



# ***BUSINESS PLAN***

***2024-25***

Justice

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Budget 2024-25: Business Plan  
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## Department of Justice

### 2024-25 Priority Actions in Support of Government's Business Plan

The Department of Justice is responsible for the promotion of, access to, and administration of justice as well as the safety and security of Nova Scotians through programs, services, and initiatives. The Department delivers this mandate with a staff of approximately 1,740 employees who

- provide administration services to Nova Scotia's courts;
- oversee correctional facilities, public safety and policing;
- oversee and deliver restorative justice services;
- deliver maintenance enforcement services and provide supports for victims of crime;
- work towards creating an accessible Nova Scotia;
- promote equitable and anti-racist outcomes that improve the social and economic wellbeing of all Nova Scotians; and
- provide legal services to all of government.

#### Priority Areas

##### **Address systemic inequity and racism in the justice system and government and improve services for those dealing with addictions and mental health conditions**

- This year the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, now a division of the Department of Justice, will continue its work toward addressing systemic racism and inequities in government institutions and improving social and economic well-being for all Nova Scotians. This work will include finalizing an equity impact assessment tool for use across government, improving data collection that will inform and support equity, and building relationships with underrepresented and underserved communities. It will also include the development of an action plan for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community as committed to in the provincial [Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy](#). The development of this action plan will involve working with community members and other departments and offices.
- In 2024-25, the Department will continue to address recommendations from the 2019 Wortley Report on street checks, including the development of a race-based data collection model for police stops.
- Following the extensive province-wide community engagement process that took place in 2023-2024, the Department will work to implement the province's first African Nova Scotian Justice Action Plan. Among other elements, this plan identifies actions to address systemic anti-Black racism in the criminal justice system.
- In 2024-25, the Department will continue to work with the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network and other partners to support a collaborative approach for creating an Indigenous Justice Action Strategy.

- The Department will continue to work with community partners to expand access to transitional housing for individuals reintegrating into community following involvement with the criminal justice system. The housing programs will be accompanied by access to mental health and addictions treatment, as well as other supports to facilitate education and employment opportunities. In addition, social workers provided through Correctional Services will continue to provide clinical services to support trauma-responsive treatment of adults and youth involved with Correctional Services, both in custody and community.

### **Collaborate on government’s response to the Mass Casualty Commission (MCC) Recommendations (2022) and Desmond Inquiry Recommendations**

- In 2024-25, the Department will continue advancing the implementation of MCC recommendations by working collaboratively with other government departments and agencies.
- The Department will also undertake a comprehensive review of policing in Nova Scotia. This review will engage a consultant to perform the technical aspects as well as an advisory working group that will ensure broad perspectives are engaged and heard.
- In 2024-25, the Department will work with other government departments and agencies to address the recommendations from the Desmond Inquiry after they have been reviewed and considered by government.

### **Lead work to modernize key pieces of legislation**

- Working with the Departments of Service Nova Scotia and Cyber Security and Digital Solutions, in 2024-25 the Department of Justice will continue to lead a comprehensive review of the information access and privacy legislative framework in Nova Scotia. This includes the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP), the *Privacy Review Officer Act*, the *Personal Information International Disclosure Protection Act*, and Part XX (20) of the *Municipal Government Act*. The review will involve targeted consultations with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, government departments, municipalities, other public bodies affected by the legislation, and media and legislative caucus offices. Legislative amendments are anticipated to be completed by 2025.
- In 2024-25, the Department will work towards proposing amendments to the *Victim’s Rights and Services Act* to entitle a victim of sexual violence to be treated with respect when testifying about the sexual violence. The proposed amendments are expected to include measures to ensure victims and survivors are informed of any entitlement they may have to legal representation during a sexual assault court proceeding and/or financial support available to assist in accessing legal representation or information. This work will follow public engagement begun in 2023-24.
- The Department will continue its Family Law Property Reform Project in 2024-25, working towards modernizing the *Matrimonial Property Act*. This legislation, dealing with the division of married spouses’ and registered domestic partners’ property at the end of a relationship, has had no substantive amendments since it was enacted over 40 years ago. Targeted engagement is underway as the Department examines possible amendments and their impacts.

## **Lead work to create an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030**

- Nova Scotia's *Accessibility Act* sets a goal of achieving an accessible Nova Scotia by 2030. In 2024-25, the Department's Accessibility Directorate will continue to lead the work across government toward this goal, in collaboration with persons with disabilities, other levels of government, public sector bodies, businesses, and others.
- The Directorate will also continue to support municipalities, post-secondary institutions, and others in the implementation and updating of their accessibility plans and initiatives.
- Work is underway for all [six standard areas](#). Accessibility Standards for the built environment and education are being developed and guided by the Accessibility Advisory Board and the Standard Development Committees; recommendations for the areas of employment, goods and services, public transportation, and communications and information will be further developed.

## **Work to modernize the court system to improve access to justice**

- In 2024-25, the Department will continue to advance the work of the Digital Task Force co-led by the Department of Justice and the Judiciary, including the implementation of the Road Map for digital transformation.
- Work will advance toward the first of three key areas from the road map: electronic filing and digital document management.
- The Department will also continue to work towards the implementation of Provincial Court scheduling software to maximize scheduling efficiencies and avoid unnecessary delays.

## Financial Summary

<b>Departmental Expenses Summary</b>			
<b>(\$ thousands)</b>			
<b><u>Programs and Services</u></b>	<b><u>2023 -2024</u></b> <b><u>Estimate</u></b>	<b><u>2023-2024</u></b> <b><u>Forecast</u></b>	<b><u>2024-2025</u></b> <b><u>Estimate</u></b>
Administration	34,269	33,826	36,772
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	30,473	31,083	29,538
Court Services	81,522	82,939	85,326
Correctional Services	85,270	84,250	84,831
Office of Public Trustee	3,300	3,232	3,365
Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service	6,057	6,771	6,082
Public Safety and Security	194,209	193,217	204,080
Serious Incident Response Team	1,424	914	1,467
Accessibility Directorate	2,290	2,474	2,442
Maintenance Enforcement and Victim Services	11,402	12,290	11,419
Office of Equity & Anti-Racism	3,236	2,818	3,365
<b>Total - Departmental Expenses</b>	<b><u>453,452</u></b>	<b><u>453,814</u></b>	<b><u>468,687</u></b>
<b>Ordinary Recoveries</b>	153,010	151,642	150,758
<b><u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u></b>			
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>	1,742.6	1,607.9	1,751.9
<b>Note:</b>			
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2			
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1			