



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

2024-25

Service Nova Scotia

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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2024-25 Priority Results in Support of Government’s Accountability Report

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Service Nova Scotia 2024-25 Priority Results in Support of Government's Accountability Report

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Service Nova Scotia for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of Service Nova Scotia outcomes includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by Service Nova Scotia management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Service Nova Scotia 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 Service Nova Scotia 2024-25 Business Plan.

Original Signed by:



Minister: Honourable Jill Balser

Original Signed by:



Deputy Minister: Joanne Munro

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Measuring Performance

Service Nova Scotia is dedicated to advancing its core priorities while actively supporting the strategic goals of other government departments and offices. As a central service provider and enabler across government, Service Nova Scotia has a vital role in driving collaboration, efficiency, and results that benefit all Nova Scotians.

Maximizing the Economic Impact of Public Procurement

- Implemented a “Nova Scotia Advantage” initiative requiring Government departments to provide local businesses with favourable treatment in the purchase of goods and services by providing them with a 10% advantage for purchases within the Canada Free Trade Agreement thresholds. For Price Based Purchases this means if the price submitted by a Nova Scotia business is within 10% of the lowest bid, it will be awarded the contract. For Evaluative Criteria Based Purchases, if the submission of a Nova Scotia business passes the technical requirements, and the total evaluated score of the submission is within 10% of the highest scoring bid, the contract will be awarded to that business;
- Introduced a new requirement to engage with Invest Nova Scotia for any purchases over \$10M to identify potential investment attraction opportunities. This is not limited to Nova Scotia-based companies, as it is also aimed at encouraging out-of-province firms to invest in and establish operations in Nova Scotia;
- Amended the *Public Procurement Act* by increasing the maximum single-transaction limit on Nova Scotia’s PCard from \$2,500 to \$5,000, to help increase the volume of point-of-sale payments for small businesses when doing business with Government;
- Maximized utilization of Regional Economic Development exemptions under the Canadian Free Trade Agreement. Nova Scotia can award contracts up to \$1.0M, ten times annually for Regional Economic Development. Service Nova Scotia leveraged all ten opportunities last year; and
- Issued quarterly letters to Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade regarding the number and value of contracts awarded to Nova Scotia businesses. These letters encourage member businesses to register with the Province’s Tender Opportunities Notification Service platform, so they get notified about opportunities that match their profile.

Contributing to [Our Homes, Action for Housing and Affordability](#)

- Amended the *Interim Residential Rental Increase Cap Act* by extending the rent cap until December 31, 2027, as well as providing regulation-making authority for Government to set the maximum allowable rental increase amounts for 2026 and 2027. The amendment also allows a tenant who believes a landlord has imposed a rental increase in contravention of the Act to make

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an application to the Director of Residential Tenancies for up to one year after the expiry of the Act (i.e. December 31, 2028);

- Pursued further amendments to *Residential Tenancies Act*, which:
 - shortened eviction timelines for non-payment of rent to align with most other Canadian jurisdictions;
 - introduced authority and discretion to publish some, all, or part of Director's orders or summaries of Director's orders as an accountability measure;
 - prohibited tenants from entering subtenancy agreements for a rental amount greater than the amount owed on the original lease to prevent unfair profit from subtenancy agreements and contributing to a more expensive housing market;
 - provided landlords the option to terminate a tenancy where the tenant repeatedly pays rent late, engages in illegal activity, causes extraordinary damage to the unit or property, or interferes with or disturbs another occupant or the landlord; and
 - required landlords to provide additional contact information to make it easier for tenants to contact their landlords.
- Proclaimed amendments to the *Residential Tenancies Act* and created a simpler process for tenants to request the return of their security deposit when it is not returned to them, and for landlords to submit a claim to retain all or part of a tenant's security deposit. These amendments made the process for resolving security deposit claims simpler for both tenants and landlords and eliminated the need for a telephone hearing in such situations;
- Successfully secured funding for the Heating Assistance Rebate Program (HARP) to match the 2023-2024 amount of \$600. More than 118,000 eligible households received the rebate in 2024-2025;
- Provided Property Tax Rebate for 20,000+ low-income seniors; and
- Amended the Condominium Registration fees under the Condominium Regulations, which addressed outdated fee structures charged to register new and phased condominium developments. These amendments established a fee structure that supported the construction of new housing and encouraged developers to create larger condominium corporations by keeping the costs of condominium registration low, predictable, and fair.

Contributing to Nova Scotia's [Action for Health](#)

- Introduced regulatory changes that require responsible alcohol service training for individuals serving alcohol in roughly 2,400 licensed establishments and at identified, high-risk special occasion events. These changes seek to decrease incidences of intoxication or unsafe practices attributed to servers' drink handling practices and reduced public intoxication and alcohol-related visits to emergency rooms. This reduction supports the Government's overall objective of providing more efficient healthcare delivery;
- Continued to work with Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care to plan and execute procurement processes for the expansion and renovation of long-term care facilities, and to

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effectively deliver the Seniors Care Grant program which approved 38,000+ applications during 2024-2025;

- Continued to work with Build Nova Scotia, the Department of Public Works and Nova Scotia Health to plan and execute equipment procurement for the expansion and renovation of health care facilities across the province; and
- Supported the Department of Health and Wellness in the development and implementation of policy and legislation relating to tobacco and vape products, with a view to improving health outcomes and protecting youth.

Service Efficiency and Program Modernization

- In compliance with the *Financial Measures Act*, Service Nova Scotia amended the Consumer Protection Act to remove the 30-day notice that provincially licensed lenders were required to give borrowers before they could change the information required in regular disclosure statements for variable credit products. This amendment eliminated a substantial administrative burden and aligned our practice with other jurisdictions across Canada;
- Amended Ministerial regulations under the *Mortgage Regulation Act* in collaboration with Mortgage Professionals Canada and Canadian Mortgage Brokers Association–Atlantic. The changes entailed significant red tape reductions that resulted in an average estimated annual savings of \$2,150 for all impacted businesses;
- Launched the new Lobbyist Registry with its own customer portal site providing online access for clients to create, manage and search for registered lobbyists within Nova Scotia. This initiative facilitates easier upgrades and provides easier internal and client stakeholder interaction with the service, improving data integrity and creating more options for reporting;
- In late 2024, the province re-established the billing of Nova Scotia Sales Tax (NSST) on private pleasure craft sales. The province collects between \$500,000 and \$600,000 annually in taxes on the private sales of pleasure crafts. The backlog of unbilled NSST on private pleasure craft sales is approximately \$2 million over a 3 to 4 year period. To date, roughly \$648,000 has been remitted and work is underway to have the remaining NSST collected;
- Amended the Casino Regulations to ensure financial reporting reflects the nature of the revenue being collected from casinos and remitted to the Province;
- Through a license issued under the new Interprovincial Ticket Lottery Regulations, the Jays Care Foundation, a Toronto-based registered charity, raised over \$440,000 to be spent on charitable objects or purposes in Nova Scotia;
- Entered a Memorandum of Understanding for the sharing and use of records between Service Nova Scotia and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police regarding illegal tobacco and vaping products to enhance collaboration between the agencies;
- Updated the procedures to be followed by Canada Revenue Agency and the Province related to collection of debt due to the Province through the Refund Set-Off Program;

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- Continued our collaboration with the Office of Service Efficiency in developing and measuring red tape reduction initiatives including a reduction of regulatory burden on businesses by \$1,003,850 and savings of 2,200 citizen hours during calendar year 2024.
- Supported Government in responding to over 3,700 access to information requests, provided leadership in government-wide privacy assessments and supported the Department of Justice in the review of privacy and access legislation;
- Continued to support Nova Scotia's regulated petroleum marketplace by amending the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulations to enhance the Energy Board's ability to access relevant pricing reports;
- Modernized and updated the Government Sign Language Interpreter Services for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Persons Policy;
- As part of launching the Sustainable Procurement Strategy and Action Plan, SNS increased accessibility of public spaces, infrastructure, and accessibility trainings for service providers when procuring goods and services; and
- Created a reporting tool for client complaints/feedback regarding accessibility concerns.

2024-25 Key Facts and Figures

- 474,477 calls were answered by the Provincial Contact Centre.
- 2.4 million Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) transactions processed.
- 46,783 RMV knowledge tests conducted (including 20,034 conducted online).
- 43,269 online driver license renewals and 273,289 online vehicle permit renewals.
- Business Registration Unit answered over 32,000 calls and completed 223,290 transactions.
- 199,622 citizen transactions were completed by the Refunds, Rebates, and Special Services Unit.
- 432 consumer complaints addressed.
- 4,685 Marriage Licenses processed.
- 192,694 land documents and plans processed and/or registered.
- Over 80% of information for Service Nova Scotia online programs and services translated into French.
- Approximately 65,000 words translated into the French language for Service Nova Scotia.
- 118,000+ low and middle-income households helped with heating costs.
- 20,000+ low-income seniors assisted with property taxes.
- 339 tenders were posted for high value goods/services/construction.
- 720 contracts established for high value goods/services/construction.
- 3,700+ requests for information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP) completed, including over 426,111 pages of documents reviewed for release.
- 109 Privacy Impact Assessment checklists completed.
- \$21 million in debt recovered.
- 10,000+ field inspections related to alcohol and tobacco licensing.

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- Over 10,000 licenses were issued pursuant to the *Liquor Control Act* and *Gaming Control Act*.
- \$420 million collected through fuel, tobacco, vaping products, and vehicle/boat sales tax.
- Reviewed and approved \$147 million in rebates for the Your Energy Rebate Program (YERP) – the provincial program that provides a rebate equal to the provincial portion of HST charged on residential energy usage.

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Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
Programs and Services	2024-2025 Estimate	2024-2025 Actuals	2024-2025 Variance
Senior Management	573	620	47
Corporate Services	11,098	10,646	(452)
Government Services	15,998	36,687	20,689
Internal Audit	2,807	3,109	302
Financial Services	14,854	14,018	(836)
Citizen Services	36,196	40,231	4,035
Procurement	10,538	9,670	(868)
Program Modernization	65,639	102,213	36,574
Information Access and Privacy	3,435	3,419	(16)
Total - Departmental Expenses	161,138	220,613	59,475
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	613,760	614,430	670
Fees and Other Charges	9,529	9,619	90
Ordinary Recoveries	4,944	8,685	3,741
Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries	628,233	632,734	4,501
TCA Purchase Requirements	1,530	453	(1,077)
Funded Staff (# of FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	982.0	955.0	(27.0)
Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:			
Department of Service Nova Scotia expenses were \$59.5 million or 36.9 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$36.9 million in heating rebate grants, \$12.8 million in partially recoverable expenses due to damage from weather related events, \$7.5 million for self-insured claims partially recoverable on behalf of related entities and \$1.3 million for Property Tax Rebate for Seniors grants.			
Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia 2024-25 revenues were \$4.5 million or 0.7% higher than estimate primarily due to \$3.3 million in recoverable insurance claims and premiums, and an increase of \$0.8 million for other ordinary revenues and fees.			
TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia Tangible Capital Asset purchases were \$1.1 million or 70.4% lower than estimate primarily due to multi-year project cashflow adjustments.			
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:			
The Department of Service Nova Scotia Provincially Funded FTEs were 27.0 or 2.7% lower due to filling vacancies and position reduction exercise.			

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Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations;
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets;
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment; or,
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing.

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing. (Insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A