



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

2024-25

Cyber Security and
Digital Solutions

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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Table of Contents

Contents

- Table of Contents 2
- Accountability Statement 3
- Introduction 4
- Measuring Our Performance 4
 - Supporting Action for Health and healthcare system improvements 4
 - Delivering simple, secure online public services..... 4
 - Reducing Risk in old technology 5
 - Enable accessible data for better services and decision making 6
 - Secure government services and people’s information 6
- Support the goal of Building an Accessible Nova Scotia by 2030 6
- Financial Summary and Variance Explanation..... 7
- Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act*..... 8

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions 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 2024-2025 Business Plan.

Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions

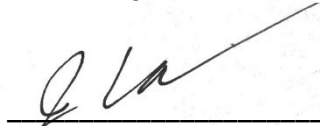
Original signed by:



Hon. Jill Balser

Minister

Date: August 25, 2025



Jennifer LaPlante

Deputy Minister

Introduction

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions (CSDS) is responsible for leading the digital transformation of government services and delivery to give Nova Scotians access to high-quality citizen centred services. CSDS is responsible for information, communication, cybersecurity, and technology services for government and is a partner in health care delivery.

Measuring Our Performance

Supporting *Action for Health* and healthcare system improvements

Modernizing healthcare communication systems in partnership with healthcare facilities across Nova Scotia:

- Continued to support One Person One Record program delivery in partnership with Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health Centre and the Department of Health and Wellness, including completion of wireless expansion in public, patient, treatment and administrative areas.
- Established a partnership with Nova Scotia Health to enhance or expand primary health care locations over the next 2 years. Delivery of enabling technologies, including, but not limited to network, wireless, telephony, non-clinical devices and collaboration tools.
- Partnered with Build Nova Scotia to design and implement technology and digital services for renovations and expansions to healthcare facilities with a focus on meeting the needs of today and into the future.
- Enhanced the YourHealthNS App with My NS Account integration, making it easier and safer for Nova Scotians to access their health information.
- Continue to expand Wireless Internet Access to healthcare facilities throughout the Province.
- Modernized phone systems at the Cobequid Community Health Centre.
- Enabled Caller ID for Health Services, so Nova Scotians can recognize calls from Nova Scotia Health.

Cyber Security and Digital Transformation

Delivering simple, secure online public services

CSDS collaborated with government partners to design and deliver secure, reliable, and user-centered digital products and services. By conducting user testing with individuals from diverse communities, backgrounds, and lived experiences, solutions were made more accessible and inclusive to better reflect and meet the needs of all Nova Scotians:

- Developed and published a [Digital Code of Practice](#) to help build digital products designed for the needs of users and delivered securely and sustainably.
- Hunt Nova Scotia – replacing the Wildlife Resources System for account management, education registration, licence draws, and range bookings.
- Register Your Short-Term Accommodation – new service aligned with regulatory changes.
- Renew Your Short-Term Accommodation Service – enhancements to simplify renewal.

- Online Security Deposit Claim Form for the Residential Tenancies Program – new service for easier access and quicker processing of applications.
- Vital Statistics Services - integrated into the Citizen Online Booking Tool to streamline service delivery and enhance citizen experience by enabling online appointments for services including birth, death, marriage certificates, change of name and sex and certificate pickup.
- Seniors Care Grant – service enhancements to better capture demographics and address challenges with user experience on the online portal.
- Heating Assistance Rebate Program – Service enhancements, including application status checking and improved accessibility with French language updates.
- Childcare Subsidy Application – New digital application to make it easier for families to access support in a streamlined process for faster decision making in a secure portal.
- Online Driver Knowledge Test – service enhancements for improved user experience.
- Tax Program Applications – Including More Opportunity for Skilled Trades and Occupations (MOST) Tax Refund and Fertility & Surrogacy Tax Credit.
- Child Abuse Register Search Service – enhancements and digital confirmation letters to help streamline the process, reduce costs and provide faster service to applicants.
- Nova Scotia School Lunch Online Ordering System – new service to reach more students so they can order affordable, nutritious school lunches easily.
- Nova Scotia Independent Online Learning for Education - new system for students to study by correspondence, and home schooling.
- Business Licence Collections Renewals – new service to make it easier for renewals so businesses can employ Nova Scotians.
- Business Emergency Financial Support Service – service enhancements for timely disaster response.
- Tariff Inquiry Hotline and Survey – new service to support individuals and businesses across the province affected by proposed U.S. tariffs.

Reducing Risk in old technology

- Continued progress on enterprise resource planning system modernization for financial and procurement systems for the Province, Nova Scotia Health, IWK Health Centre, Regional Centres for Education (RCEs), and Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP).
- Ongoing work on the multi-year Registries Transformation and Modernization Initiatives, including:
 - Modernization of the Registry of Motor Vehicles to upgrade systems and ensure safe, secure services across all registry functions. Launched new services for Nova Scotians, including:
 - Road Test Capture System used by all Driver Examiners at Access Nova Scotia locations.
 - Online Driver Knowledge Tests for improved accessibility.
 - Service enhancements for vehicle dealers.
 - Land Registry system modernization began to upgrade the platform and improve services

- Modernized the Nova Scotia School Book Bureau, which is responsible for distributing learning resources and related products to support teaching and learning.
- Piloted new information system for residential tenancies.
- Continued to address legacy technologies, systems, and processes to improve the reliability and usability of public services for Nova Scotians, by decommissioning over 50 legacy services and applications.

Enable accessible data for better services and decision making

- Delivered the first guidelines for the responsible use of public generative AI tools and AI meeting assistants, helping public servants use these tools effectively to improve service delivery for Nova Scotians.
- Launched the Analytics Centre of Enablement to promote data-informed decision-making and modern analytics practices across government.
- Initiated work to support better data sharing and integration practices, including work towards a data sharing agreement between Early Education and Childhood Development and Opportunities and Social Development. This agreement facilitates access to data on children in foster care, enabling a more comprehensive analysis of their academic outcomes compared to non-foster care children.

Secure government services and people's information

- Supported public servants in becoming more cyber-aware and vigilant, emphasizing their role in protecting Nova Scotians' information through mandatory cybersecurity training, resulting in an approximately 20 percent increase in trained public servants over the previous year.
- Enhanced security within the MOVEit file transfer system to better protect sensitive data.

Support the goal of Building an Accessible Nova Scotia by 2030

- Continuation of support to the Accessibility Directorate to develop standards in areas including education, employment, goods and services, public transportation, and infrastructure.
- Continued working with partners to implement user-centered approach to service design delivery for more accessible services for citizens including Seniors Care Grant, Child Care Subsidy, and Application, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (ABCs).

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2024-2025 Estimate</u>	<u>2024-2025 Actuals</u>	<u>2024-2025 Variance</u>
Senior Management	355	369	14
Digital Culture, Strategy, & Performance	6,663	6,664	1
Data Management	3,168	4,468	1300
Digital Solutions	48,576	41,773	(6,803)
Cyber Security & Technology	217,462	193,275	(24,187)
Total - Departmental Expenses	276,224	246,549	(29,675)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	---	---	---
Fees and Other Charges	---	---	---
Ordinary Recoveries	9,964	19,909	9,945
Total: Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries	9,964	19,909	9,945
TCA Purchase Requirements	29,754	67,271	37,517
Funded Staff (# of Net FTEs)			
Department Funded Staff	813	727	(86)

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions expenses were \$29.7 million or 10.7 per cent lower than estimate primarily due to \$20.3 million enterprise resources planning system (SAP) modernization costs, \$6.1 million of vacancy savings and \$2.7 million less amortization due to project delays.

Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions 2024-25 recoveries were \$9.9 million or 100% higher than estimate for purchases on behalf of related entities, primarily Nova Scotia Health.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were \$37.5 million or 126% higher than estimate primarily due to the enterprise resource planning system (SAP) modernization project and multi-year project cashflow modifications.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions Provincially Funded FTEs were 86 or 11% lower due to delays in filling vacancies.

Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the 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 Cyber Security and Digital Solutions:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-2025
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	N/A