

Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs

Business Plan

2005-06

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Message from the Minister and Interim Executive Director

The creation of the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (OANSA) demonstrates government's commitment to the well-being of African Nova Scotians. This commitment will be met through the establishment of culturally competent services and initiatives that effectively meet the unique needs of African Nova Scotian communities.

The Office's mission is to 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.

Its mandate is to create and promote an integrated approach within government on matters related to 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; and to develop communication strategies and public education initiatives to increase understanding within the province around African Nova Scotian culture, heritage, and community issues.

The Office's strategic initiatives include to relocate to permanent office space by spring 2005 and complete the first phase of the staffing plan; to launch communications initiatives including the newsletter, website and toll free number; to deliver information sessions to government and community organizations; to develop information strategies for communities about government and around communication protocols; to coordinate and facilitate forums with African Nova Scotians to gather information for government when it is developing policy; to organize a provincial summit to bring together African Nova Scotian communities for networking purposes; and to initiate the process of establishing the first of four satellite offices to be put in place by 2009.

Long term goals include exploring partnerships with the departments of Education; Justice; Tourism, Heritage & Culture; and agencies, boards and commissions. This includes researching and highlighting gaps in services delivery and identifying which department(s) should take lead action.

Honourable Barry Barnet,
Minister

Wayn Hamilton
Interim Executive Director

Mission / Mandate

Mission

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

Mandate

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

Planning Context

The desire to create a ministerial portfolio and the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs is the result of two specific developments. The first was government's response to a document entitled *Final Report on Consultations with the African Nova Scotian Community 2001*, by Dr. Wanda Thomas-Bernard and Dr. Fred Wein. The second was to acknowledge the long-standing reality that the pressing needs and issues of importance to African Nova Scotians have not been fully addressed or resolved.

According to the 2001 Statistic Canada Survey, there are 19,670 African Nova Scotians in the province. This figure is disputed by many groups, organizations and community leaders in African Nova Scotian communities. They believe the definition for African Nova Scotians should include all individuals from first migrants to this province (Matthew Da Costa circa 1604) to recent newcomers from the African Diaspora. If this definition was used, they argue that the number of African Nova Scotians would be higher.

There are said to be 48 African Nova Scotian communities in Nova Scotia. The diversity in these communities can be found in many aspects (e.g., urban, rural, community population, access to resources). Over the last four decades the population base of these communities have suffered from out-migration to larger communities, to metro Halifax, or to locations outside Nova Scotia. There is also a higher unemployment rate for African Nova Scotians when compared to the general population figures.

Previous documents dating back to early African Nova Scotian settlers had identified numerous concerns raised by African Nova Scotians to government. Past and present issues such as housing, employment, education, community development, and access to resources have not been adequately addressed for Nova Scotians of African descent.

African Nova Scotian communities have not always had the benefit of equitable access to health services (Enang 2001), education (BLAC Report 1994) or the justice system (Marshall Report 1999). Many African Nova Scotian communities have not been able to maintain their community halls/centres and struggle to provide a range of activities for adolescents, youth, seniors and families. Some of the community cohesion is not as strong and vibrant as in previous times.

Within government, there are a few African Nova Scotian civil servants in managerial positions. Only 2.23% of public sector employees are African Nova Scotians. There are a high number of 'term' positions and a tendency for African Nova Scotian civil servants to move horizontally in organizational structures rather than vertically.

There have been numerous reports, submissions and recommendations all attempting to define the problems, provide solutions or establish corrective measures. In the past, government's

accountability and resources for specific initiatives have not been consistent. However, there have been two province wide initiatives that have resulted in positive government and community partnerships.

One successful government initiative to the community's need was the creation of the Black Business Initiative (BBI). The BBI was seen as a response to the growth of entrepreneurialism and small business development among African Nova Scotian communities. BBI is a provincewide business development initiative committed to fostering the growth of businesses owned by members of the Nova Scotia Black community. BBI also places priority on educating Black business owners in the operation of their business - from marketing to budgeting to securing funding.

Another is the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE). CACE is a provincial advisory council with a mandate to provide advice and guidance to the Minister of Education with respect to the development, implementation, evaluation, and funding of educational programs and services for African Nova Scotian learners. There is also the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD), a full Division within the Department of Education that acquires adequate resources to respond significantly in redressing the educational needs of African Canadian students, parents, and adult learners. ACSD responds effectively on issues such as accessibility, achievement, and curriculum development.

However, no other government initiatives specifically targeting the needs of African Nova Scotian communities are in place and African Nova Scotians are virtually absent from government affiliated volunteer agencies, boards or commissions.

It is against this backdrop that the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs was created.

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs was officially brought into existence by Order In Council (2005-26) dated January 27, 2005 which stated... "Order and declare by proclamation that Chapter 45 of the Acts of 2004, *An Act to Amend Chapter 376 of the Revised Statutes, 1989, the Public Service Act, to Establish the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs*, come into force on January 27, 2005".

The creation of the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs (OANSA) indicates government's commitment to the well being of African Nova Scotians. The demonstration of this commitment will be delivered through the establishment of culturally competent services and initiatives that effectively meet the unique needs of African Nova Scotian communities. The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs will have the opportunity to act as a broker to other government agencies and to the community. The Office will also serve as an advocate for cross-cultural understanding and a conduit through which Nova Scotians of African descent can reach their full potential in an equitable and inclusive society.

Synopsis of SWOT Analysis:

It should be noted that the legislative mandate for the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs legitimizes government's intention to address the issues facing the African Nova Scotian community. There is also the community's willingness to engage in collaborative partnerships and substantial community interest in the affairs of this Office.

However, the current level of staffing of the Office of Nova Scotian Affairs restricts the number of initiatives it can deliver. As well, attempting to maintain and respond to issues, and or assist in the delivery of government initiatives for the 48 African Nova Scotian communities across the province will be a challenge. It should be noted that the Office is a new entity and, therefore, some government departments and agencies have yet to establish a relationship with us.

The Office will use innovative, collaborative and partnership strategies to work across government departments and agencies. We recognize that the community is looking for government leadership and involvement, therefore, the opportunity to assist in developing a more focused ANS community consensus on government initiatives or community responses to issues / concerns will be pursued.

The Office will also develop Primary Reference Groups (PRG) to draw on specialized knowledge and experience within the African Nova Scotian community that will complement the knowledge and skills of staff. We expect PRGs to strengthen the delivery of services to African Nova Scotians by helping us understand local concerns and by drawing on the skills and expertise of community leaders throughout the province.

The Office will need to respond in a positive way to individuals in various community organizations making demands beyond the capacity of the Office. The Office will also need to address developments which may negate the development of "group consensus" within the ANS community.

Strategic Goals

1. To facilitate and support an integrated approach within government on matters related to African Nova Scotian issues and provide corporate policy, strategic advice and support to departments in order to build a sustainable framework for African Nova Scotian government relations.
2. To work collaboratively with the African Nova Scotian Community to foster development and capacity building.
3. To enhance awareness and understanding of African Nova Scotian experiences to government.

Core Business Areas

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs will carry out its responsibilities through the following four core business areas:

1. African Nova Scotians and Interdepartmental Relations

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs will:

- I work with African Nova Scotian communities and government departments, agencies and organizations to support African Nova Scotian initiatives,
- ii develop strategies to improve services,
- iii build and maintain a sustainable framework for African Nova Scotian government relations.

2. Negotiations and Related Discussions

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs is responsible for coordinating input into other provincial government departments/agencies on matters pertaining to African Nova Scotians.

3. Community Outreach

The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs supports and promotes efforts at the community level that enhance the well-being and quality of life for African Nova Scotians.

4. Communication, Public Education, and Awareness

- I The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs assists in the communication of issues and concerns of African Nova Scotians to government.
- ii The Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs, using strategic communication and public education tools, is the mechanism through which government communicates with African Nova Scotians to increase awareness of government initiatives.

Priorities

Strategic Plan Matrix / Priorities for 2005-06

Strategic Goal: To facilitate and support an integrated approach within government on matters related to African Nova Scotian issues. This also includes providing corporate policy, strategic advice and support to departments in order to build a sustainable framework for African Nova Scotian government relations.

Core Business Area: Negotiations and Related Discussions

Objective	Indicators of Goal Achievement	Target
Increase parent/community involvement in the educational process	Positive parenting workshops in the province	8 sessions
Improve capacity for policy decisions for services to African Nova Scotians	Number and quality of analysis and reports	Specific action plan for service to African Nova Scotians
Increase community awareness of Public Service Commission to African Nova Scotians	Number and quality community presentations	10 community presentations
Improve government policy for health and health service delivery for the African Nova Scotian population	Data collection on health/health service delivery	Specific action plan
Development of a provincial African Nova Scotian youth and justice initiative	Research various youth restorative justice models	2 pilot projects established

Strategic Plan Matrix / Priorities for 2005-06

Strategic Goal: To work collaboratively within the African Nova Scotian Community to foster community development and capacity building.

Core Business Area: Community Outreach
 Communication, Public Education & Awareness

Objective	Indicators of Goal Achievement	Target
Encourage African Nova Scotians to become involved in government Agencies, Boards and Commissions	Number of information sessions on involvement	15 community information sessions
Increase communication with African Nova Scotians	Production of newsletter	4 issues produced
	Production of Web site	300 hits or more
Improve partnerships with African Nova Scotian key stakeholder groups	Number of Primary Reference Groups established	6 Primary Reference Groups established

Strategic Plan Matrix / Priorities for 2005-06

Strategic Goal: To enhance awareness and understanding of African Nova Scotian experiences in Nova Scotia, to government.

Core Business Area: Interdepartmental Relations

Objective	Indicators of Goal Achievement	Target
Improve departmental understanding of African Nova Scotian issues	<p>Number of presentations to departments</p> <p>Attend interdepartmental meetings</p> <p>Government usage of African Nova Scotian web site/newsletter</p>	<p>Presentations to every department</p> <p>60% attendance at all scheduled meetings</p> <p>Number of web site hits from government</p>
Increase profile of the Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs with federal government	Number and quality of meetings	Specific action plan

Budget Context

Office of African Nova Scotian Affairs – <i>Estimated Budget Expenditures</i>			
	2004-2005 Estimate	2004-2005 Forecast	2005-2006 Estimate
	\$ Thousands	\$ Thousands	\$ Thousands
Total Program Expenses – Gross current	428.0	327.0	641.0
Net Program Expenses – Net of recoveries	428.0	327.0	641.0
Salaries and Benefits	245.0	146.0	361.0
Funded Staff	3.0	2.0	6.0