



Business Plan

2019–20

Department of Justice


NOVA SCOTIA

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Budget 2019-20: Business Plan
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Message from the Minister



We live in a time of great societal change. Complex social issues impact our courts, our law enforcement agencies and many other areas of the justice system, and it is forcing us to rethink how we do our work.

While much of our work presents challenges; it also presents us with the opportunity to do things differently. To meet these challenges, we have become a department that is pushing innovation and improving access to justice.

That means a justice system in Nova Scotia that is responsive to diverse communities, collaborative, and accountable to Nova Scotians for the important work we do.

Our Department of Justice Business Plan for 2019-20 has been designed to deliver on these themes.

We will continue to work across government and collaborate with community and justice partners to ensure Nova Scotians have an open, accessible and transparent justice system. This will support safety, security and opportunity for a better future for Nova Scotians.

All our work for the coming year is focused on supporting access to justice, especially for those who struggle most; a culture of innovation in effective and efficient services; supporting public safety, well-being and economic stability of Nova Scotians.

Preventative and restorative justice will be our guiding principles. Four out of ten Nova Scotians come into recontact with the criminal justice system. Our goal is to end that revolving door within the criminal justice system where too many young Nova Scotians – many of them marginalized – cannot escape. We want to end the cycle and help support them so they do not return. This year, with our partners, we will strengthen the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program, strengthen responses to human trafficking and cyber-protection.

We will build upon changes in Corrections this year. We will create a program alternative to reduce the use of close confinement. We will work with the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Seven Step Program; provide additional oversight with our new Inspector position; and increase programming in Correctional Services.

Justice will continue our work legalizing cannabis to ensure our province is ready to accommodate the next stage of federal policy to permit the sale of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals when they become legal on October 17, 2019. We will build upon our successful

public education and awareness efforts, which has resulted in more than 44,000 visits to the cannabis website for information.

Justice will work with the Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women on a plan, called *Standing Together*, to break the harmful cycles of Domestic Violence in our homes, workplaces and communities. All Divisions will focus on Domestic Violence and will review gaps in programs and expand current initiatives offered by the Department to prevent future violence and support people affected by Domestic Violence. Particular attention will be paid to historically marginalized and equity seeking groups.

Money owed in cases managed by our Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) are at the lowest level in over 10 years; however, there remains work to be done. We will make even more improvements such as better service to clients through improved technology. This work is vital to the economic opportunity of vulnerable Nova Scotians.

In the past year, the Department has taken many important steps to support inclusion and diversity in the justice system. For example, there has been targeted hiring of more Indigenous and African Nova Scotians in correctional services, cultural competence training department wide, as well as a wellness court opened in Wagmatcook First Nation in April 2018.

We continue to prioritize diversity in the Justice System as there is a need to have people and programming reflective of, and responsive to, the Nova Scotians we serve. We will do this by implementing our Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) Diversity Recruitment and Inclusion Strategy and working on initiatives related to Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities.

We will work alongside and in collaboration with the Public Prosecution Service, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network (MLSN) and others on further building of the Indigenous Justice Strategy and African Nova Scotian initiatives. The main focus is to address the overrepresentation of both groups in the criminal justice system and to increase their representation in justice professions.

The Department continues government's important work on Accessibility by leading the implementation of the Access by Design 2030 strategy and the Government of Nova Scotia Accessibility Plan, which will guide the province toward its goal of being fully accessible by 2030. This year we will begin development of the Nova Scotia's first accessibility standards, starting with the built environment and education. The standards will be developed with intentional input from communities, businesses and government departments.

All of the priorities we are working on supplement the important work we do every day. That work includes running the courts, providing legal support to all of government, keeping those in custody safe, reintegration of offenders into the community, supporting victims of crime, administering the federal Firearms Act, proper administration of estates of deceased persons, accurate medicolegal death investigation and ensuring effective civilian oversight of our police.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the staff of the Department and the Department's valuable partners, including the Criminal Justice Transformation Group, who are instrumental in accelerating access to justice.

Original Signed By

Mark Furey
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Mandate

“The Department of Justice is responsible for the administration of justice and for promoting access to justice and the safety and security of Nova Scotians through justice-related programs, services and initiatives.”

To accomplish its mandate, the Department provides services through five core business areas:

- Public Safety and Security;
- Court Services;
- Correctional Services;
- Accessibility Directorate; and,
- Legal Services to Government.

Minister’s Mandate Letter: September 21, 2017

The Premier in the mandate letter requested the Department:

- Use preventative and restorative justice principles to guide our efforts in the justice system;
- Continue to focus on prevention as a mechanism to support the economic and social wellbeing of our province;
- Continue to increase responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children through the Maintenance Enforcement Program;
- Continue cyber protection actions to ensure the safety of Nova Scotians;
- Continue activities to reduce delays in the justice system;
- Play a leadership role in the government’s work on accessibility; and
- Lead Nova Scotia initiatives to ensure our province is ready to accommodate the federal policy to legalize cannabis when it comes into effect.

The mandate letter also outlined three platform commitments:

- Take immediate action to improve the Maintenance Enforcement Program;
- Work with the Department of Community Services to create a continuum of programs to address Domestic Violence; and
- Expand the Domestic Violence Court to Halifax and make permanent the court in Sydney.

Goals

The Department has set overarching goals to focus its efforts to achieve its vision and meet its mandate:

- Support access to justice especially for those who struggle most;
- A culture of innovation in effective and efficient services; and
- Support public safety, well-being and economic stability of Nova Scotians.

Core Responsibilities/Services

The Department has core responsibilities and provides services as outlined below:

- Administration of Courts and support to the judiciary;
- Administration of Victim Services Program;
- Administration of Sheriff Services Program;
- Administration of Maintenance Enforcement Program;
- Provision of Family Law Services;
- Legislative oversight for policing, private security, firearms control;
- Oversight of the Restorative Justice Program delivered by community-based Restorative Justice Agencies and Community Corrections;
- The administration and operation of community and custody-based programs and services for adults and young persons;
- Delivery of programs and services that support public safety and well-being, including offender rehabilitation and reintegration, and crime prevention initiatives;
- Provision of legal advice to government and litigation for or against the Crown;
- The Accessibility Directorate is responsible for implementing and administering the new Nova Scotia Accessibility Act to ensure Nova Scotia is accessible by 2030; and
- The Minister is responsible for the Office of the Public Trustee, the Medical Examiner Service and the Serious Incident Response Team (SIRT).

Priorities 2019-2020

The Department is focused on achieving results in the areas identified in the Minister's Mandate Letter. The Department's priorities for 2019-2020 are as follows:

Lead Nova Scotia initiatives to ensure our province is ready to accommodate the next stage of federal policy to legalize the sale of cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals when it comes into effect.

Actions:

- Report to Nova Scotians on the legalization of recreational cannabis since October 2018.
- Working horizontally with other government departments implement provincial initiatives to accommodate the federal policy to legalize cannabis edibles, extracts and topicals.
- Work collaboratively with our partners and stakeholders to effectively determine impacts on the justice system and address issues that arise from legalizing cannabis.
- Ensure Nova Scotians are aware of the rules and risks of legal cannabis through public education and awareness campaigns.
- Continue training plan with Law Enforcement Agencies for additional Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) and additional officers trained in Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST).

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Additional Police Officers trained in Standardized Field Sobriety Test (SFST) and Drug Recognition Experts (DRE) to ensure the expertise is in place to enforce drug impaired driving given the legalization of Cannabis.
- Public education and awareness of the rules and risks associated with the upcoming federal policy change with respect to edibles, extracts and topicals as measured by website visits.

Preventative justice as a mechanism to support the economic and social well-being of our province. Preventative Justice refers to actions and initiatives which prevent or reduce individuals' contact with the justice system.

Actions:

- Realign provincially funded police resources (Additional Officer Program) to focus on issues in today's policing environment.
- Support the work of the Desmond Fatality Inquiry by providing infrastructure, security, technology and staff.
- Advance the Indigenous Justice Strategy (IJS), in partnership with MLSN by engaging directly with Mi'kmaq communities to gain input, insight, and wisdom from the Mi'kmaq nation and those with lived experiences.
- Develop Africentric programming that better meets the needs of African Nova Scotians involved in the Justice system, with the goal to reduce their overrepresentation.
- Respond, in consultation with partners, to the Wortley Street Check report.
- In partnership with Executive Council Office, Public Service Commission and the Human Rights Commission, begin implementation of the Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABCs) Diversity Recruitment and Inclusion Strategy developed in 2018.
- Correctional Services will increase oversight and create a program alternative to close confinement.
- Correctional Services will continue to collaborate with strategic partners to enhance education, housing, mental health and addictions services.
- Correctional Services will leverage existing partnerships to extend educational opportunities for those reintegrating from custody to community.
- In partnership with existing community-based organizations and police, Public Safety will develop a Guns and Gangs Initiative to restrict criminal access to firearms, reduce gun and gang violence and address human trafficking.
- Continue cyber-protection actions to ensure the safety of Nova Scotians, including raising awareness through education.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Better support for indigenous peoples in contact with the justice system including the undertaking of an Indigenous Justice Summit to inform an action plan.

- Enhanced cultural competency of ABC members with the goal of greater diversity and inclusive environments.
- Increased opportunity for access to programs and services by creating an alternative to close confinement and reducing days per inmate in close confinement.
- Support reintegration of those in custody and under community supervision by extending educational opportunities.
- Enhance cyber-safety of Nova Scotians through education sessions held across the province.

Restorative justice is an effective approach to reduce future contact with the justice system and improve victim outcomes.

Actions:

Restorative Justice seeks to understand and respond to the impact of crime on individuals and communities, providing the opportunity to bring together those harmed by crime and those responsible for the harm. The Program uses processes to address the issues, harms and needs of those involved. Plans are developed which include commitments by those who caused harm to take specific actions.

This year we will focus on:

- Work with community partners to increase the use of Restorative Justice in the criminal justice system.
- Update the Restorative Justice data requirements to assist with case management and reporting requirements.
- Work across Government to support the use of a restorative approach.
- Increase focus on Restorative Justice education and professional development.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Increased usage of the Restorative Justice Program, an effective alternative to the traditional criminal justice system, through police referrals and engagement of victims.

Create and enhance a continuum of programs to address Domestic Violence.

Actions:

- To support the Province's efforts to prevent Domestic Violence, DOJ will undertake the following:
 - Work with Department of Community Services, Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women, community-based partners and other justice partners to create and enhance a continuum of programs to address Domestic Violence.
 - Conduct Domestic Violence Audits of Municipal Law Enforcement Agencies.
 - Support and participate on a Domestic Violence Law Enforcement Committee of the Nova Scotia Chiefs of Police Association.

- Build stronger supportive connections between families participating in the Domestic Violence Court Program and child protection.
- Work with the other Atlantic Provinces towards the establishment of an Atlantic Domestic Violence Homicide Review Network.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Conduct Domestic Violence compliance audits of police agencies to identify areas to improve service levels and enhance training opportunities.
- Ensure stronger supportive connections between families experiencing violence and child protection through the development of policy and by holding case coordinator conferences.

Play a leadership role in the government's work on accessibility.

Actions:

- Continue work to develop accessibility standards in the built environment and for the education sector.
- Undertake additional work with public-sector bodies to support them in establishing accessibility advisory committees and developing accessibility plans.
- Continue developing educational information to support Access by Design 2030.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Engage public in consultations to inform standards development.
- Workshops and additional resources developed and delivered to public-sector bodies to assist in developing their accessibility plans.
- Sessions delivered to stakeholders to increase awareness of Access by Design 2030.

Increased responsiveness to Nova Scotian families and children for maintenance enforcement.

Actions:

- Continue to reduce arrears and increase enforcement activities, while improving client service.
- Complete implementation of new online service and technology enhancements.
- Continue to build on Federal and Provincial/Territorial partnerships to improve processing and enforcement of inter-jurisdictional support orders.
- Fine tune and improve program measures that focus on better client outcomes.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Greater support to Nova Scotian families by increasing the number of Maintenance Enforcement Cases with no money owing and reducing the amount of money which is overdue in cases where there are arrears.

Continue activities to reduce delays in the justice system.

Actions:

- Continue to chair and support the work of the Criminal Justice Transformation Group, comprised of the senior leaders of Nova Scotia's criminal justice system, in its efforts to:
 - reduce delay in the criminal courts.
 - increase the use of video court appearances by raising awareness among participants.
 - address the substantial increase in the number of people on remand and the overrepresentation of marginalized populations.

Planned approach to measure progress, impact and success:

- Reduction of delay in criminal court cases resulting in fewer cases exceeding *R. v. Jordan* thresholds.

Departmental Expenses Summary

Departmental Expenses Summary			
(\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2018-2019</u> <u>Estimate</u>	<u>2018-2019</u> <u>Forecast</u>	<u>2019-2020</u> <u>Estimate</u>
Administration	23,142	22,369	23,416
Nova Scotia Legal Aid	26,800	26,800	26,904
Court Services	75,090	76,329	75,059
Correctional Services	73,530	73,530	74,769
Public Trustee	2,649	2,468	2,681
Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service	4,896	4,812	4,986
Public Safety and Security	146,663	147,448	151,840
Serious Incident Response Team	607	610	671
Accessibility Directorate	1,204	1,035	1,112
Total - Departmental Expenses	354,581	355,401	361,438
Ordinary Recoveries	121,851	120,745	123,575
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	1646.8	1619.9	1657.1
Note:			
For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2			
For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1			

