

Department of Community Services

Responsibilities

The overall mandate of the Department of Community Services is to provide for people in need. In doing so, the department offers a wide range of social services to Nova Scotians in need and operates under a broad legislative mandate. The services provided by the department form the social safety net and play a significant role in contributing to better futures for our children and families, persons with disabilities, and to the overall health and well-being of communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Within the department's programming (Employment Support and Income Assistance, Child, Youth and Family Supports, and the Disability Support Program) and that of the two agencies supporting it (Housing Nova Scotia and the Status of Women), Community Services aims to promote the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve. This is achieved through excellence in service delivery, leadership, and collaboration with our partners.

The department works with individuals, families, youth, and children to enable them to meet their basic needs, to have control over their own lives, to be safe from abuse and violence, to find and maintain employment, and to participate as citizens in their communities. Programs and services are delivered by staff of the department, as well as a network of funded organizations throughout the province who are empowered to make decisions resulting in a positive outcome in people's lives. The department also ensures that services and supports are accessible, affordable, and sustainable, are delivered efficiently, and include a balanced mix of prevention and intervention programs.

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MINISTER

The Deputy Minister, responsible to the Minister of Community Services, is accountable for a wide range of social services, which are delivered directly by the department or by organizations receiving funding from the department. The Deputy Minister has overall responsibility for:

- carrying out government policies,
- implementing decisions made by the Minister and the Executive Council,
- providing quality advice and information to assist the Minister in making decisions,
- securing the necessary resources to enable the department to carry out its mandate, and
- overseeing all aspects of the administration of the department.

Reporting directly to the Deputy Minister are:

- Associate Deputy Minister
- Executive Director, Policy & Innovation
- Executive Director, Employment Support & Income Assistance
- Executive Director, Child, Youth and Family Supports
- Executive Director, Disability Support Program
- Chief Executive Officer, Housing Nova Scotia
- Executive Director, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women

The following Corporate Agency staff are located at Community Services and support the Minister and Deputy Minister:

- Director of Communications, Communications Nova Scotia
- Director of Human Resources, Public Service Commission
- Executive Director of Finance & Administration, Department of Finance and Treasury Board

OFFICE OF THE ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER

The Office of the Associate Deputy Minister is also responsible for ensuring the department achieves its outcomes related to quality service delivery to clients. This includes ensuring that department supports and services are accessible, supports and services are delivered efficiently, and that staff and delivery partners are empowered to make a positive difference in people's lives.

Reporting directly to the Associate Deputy Minister are:

- Executive Director of Service Delivery and Operations
- Executive Director of Service Strategy, Design and Support

Core Programming

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) provides financial assistance and supports to people struggling to meet their basic needs. Its programs are designed to help people with the costs of food, clothing, and shelter, and to link them to supports and services that will eventually help them to be more independent, self-sufficient, and included in their community.

ESIA's employment programs help eligible income assistance recipients get the skills and training they need to be more employable and attach to meaningful work. This can include literacy and skills upgrading, training, and job opportunities.

The Pharmacare Program provides prescription drug coverage for approximately 40,000 people who receive assistance from the department. The department also provides the Nova Scotia Child Benefit, a non-taxable monthly payment provided to low-income families to assist with the cost of raising children under age 18.

CHILD, YOUTH AND FAMILY SUPPORTS

Child, Youth and Family Supports (CYFS) provides a variety of programs and services to support Nova Scotia's children, youth and families.

- Prevention and Early Intervention offers programs to strengthen children, youth and families, support their safety and well-being, and maintain healthy family relationships. Most of these services are funded by the department but provided by community-based organizations and programs such as Family Resource Centres, Parenting Journey, Youth Outreach and Boys & Girls Clubs.
- Child Protection investigates reports of alleged child abuse and neglect, attempts to reduce the risk of harm, and, when necessary, provides out-of-home support or placement services.
- Placement services are provided when children cannot remain safely at home, either on a temporary or permanent basis. The continuum of placements includes foster care, residential care, and adoption. All placement options for children must be either approved or licensed.

DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Disability Support Program (DSP) serves children, youth, and adults with intellectual disabilities, long-term mental illness, and physical disabilities in a range of community-based, residential, and vocational/day programs. DSP promotes a participant's independence, self-reliance, security, and social inclusion. The goal of the program is to support participants at various stages of their development and independence through a range of programs. Support options include enrollment in Adult Service Centre programming, help for families who care for a family member with a disability in their own home, support for participants in independent living, and support for people with disabilities in a 24-hour residential support option.

HOUSING NOVA SCOTIA

Housing Nova Scotia (HNS) is the primary housing delivery agency in Nova Scotia. It is responsible for delivering a range of housing programs on behalf of the government to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing.

HNS provides funding, oversight, and policy direction to five regional Housing Authorities that are responsible for the administration, operation, and maintenance of Nova Scotia's provincially-owned rental housing properties, as well as rent supplement agreements with private landlords and non-for-profit organizations. Each Housing Authority has a board responsible for tenant issues, such as approval of applicants for social housing, tenant transfers, renewal or non-renewal of leases, and responding to complaints or inquiries from tenants.

POLICY AND INNOVATION

Policy and Innovation brings together the department's strategic policy and planning functions with a suite of information activities that affect the overall direction, management, effectiveness, and efficiency of the department. Functions of the division include:

- Intergovernmental relations
- Strategic policy and decision support
- Information services and privacy
- Records management

TRANSFORMATION SUPPORT UNIT

The Transformation Support Unit (TSU) supports the successful delivery of strategic initiatives, transformation projects, and the realization of project benefits across all three of the department's major program areas and departmental corporate units. TSU provides a departmental approach to portfolio/project planning, management, and delivery so that work is done consistently and desired results are achieved.

The main TSU functions are:

- Defining and delivering project governance and clear structure that is separate from daily operational structure and roles/responsibilities.
- Aligning projects to government and departmental outcomes/strategies and the transformation agenda.
- Ensuring that strategies and projects are realizing the intended benefits for clients and the system.
- Leading consolidated reporting on transformation progress to Executive and central government to inform decision making and execution on the department's overall mandate.

SOLUTIONS AND SUPPORT

Solutions and Support (SAS) is accountable for understanding program and policy requirements, translating those requirements into service delivery strategies and designs, and ultimately supporting the regions in implementing those decisions. The unit provides three functions: service strategy, service design, and operations support. The work of SAS contributes to the department's consistent, efficient, and accessible service delivery to clients no matter where they are in the province or which program they are accessing. Furthermore, the unit works on eliminating unnecessary administrative processes that make accessing services more difficult for clients.

SERVICE PROVIDER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Service Provider Relationship Management was developed to enhance the department's relationship with third-party service providers. The unit supports service providers to navigate the departmental system, supports the work of service providers through the development of department-service provider contracts and agreements, and is the liaison to service providers regarding departmental communications, updates, and information.

Acts Administered

- *Adoption Information Act*
- *Children and Family Services Act*
- *Employment Support and Income Assistance Act*
- *Homes for Special Care Act*
- *Housing Act*
- *Housing Development Corporation Act*
- *Protection for Persons in Care Act*
- *Senior Citizen's Financial Aid Act*
- *Senior Citizens Social Services Act*
- *Social Assistance Act*

Administrative update: **November 8, 2017**
