

# AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN AFFAIRS



## AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN COMMUNITY ACTION PARTNERSHIP (ANSCAP)

### Information Package

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## Introduction

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The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (ANSA) was formally established in September 2004 to assist, support, and enhance the provincial government's delivery of services to African Nova Scotians. Our role is to develop self-reliance and sustainable development for African Nova Scotians and their communities.

We are looking for volunteers to help.

The way we will organize and formalize this help is through our primary reference groups, commonly known as *African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnerships (ANSCAPs)*.

Whenever we have an issue or a subject area that we think would benefit from community participation, we will recruit a knowledgeable group of community members with expertise in dealing with a specific issue or subject area to help us.

We will seek out African Nova Scotians who can bring insight and expertise to the issue at hand. These volunteers will represent the community, government, and any special interests that might be involved in an issue or subject area.

The role of the group will be advisory. Members will be expected to bring their many perspectives about an issue or subject area to the table and be expected to discuss the issues that are raised from all points of view and collaborate, negotiate, and come to a consensus on the issues at hand. The ANSCAP will then make group recommendations to ANSA. Volunteers must remember that their role is advisory. ANSCAPs cannot issue directives and have no formal authority.

ANSA will benefit from the independent perspectives of the volunteers. ANSCAPs will give us a better understanding of community concerns, help us identify local issues and assist in ensuring we have all the information and materials we need to make productive decisions for African Nova Scotian communities.

ANSCAPs will also benefit African Nova Scotian communities. They will give communities a chance to discuss complex issues and future projects in an organized, productive way; give communities a forum for bringing their solutions to government; and offer a valuable opportunity for people with a keen interest or known expertise in the subject area to contribute to their communities.

## Section 1: African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership Overview –Who, When, What, Why and How

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### 1.1 Purpose

ANSA may establish and consult with an African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership for a range of purposes, including to:

#### Community Issues

- Provide feedback on issues affecting African Nova Scotians
- Identify issues, exchange information, determine solutions and develop recommendations for consideration by ANSA and government
- Provide advice on matters relating to planning, co-ordination, and leadership in the African Nova Scotian community and with community development

#### Programs / Policies

- Contribute to the development of policies and implementation plans
- Provide the opportunity for community to respond to local needs in a consistent and coordinated way, including advice on government programs, policies, or “acts”
- Identify and enhance government’s delivery of programs and services to African Nova Scotian communities
- Review and provide additions and/or alternatives to policy, programs and initiatives
- Promote the development of policy and improve community contact
- Get expert input in various areas
- Establish criteria for evaluating and reviewing government programs and projects relating to African Nova Scotians

#### Communication

- Provide a means for consultation, discussion, and collaboration
- Ensure and strengthen communication and information sharing in a specific area
- Provide and encourage opportunities for collaboration across and between community groups and governments

### 1.2 How ANSA will establish an African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership

ANSA will:

- Assign a name to the group
- establish terms of reference to guide the group’s work

- Establish its size and composition
- Invite potential members to an African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership who have specific expertise in area and can contribute to the group's purpose
- Specify appointment terms of up to two years
- Expand the scope of the group if necessary

### **1.3 Who we are looking for — Membership criteria**

ANSA is looking for members who have:

- A willingness to support ANSA's mandate
- Unique knowledge of the African Nova Scotian community
- Skills and experience in the particular sector or subject area

More specifically, we are looking for members who:

- Have experience in strategic planning and community development
- Have specific sector experience and knowledge, such as health, community development, youth, art and culture, to name a few
- Have the capacity to analyze, inform, and understand complex issues at a detailed level
- Can give the group regional and gender balance
- Can respond to emerging needs and take advantage of new opportunities

### **1.4 How we will choose volunteers – Invitation process**

ANSA will:

- Distribute a general call for applicants to specific organizations or individuals
- Provide information about the African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership - the name, terms of reference, required composition, and appointment terms
- Request that interested persons complete and submit an application by the specified deadline
- Review the submitted applications to ensure the membership criteria are met, as stated in section 1.3
- Make formal invitations to chosen applicants
- Ensure the collective mix of knowledge, skills, and abilities supports the group's terms of reference
- Make direct appointments when the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities or the right balance of personal, organizational, regional and gender representation have not been maintained

## 1.5 How the group will be structured

Each group will:

- Select a Chair through a nomination process, from within the group, by a majority vote
- Agree upon ground rules to address such things as how members will define and measure success, conduct meetings, communicate with each other, share information, and make decisions and recommendations (including procedure for missed meetings)
- Plan, together with ANSA, how they will maintain momentum and sustain their efforts to keep members involved over the length of their two-year term - celebrating successes and creating a sense of shared ownership and collective purpose
- Meet up to six times for face-to-face meetings over the two-year period
- Agree on the amount and frequency of informal interactions and exchanges
- Mutually agree upon member involvement in specific projects

Each member:

- Will be asked to commit to a two-year term
- May select a replacement from within the group to participate on their behalf when they are unable to attend a meeting or teleconference

ANSA will:

- Review membership each year to ensure the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities or the right balance of personal, organizational, regional and gender representation are maintained
- personal and organizational growth is represented and criteria is met (see Section 1.4)

## Section 2: Function of an African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership

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### 2.1 Role of the Chair

- The Chair of an African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership will provide updates on the group's activities and be responsible for planning and calling meetings, in collaboration with the ANSA Chief Executive Officer or designate. At the beginning of each fiscal year, the Chair will work with the CEO of ANSA or designate to develop a work plan that outlines the agendas and group priorities.
- The Chair and Chief Executive Officer or designate will try to ensure that agreement is reached on issues, barring this, the minutes will reflect the various points of view.

### 2.2 Role of the Recorder

- The Recorder will take minutes of all meetings.
- The Recorder will prepare and finalize minutes in collaboration with the Chief Executive Officer or designate before distributing to members.
- The minutes will record action items, the general discussion, and agreement reached on issues. Minutes will not detail specific members' names when discussion occurs. When consensus has not been reached, the minutes will reflect the various points of view.

### 2.3 Role of Members

- Members will attend each meeting fully prepared to discuss and participate in the agenda topics.
- Members will serve without remuneration, but will be reimbursed for appropriate travel expenses incurred in performing their duties
- A member who is absent for three consecutive meetings without providing reasonable cause to the Chair in advance of the meeting will be deemed to have resigned. (See Section 1.5 - Structure)
- Participants will respect the confidentiality of other members. While they are expected to discuss issues and possible solutions within their communities, they must not divulge specific information about the ANSCAP, its work as it develops, the content of meetings with others outside the group, personal information about its members, or information that may be considered confidential by the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, subject to the *Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act*.

### 2.4 Agendas

- Agendas will be circulated seven (7) days in advance of meetings. The first agenda item will be a review of the minutes and any materials from the previous meeting.

### 2.5 Meetings

- Each group will hold at least six meetings per two-year term, supplemented, as required, by conference calls at the discretion of the Chair or at the request of members, in consultation with the CEO or designate.

- Meeting will begin and end at a predetermined time
- Meetings will be conducted only when there are ½ plus 1 of the group's members present (quorum) within 15 minutes of the designated start time of the meeting.
- Decisions will be reached by consensus.
- Each group will stay within the budget approved by the CEO of ANSA.
- The meeting location and timing will be decided upon during the previous meeting.
- If possible, meetings will be held at a variety of locations around the province to share the burden of travel.
- Additional meetings or conference calls may be called by the Chair, as required, in consultation with the CEO or designate.

## **2.6 Minutes**

- Meeting minutes will be taken by the selected recorder, approved by the Chair and circulated to members within five working days of the meeting.
- The minutes will record action items, general discussion, and any agreement reached on issues but will not detail specific members' names when discussion occurs.

## **2.7 Amendments**

- ANSA may amend the Terms of Reference for any African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership as required.

## Section 3: Guiding Principles, Roles & Responsibilities

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### 3.1 Guiding Principles

African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnerships will:

- Operate within the policies and strategies of ANSA to ensure shared direction and priorities
- Use consensus as an approach to decision-making to promote group accountability and positive relationships
- Use a transparent process open to scrutiny
- Openly acknowledge areas where members have different perspectives and goals should they not be able to come to an agreement
- Respect confidentiality of individual group members

### 3.2 Role of ANSA

ANSA will:

- Pay the costs of meeting rooms and equipment rentals for group meetings and the cost conference calls
- Provide the leadership
- Determine how best to publicize issues and news related to the work of the African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership through newsletter, website updates, etc.
- Accept, amend, or reject recommendations made by the African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership
- Maintain the authority to remove a member of a group
- Maintain the authority to invite members to fill vacancies should vacancies arise and to represent other government departments, industry groups, expert committees, researchers, and user groups
- Provide clerical / administrative support for the African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership

### 3.3 Role of African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership Members

African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership members will:

- *Establish clear governing structures and ground rules* (as specified in Section 1.5) that define member roles and responsibilities
- *Set and abide by ground rules* that guide the group in its work

- *Be flexible.* Adopt an entrepreneurial mindset and adapt to changing conditions and resources
- *Enable all partners (members) to benefit* by drawing on strengths and contributions. Each African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership member brings with them different strengths, knowledge, and resources. Sensitivity to these attributes will cement the working relationship among partners and allow the partnership to draw on a broad range of resources and expertise.
- *Give group activities the necessary priority and attention.* Take responsibility for particular action items from the group's action plan. Be available.
- *Agree to work collectively* to fulfill all the purposes of the group, and work within its guiding principles, as outlined in section 3.1
- *Communicate with and gain feedback from the sector.* Ensure two-way feedback between the group and colleagues. The African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership will take opportunities to gather and communicate on the needs, perceptions or experiences of external organizations.
- *Report back* to their organization(s) on the activities and strategies of the African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnership
- *Develop and encourage relationships* with African Nova Scotian individuals and organizations
- *Possess the capacity to negotiate agreement* with others
- *Construct consensus statements,* as action statements
- *Establish indicators.* Targets must be challenging but achievable, with intervals between targets
- *Review and assess* the range of options available and make recommendations on implementation