

Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs

*Information
Update*

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NOVA SCOTIA
African Nova Scotian Affairs

A Letter from Barry Barnet, Minister Responsible for the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs



As Minister Responsible for the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, I thank you for the support you have afforded me and the staff of this Office. It has been a challenging task for two people (Wayn Hamilton and Evangeline Williams) to develop a fully functioning office from concept, to design, to reality in just over year - all while doing the day-to-day necessities of managing a busy office.

We've developed legislation which allows the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs to operate with a legal mandate and framework. We have also traveled throughout the province informing African Nova Scotian communities of our progress.

In the next few months we envision a fully developed and staffed Office, implementing the second phase of the operational strategic plan. Simply put, we plan to work in government, partnering with government departments and agencies. Working in government will also mean

“educating” government on the role of this Office. Another strategic goal is to work with the African Nova Scotian community, not only groups and organizations but also individuals.

I will continue to advocate, recommend and encourage my colleagues at every opportunity to work with this Office to ensure that we reach our full potential in providing equal access to services and opportunities for African Nova Scotians. I look forward to working with you as we move into the operational phase of the Office.

Wayn Hamilton shared an appropriate African proverb with me: “One hand cannot lift a calabash”. There is a lot of work to be done and we will need support from all stakeholders.

Sincerely,

The Honourable Barry Barnet

Mission Statement

Assist, support, and enhance the provincial government's delivery of services to African Nova Scotians and be a partner in developing innovative solutions that lead to self reliance and sustainable development for African Nova Scotians and their communities.

An Update from Wayn Hamilton

It has been more than a year since Evangeline Williams and I joined the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs. It has been a privilege, an honour, and at all times a unique experience, to create a fully operational government entity for African Nova Scotians.

In previous presentations, I mentioned that African Nova Scotians have advocated for full and equal government services and supports since the early 1700s. Since that time there have been successes that have come about through enormous effort and a total focus of “keeping your eye on the prize.” We have developed an operational plan that has taken its core concepts, strategies and frameworks from previous government, community reports and consultations on accessibility and delivery of government services, as well as issues facing African Nova Scotian communities.

We are building on the accomplishments achieved by other African Nova Scotian individuals and organizations. We realize that there is a tremendous amount of work to be done in order to take this Office from its infancy to a viable government entity. We are committed to the task and excited over the endless possibilities.

Realizing the challenges will not deter us from forging ahead, we will keep our “eye on the prize” which is accessible and equal government services and opportunities for all African Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,



Wayn Hamilton
Interim Executive Director

Mandate

- To create and promote an integrated approach within government on matters related to the African Nova Scotian communities in the province.
- To represent the interests of the province in intergovernmental initiatives and negotiations on matters integral to the interests of African Nova Scotians.
- To provide research analysis and policy advice on African Nova Scotian issues.
- To develop communication strategies and public education to increase understanding within the Office of African Nova Scotian culture, heritage, and community issues.

Accomplishments

- Developed Legislation which officially establishes this Office and allows us to operate under a legal mandate and framework
- Developed strategic operational plan for the Office
- Presented more than 40 Information Sessions to African Nova Scotian Communities
- Final stages of securing space for a permanent Head Office location
- Final stages of hiring permanent staff for the Head Office
- Facilitated key presentations to Cabinet, Communications Nova Scotia, and the African United Baptist Association
- Active participation on 7 interdepartmental committees/task groups

The Road Ahead

- Coordinating a provincial summit “Black Family Meeting”
- Developing a website
- Producing a newsletter
- Establishing a Toll Free telephone number
- Establishing regional offices
- Communicating with federal agencies
- Developing interdepartmental initiatives with the departments of Justice, Health, Health Promotion, Tourism Culture and Heritage, and Community Services
- Providing community Information Sessions