-2014 year. The target for this measure remains the same for 2013-2014 – 75% “high overall satisfaction” of the Group of IX members.

The Department’s ability to engage seniors and those working with senior-serving organizations is reflected in the 97% (average) level of agreement among attendees at the Spring 2012 and Fall 2012 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?
‘Initiatives’ may include work on program initiatives, projects, or publications (often, but not necessarily, completed through committee work). This 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 30 initiatives per year which directly impact seniors, their families and communities. The actual result for 2012-2013 is 33 key initiatives.
Where Do We Want To Be?
The target for this measure for 2013-2014 remains at 30. However, as previously noted, the Department expects to develop new performance measures by the end of fiscal 2013-2014. Given this context, it is likely that the Department will adjust this measure in the 2013-2014 year.

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 and number of calls received on the Seniors Information Line (i.e. the Department’s toll-free line). Measures discontinued in 2012-13 are number of visits to the Department’s website and number of Seniors’ News newsletters distributed. Tracking of the Department’s website is no longer possible due corporate changes to the site and the Seniors’ News newsletters are no longer being produced by the Department.

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 to be assessed in order to ensure consistency of collection and relevancy of reporting results. As previously noted, new performance measures will not be developed until end of fiscal 2013-2014.

Where Do We Want To Be?
This is outlined for each measure separately on page 10.
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?
Our target was set at 75 speaking engagements for 2012-2013. The number of speaking engagements in 2012-2013 was 72.

Where do we want to be?
Our goal is to ensure a target of participating in 75 speaking engagements/events for 2013-2014.

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?
The target for 2012-2013 was 2,900 calls. In 2012-2013, there were 2647 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?
As noted above there were 2647 calls to the Department’s Seniors’ Information Line. The number of calls to the toll-free line increased from 2008-2009 (2,796) to 2009-2010 (2,922), fell in 2010-2011 to (2,294) and increased again from 2010-2011 in 2011-2012 to (2,626). The Department continues to promote the toll-free line as part of our efforts to provide ongoing support to more seniors. The target for 2013-2014 remains the same at 2,900 calls.

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).
Appendix A
Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Required under Section 18 of the Act</th>
<th>Fiscal Year 2012-2013</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of disclosures received</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The number of findings of wrongdoing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Details of each wrongdoing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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