



# Accountability Report 2020–21

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Municipal Affairs and Housing

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Accountability Report 2020–2021

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## Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the year ended March 31, 2021 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the department's Statement of Mandate for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the department's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by department management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing 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 Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing Nova Scotia's 2020–2021 Business Plan(s).

"Original signed by"

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Hon. John Lohr  
Minister

"Original signed by"

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Paul LaFleche  
Deputy Minister

## Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to present the Accountability Report for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing for fiscal year 2020-2021. This report highlights results and progress in meeting the priorities outlined in the department's business plan.

It is important to note that in February 2021, the responsibility for Housing was transferred to the newly created Department of Infrastructure and Housing, with Municipal Affairs becoming the Department of Municipal Affairs. The responsibility of Housing was then transferred back to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing on August 31, 2021.

Moreover, on April 1, 2021, responsibility for the Regional Enterprise Network program moved from the Department of Municipal Affairs to the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth.

The mandate of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing was to promote responsible local government and support safe, sustainable, and inclusive communities – priorities that directly benefit Nova Scotians. To effectively contribute to strong and diverse economies, high quality of life, and affordable, adequate, and suitable housing for all, our department depended on the strength of our partnerships with stakeholders – from municipalities and the federal government to community agencies. We thank them for their work with us and their commitment to making life better for Nova Scotians.

In 2020-2021, the department provided PPE to Emergency First Response Groups through the Office of the Fire Marshal: which celebrates its 100 years of dedicated service to the fire and life safety of Nova Scotians this year. We also capped rental increases to a maximum of 2% during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, helped reduce flood risk and community vulnerability resulting from climate change, enhanced community spaces, offered a new low-interest municipal loan program to help municipalities with COVID-19 related losses, and launched the Canada-Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit to provide direct funding support to hundreds of low-income households across the province.

The Department committed funding for the construction of 203 new affordable housing units across the province. As well, an additional \$2 million was added for the low-income home repair and adaptation program, which helps low-income Nova Scotians stay in their homes by supporting the completion of structural repairs and accessibility adaptations. The Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission was also created to engage with experts and stakeholders across the province to hear about the current state of

affordable housing and propose meaningful solutions to build on commitments made under the National Housing Strategy.

The Department also updated legislation to empower local governments and encourage municipal modernization. These amendments support local governments and businesses in becoming more accessible, support Nova Scotia’s goal of becoming barrier-free by 2030, as well as allow municipalities and villages to hold virtual meetings, and improve codes of conduct for municipalities and village commissions.

We were pleased to assist with last fall’s Municipal Elections and to provide virtual training for new councillors on a range of topics relating to governance, roles and responsibilities, and financial condition indicators. Nearly 250 people participated over a 3-day period.

Our EMO – 911 Division worked with municipalities on updates to civic addressing and mapping, promoting 911 awareness, and in collaboration with our partners, Next Generation 911 (NG911) testing, where development continues.

We would like to extend our deepest thanks to the staff of the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, who work tirelessly to help build healthy, safe, and inclusive communities for all Nova Scotians.

Sincerely,

“Original signed by”

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Hon. John Lohr  
Minister

“Original signed by”

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Paul LaFleche  
Deputy Minister

## Financial Results

	2020-2021 Estimate	2020-2021 Actuals	2020- 2021 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
<b>Departmental Expenses:</b>			
Senior Management	980	1,005	25
Housing Authorities	31,323	38,912	7,589
Corporate Services, Policy & Innovation	2,584	2,309	(275)
Projects and Strategic Planning	314	257	(57)
Homelessness and Shelters	10,902	11,858	956
Housing and Municipal Sustainability	249,724	297,696	47,972
Housing Loan Administration and Finance	2,351	2,376	25
Emergency Management Office	10,335	9,242	(1,093)
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>308,513</b>	<b>363,655</b>	<b>55,142</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenue	5	4	(1)
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	127,559	122,079	(5,480)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>127,564</b>	<b>122,083</b>	<b>(5,481)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	<b>476</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>(208)</b>
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	<b>182.0</b>	<b>149.7</b>	<b>(32.3)</b>
<b><u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u></b>			
<p>The Department of Municipal Affairs expenditures were \$55.1 million or 17.9 percent higher than estimate primarily due to \$67.5 million made available through the municipal stream of the Federal Safe Restart Program due to COVID-19. This increase is partially offset by \$6.3 million in Invest Canada Infrastructure Program and \$5.0 million in New Build Canada Fund due to project delays and \$1.1 million vacancy and operational savings.</p>			
<b><u>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u></b>			
<p>The Department of Municipal Affairs recoveries were \$5.5 million or 4.3 percent lower than estimate due primarily to lower recoveries of \$2.8 million Investing in Canada Program due to project delays, \$1.6 million Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement, \$1.0 million E911 Recovery Fund and \$100 thousand in net other recoveries.</p>			

**TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing Tangible Capital Asset purchase requirements were \$208 thousand lower than estimate due to delays in the Municipal Affairs asset tracking project and Emergency Management Office Vehicle Procurement.

**Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

Delays in filling vacancies account for lower than expected (32.3) FTE's.



## Measuring our Performance

### Statement of Mandate:

In 2017, the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs and the Minister responsible for Housing Nova Scotia (at the time, the Minister for Department of Community Services) received the following highlighted items in their mandate letters:

- Further reduce the waitlist for affordable housing by 30% over three years, beginning in 2018.
- Help first time home buyer by creating a down payment assistance program.
- Partner with groups like Bryony House, the Mi'Kmaq Native Friendship Centre, Chrysalis House and Autumn House on new facilities.
- Create innovative approaches to regional economic development such as updating and improving the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) model.
- Work to build on the current strength of relationship with the municipalities and encourage municipal modernization.
- Work with municipalities and Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on phase two of the federal infrastructure funding programs to support municipalities in leveraging federal investments.
- Create a beautification and streetscaping program.
- Create a Community Works program.

In order to advance these mandate items, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) continued to promote responsible local government and safe, sustainable, inclusive communities. Through working with municipalities and other partners, DMAH contributed to strong and diverse economics, high quality of life, and affordable, adequate, and suitable housing for all.

The mandate of DMAH was implemented through the following divisions/offices:

1. Corporate Policy and Innovation
2. Emergency Management Office
3. Housing Nova Scotia
4. Municipal Sustainability

### Government Strategic Goals

The Government of Nova Scotia has four strategic goals:

1. Inclusive Economic Growth
2. Quality Education
3. Healthy Population and System
4. Safe and Connected Communities

DMAH contributed to these goals by providing affordable housing, supporting Regional Enterprise Networks, and partnering with municipalities to build and maintain community infrastructure and develop and deliver emergency management services.

#### Core Business Functions/Areas:

DMAH delivered on the Minister's mandate through three core business areas: Emergency Management Office, Housing Nova Scotia, and Municipal Sustainability. Through these core business areas, DMAH built relationships with key community stakeholders, delivered programs, and provided advice around emerging issues in local government and housing across Nova Scotia.

#### Overview:

The Honourable Iain Rankin was sworn in as the 29<sup>th</sup> Premier of Nova Scotia on February 23, 2021. Following a Cabinet shuffle on the same day, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal were altered to create the following departments: The Department of Municipal Affairs; the Department of Infrastructure and Housing; and the Department of Transportation and Active Transit. The Honourable Brendan Maguire was sworn in as the Minister of the Department of Municipal Affairs. Justin Huston was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs.

The Honourable Geoff MacLellan was sworn in as the Minister of Infrastructure and Housing. Eiryn Devereaux was appointed as the Deputy Minister for the Department of Infrastructure and Housing. The Honourable Chuck Porter was sworn in as the Minister of Lands and Forestry and Energy and Mines.

Following the 41<sup>st</sup> Provincial General Election, the Honourable Tim Houston was sworn in as the 30<sup>th</sup> Premier of Nova Scotia on August 31, 2021. The Honourable John Lohr was sworn in as the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Paul LaFleche was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

On April 1, 2021, responsibility for the Regional Enterprise Network (REN) program was moved from the Department of Municipal Affairs to the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth, now known as the Department of Economic Development. The Department of Economic Development aligns government efforts behind a common agenda to support the conditions in which businesses can thrive and where all Nova Scotians can participate and benefit.

## Overview of Departmental Response to COVID-19

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DMAH supported communities, housing clients, and vulnerable Nova Scotians who were adversely impacted through the following contributions and accomplishments:

- In cooperation with the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and Elections Nova Scotia, DMAH prepared safe election guidelines to assist municipalities in administering their elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlights include:
  - Voter turnout increased significantly from 2016 to 2020. The province-wide voting average was 52.8% in 2020, compared to 46.5% in 2016.
  - Several municipalities successfully used e-voting systems for the first time. 39 municipalities used some form of e-voting in 2020; 23 municipalities used some form of e-voting in 2016.
- Following the municipal elections, DMAH offered virtual training sessions for newly elected councillors. For the first time ever, the councillor training sessions were hosted virtually on the Zoom platform, allowing DMAH to offer training to larger audiences. Nearly 250 people participated in the training sessions.
- Municipalities received \$67.5M in COVID-19 relief funding through the Safe Restart Program.
- DMAH created a low-interest \$380M municipal loan program through the Municipal Finance Corporation to assist municipalities with financial losses related to COVID-19.
- DMAH administered the Emergency Services Provider Fund (ESPF) on behalf of the Province. The budget for 2020-2021 was increased to \$1M to support the purchase of equipment, including a new equipment category for emergency power supply for emergency first responders. In 2020-2021 government decided to approve additional funding, for all eligible applicants, DMAH staff processed 74 applications for a total of \$1.25M in grant funding.
- DMAH delivered \$0.6M in funding for 50 community projects across the province through the Beautification & Streetscaping Program.
- Capped rental increases were introduced to a maximum of 2% annually until the State of Emergency is lifted or February 2022, whichever comes sooner. These caps were retroactive to September 2020.
- HNS provided a Loan payment deferral option for low-income homeowners and non-profit housing operators between April and June 2020.
- The Canada – Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit (CNSTHB) was launched in October 2020 and provides funding directly to people in need so they can choose their own housing. The CNSTHB was added to the suite of programs and services Housing Nova Scotia provides to support eligible low-income homeowners and renters.

- Housing clients did not see an increase in public housing rent levels or a reduction in rent supplement benefits as a result of receiving CERB.
- HNS increased expenditures by \$7.2M in 2020-21 for supplies, staff and cleaning services in units owned and operated by HNS.
- HNS committed to provide a \$1.82M capital contribution for 3 projects and 52 units funded via HRM under the federal Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI). The new RHI units will address the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians, especially in the context of COVID-19, through the rapid construction of affordable housing. The Government of Canada provided \$8.7M to HRM to support capital costs for these 3 projects during the first round of funding.

#### Outcomes for 2020-2021:

After having separate business plans for fiscal year 2019-20, DMAH integrated their business plan in 2020-2021. Based on the DMAH Business Plan for 2020-2021, the following outcomes were identified:

#### Emergency Management Office

##### Outcomes

- The safety of Nova Scotians is enhanced through the coordination and collaboration of all stakeholders in the prevention and mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery from emergencies.
- Nova Scotians have access to high quality and reliable 911 Service.

#### Housing Nova Scotia:

##### Outcomes

- Advance Government Strategic Goal: *Safe Connected Communities – Affordable Housing*.
- Reduce the public housing waiting list.
- Ensure long-term sustainability of community housing (government, coop, and not-for-profit).
- Ensure the most vulnerable populations are served.
- Increase supply of affordable housing.
- Leverage external (federal) funding.
- Achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness.

## Municipal Sustainability Division

### Outcomes

- Sustainable communities with diversified economies.
- A legislative and regulatory framework necessary to build and maintain healthy and vibrant municipalities.
- Municipalities are provided with the appropriate resources and advice to support financial capacity-building and provide effective local governance.
- Municipalities are easily able to leverage funding to support innovative projects and ongoing municipal infrastructure needs.

The goals and accomplishments for the outcomes noted above are as follows:

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### Emergency Management Office:

The Emergency Management Office (EMO) administers a province-wide EMO operational program, including collaboration and support of Municipal emergency management capacity, Provincial 911 Service, Ground Search and Rescue, and the Disaster Financial Assistance Program. The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) collaborates municipally, provincially, and federally to advise on building and fire safety issues and provides government departments, municipalities, and the public with effective approaches for building fire safety in Nova Scotia.

### **Goals**

- Support municipalities in reviewing and updating their Emergency Management Plans.
- Partner with Public Safety Canada and other related stakeholders to continue to facilitate Critical Infrastructure emergency planning and resiliency.
- Continue planning and development related to the deployments of Next Generation 911.
- Work with private and public partners to identify gaps in cellular service coverage and promote extension of the existing cellular network.
- Continue to work with provincial and municipal partners to support their efforts in achieving building and fire safety.
- Continue to support provincial fire services, including the ongoing administration of the Emergency Services Provider Fund.
- Support the work of the Joint Municipal Fire Services Committee.

## Accomplishments:

- Nova Scotia Emergency Management Operations (NSEMO) staff will continue to work closely with municipalities to build knowledge and skills that will create more resilient communities across Nova Scotia. Despite the many challenges of COVID-19, NSEMO Incident Management Director's (IMD) Operation Team continued to work with and support municipalities. Some of the activities included:
  - Maintaining relationships with Emergency Management Coordinators, Chief Administrative Officers and Elected officials.
  - Weekly and sometimes daily teleconference and web meetings to help support and guide municipalities through COVID-19.
  - Working with municipalities to establish critical personal protective equipment needs and coordinated the ordering and delivery of required materials.
  - Facilitating hundreds of daytime and after-hours enquiries from municipal, provincial, and federal partners related to COVID-19 restrictions, travel exemptions/exceptions, and other best practices.
  - Assisting municipalities on strengthening municipal emergency management and business continuity plans to better support their response efforts specific to COVID-19.
  - Developing and delivering Basic Emergency Management courses for municipal staff.
  - Delivering Emergency Management training to all municipal elected officials.
  - Conducting municipal emergency management program evaluations with all municipalities.
  - Supporting plan revisions and improvements on an ongoing basis with municipalities and key municipal stakeholders.
  - Assisting in municipal risk assessments with municipalities and their stakeholders.
  - Conducting virtual table-top exercises with municipalities to validate risk assessments and emergency management plans.
- NSEMO continues to work with its partners at the Federal-Provincial-Territorial table to share information, maximize learning opportunities, and building dynamic relationships. Despite the many challenges of COVID-19, NSEMO IMD's critical infrastructure program continued to mature and strengthen partnerships in 2020-2021. Some of the activities included:
  - Frequent meetings with Public Safety Canada's Critical Infrastructure Cross-Sector Network and Critical Infrastructure Working Group to identify and address issues across all sectors.

- Teleconference and online meetings/briefings and a weekly COVID-19 newsletter shared with a network of over 100 provincial CI stakeholders.
- Facilitating hundreds of enquiries from federal, provincial, and private sector partners related to COVID-19 restrictions, travel exemptions/exceptions, and other best practices.
- Formalizing the critical infrastructure program's support of partners during Hurricane Teddy and winter 2021 storm emergency responses.
- Planning a cross-sector tabletop exercise on the Canso Causeway throughout Winter 2021, and successfully holding the event in May.
- A Project Manager has been selected to work with EMO-911 Division staff for implementing the Next Generation 911 roadmap. Next Generation 911 voice trials are being conducted in the 911 test lab.
- Develop NS is in the process of assuming leadership over work to identify gaps in cellular service coverage and promote extension of the existing cellular network. This work aligns well with their initiative to deliver internet connections to rural Nova Scotians.
- OFM staff provided expertise and guidance to provincial and municipal partners on codes, code interpretation and issues that arose through inspections. The OFM supported ongoing training for our Municipal Fire and Building Officials across the Province. The OFM also played an important role in a number of Provincial priorities, which included supporting the Accessibility Advisory Board as Nova Scotia moves towards an accessible province by 2030. The OFM also supported Health & Wellness, Transportation & Infrastructure Renewal and Nova Scotia Lands with building code interpretations, building plan reviews, and inspection services on the generational investment in our health care infrastructure.
- The OFM continues to provide support to the provincial fire services through its work with the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia (FSANS) and individual Fire Departments across the province. The OFM supports training initiatives through FSANS for fire fighters, by providing training to individual Fire Departments on the requirements for Local Assistants and fire extinguisher training. Deputy Fire Marshals across the province provide advice to fire departments as they complete initial investigations of fires, provide fire investigation services on more complicated fires, suspected arson cases and/or fatal fires.
- The OFM, along with Strategic Policy & Planning and the Municipal Sustainability Division, continue to support the ongoing work of the Municipal Fire Services Committee. OFM provides advice on levels of service, as well as accountability to municipalities and their local fire services. OFM supports the work of the committee by issuing information bulletins to municipalities and local fire services.

## Housing Nova Scotia:

Housing Nova Scotia (HNS) develops, delivers, and administers housing programs across the housing spectrum in Nova Scotia. This includes operation of provincially owned social housing rental properties and administration of rent supplements through Regional Housing Authorities; repair and renewal of the provincially owned social housing portfolio; delivery of capital contribution programs to support rental housing preservation and expansion; programs to support low-income homeowners and first-time home buyers; and programs to support households or individuals at-risk of homelessness.

### **Goals: 3-Year Action Plan Items**

- Working with stakeholders and partners to build capacity in Nova Scotia's community housing sector.
- Strengthening, modernizing, and delivering programs across the housing spectrum to ensure they are responsive to need, and aligned with deliverables under the new 10-year bi-lateral Housing Agreement with CMHC.
- Completing a Rental Market Study to inform next steps on targeting partnerships for affordable housing development.
- Advance initiatives to increase access to and the supply of affordable housing such as introducing new community-housing rent supplements and advancing new provincial programs that contribute to new affordable housing developments and preservation of existing Social Housing.
- Investing in capital upgrades through Public Housing Renewal projects.
- Leverage federal funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) to improve energy efficiency within provincially owned social housing properties.

### **Goals: Items to Advance the Province's Long-Range Housing Outcomes**

- Implementing the Integrated Plan to address Homelessness.
- Working with the Advisory group to develop an Accessibility Plan as a designated body.
- Developing a long-term strategy to ensure greater financial predictability and suitability of public housing assets, for the greatest number of Nova Scotians.
- Deliver on year three of the Provincial rent supplement commitment to introduce 1500 new rent supplements by 2020-2021.

### **Accomplishments: 3-Year Action Items**

- 33 organizations will benefit from over \$0.90M committed through the Community Housing Capacity Building Program (CHCBP) to increase capacity and support



future growth and transformation of the sector. Funded initiatives include business plan creation, building condition assessments, governance structure and operational reviews.

- \$4.06M was committed for major infrastructure repair projects to be undertaken in partnership with 9 co-operative housing organizations on a total of 177 units through the Community Housing Infrastructure Repair Program (CHIRP).
- At least 17 units owned and operated by the Tawaak Housing Association will be repaired to good condition through a commitment of \$1.76M. This will bring the total commitment to date (between 2019/20 – 202/21) for repair of units owned and operated by Tawaak Housing, dedicated for Indigenous households, to 23 with a total funding commitment of \$5.43M to date.
- HNS completed a province-wide Housing Supply and Demand study in partnership with the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth.
- Government established the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission (NSAHC) in November 2020 to examine the current state of rental housing in the province and make recommendations on sustainable and actionable solutions. The NSAHC was comprised of 17 individuals representing provincial government, municipalities, private sector, non-profits and communities of interest. The Commission's mandate involved consultation with the public, stakeholders and experts regarding ways to increase the supply of and access to affordable housing in Nova Scotia. More than 2000 stakeholders provided input regarding initiatives to increase access to and the supply of affordable housing, including the addition of new rent supplements and creation of new provincial programs to increase the supply of affordable housing and preserve existing social housing. This input provided the NSAHC with a better understanding of housing needs facing Nova Scotians and led to the development of 17 recommendations which will be accepted by government. The input received through the consultation process will also help inform the development of the second 3-year Action Plan under the National Housing Strategy.
- Between October 2020 and March 2021, 1,755 households were approved for the new Canada Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit (CNSTHB) to help reduce their housing need.
- 109 new affordable rental units will be constructed through a commitment of \$5.7M in capital contributions under the Affordable Housing Contribution Fund Program (AHCFF). The AHCFF program supplements funding received by housing providers through the CMHC National Housing Co-Investment Fund to support the expansion of affordable rental housing across the province.
- HNS developed a new Community Housing Rent Supplement Program that provides eligible community housing organizations expanding affordable housing

supply with funding to make units affordable for low-income tenants in housing need. The new program will be launched in 2021-22.

- HNS committed \$2.08M in capital contributions through the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) to support construction in the coming years of 42 new affordable rental units. This program provides capital contributions to housing developers to support the development of new affordable rental housing in communities across the province.
- HNS committed \$1.68M in funding through the Rental Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (Rental RRAP), to repair 83 affordable private sector rental units. Rental RRAP provides financial support to landlords to assist in upgrading the condition of existing self-contained units to preserve rental affordability for low-income tenants.
- 1,833 low-income homeowners received assistance through the Homeowner Repair and Adaptation Program. This program helps Nova Scotians stay in their homes by supporting the completion of structural repairs and accessibility adaptations.
- 136 households received assistance through the Down Payment Assistance Program (DPAP). This program assists Nova Scotians with modest incomes who pre-qualify for an insured mortgage to purchase their first home.
- HNS invested \$16.9M through the Public Housing Capital Asset Management Program to support the repair and renewal of public housing building systems and major components. An additional \$1.2M was invested to renovate 45 existing public housing units to accessible standards as part of the Public Housing Accessibility Improvements Program. Of these, 10 will be barrier-free.
- Of the investments in the Capital Asset Management Program, \$6.12M was leveraged to undertake 52 greening projects, including 4 to Net Zero, to reduce energy consumption.
- In 2020/21 the department committed funding for the construction of 203 new affordable housing units across the province. There were also project cancellations related to 3 construction projects approved in prior years that involve 101 units.

#### **Accomplishments: Items to advance the Province's Long-Range Housing Outcomes**

- 41 Housing First Rent Supplements were allocated to support vulnerable households that are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- HNS will be prescribed as a public sector body under the Accessibility Act effective April 1, 2022. HNS will have one year from that date to form an Accessibility Advisory Committee and develop an accessibility plan. In 2020/21, groundwork was laid on the development of an Accessibility Advisory Committee. This work will continue into 2021/22 as HNS begins to recruit members for the committee

and launches public consultations on its accessibility plan in accordance with the Act.

- In 2020-2021, a commitment was made for 18 units in relation to the Public Housing Transformation program. This commitment will see renewal and expansion of the property, as well as transfer of the provincially owned assets to a not-for-profit housing provider who will maintain the existing units as Social Housing. The project will grow the community housing sector and contribute to a reduction to the provincial operating losses of public housing.
- In 2020-2021, 216 new rent supplements were allocated under the 2018 Government platform commitment to implement up to 1,500 new rent supplements over three years. In total, to date (2018-2019 -2020-2021), 1,175 of these rent supplements have been allocated. The remaining 325 rent supplements will be allocated in the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Overall, more than 3,000 rent supplements are currently in use across the province.

#### Municipal Sustainability Division:

The Municipal Sustainability Division (MSD) provides advice, assistance, and training in areas of municipal administration, financial management, and land use planning. MSD partners with municipalities and provides governance leadership on complex municipal issues. MSD negotiates, administers, provides project advice on federal and provincial infrastructure funding programs, and plays a key role in maintaining the province's relationships with municipalities and villages in Nova Scotia.

#### Goals:

- Continue to work with the RENs to focus mandates and support increased operational effectiveness.
- In collaboration with the Joint Municipal/Provincial Roundtable, continue to focus on the Partnership Framework deliverables; respond to annual NSFM resolutions; and coordinate policy priorities with the NSFM, DMA, and other provincial departments to ensure joint priorities are being addressed.
- Review the Municipal Financial Capacity Grant (MFCG).
- Encourage municipal regional collaboration in the area of land use planning, economic development, and infrastructure investment, and provide funding for regional initiatives through the Municipal Innovation Program.
- Support municipalities voluntarily engaging in restructure and consolidation conversation with neighbouring municipalities.
- Support municipalities in addressing impacts of climate change through climate adaptation infrastructure.
- Assist municipalities with the implementation of minimum planning requirements.
- Complete the development of a municipal planning flood line mapping standard for the province.

- Continue the delivery and administration of infrastructure funding programs and work in collaboration with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on the new Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program.
- Continue to work with our municipalities to create standardized tools and resources to advance asset management planning in Nova Scotia.
- Provide in-depth analysis on property assessment in support of various Department initiatives.
- Continue to develop and improve financial tools used to enhance municipal capacity (examples: development of a risk management program, enhancements to financial analysis and dashboard tool, changes to Financial Reporting and Accounting Manual (FRAM) to reflect upcoming Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB) changes).

#### **Accomplishments:**

- MSD revised and renewed the Province's Contribution Agreement with each REN for fiscal year 2020-2021 to ensure that the agreement continues to align with the goals of the REN program. The revised Contribution Agreement will improve administrative efficiency while maintaining our responsibility to account for the use of public funds. In conjunction with the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, DMAH also launched a data reporting initiative to ensure that government is able to appropriately evaluate the effectiveness of the program on an on-going basis, and to ensure that government is satisfied that the program is meeting stakeholder expectations. As of April 1, 2021, responsibility for the REN program was moved from the Department of Municipal Affairs to the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth.
- MSD participated in the Roads Committee, which has developed road proposals according to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipality (NSFM) Resolution.
- MSD participated in the Solid Waste Priorities Committee, which has developed an Extended Producer Responsibility consensus proposal, in accordance with the NSFM Resolution.
- MSD maintains the delivery and administration of the Gas Tax Fund on behalf of the GoC. DMAH continues to work collaboratively with NSFM on Gas Tax Administration. The Sustainability Coordinator position is funded through the Gas Tax.
- MSD and NSFM successfully implemented various educational tools and resources to advance Asset Management practices for municipalities across the province.
- Allocations through the Financial Capacity Grant remain frozen. This freeze was recommended for five years during a Provincial Municipal Fiscal Review, and later extended by the Minister of Municipal Affairs for an additional two years in 2019.
- DMAH supports Minimum Planning Requirements, through which MSD is encouraging regional approaches as endorsed by the Municipal Innovation Project (MIP) funding and is illustrated by our support of the Cape Breton Regional Planning

Project and the Southwest Nova Regional Planning Project supported through MIP. MSD will continue to deliver funding to innovative and collaborative projects.

- DMAH continues to support our interdepartmental partnership for the delivery of the ICIP. MSD administers projects on behalf of the province, leveraging federal and provincial funding to assist with municipal infrastructure investments.
- In fiscal year 2020-2021, MSD continued to meet with municipalities who were interested in exploring, or were already undergoing, structural change. In particular, MSD provided ongoing advice, guidance and support to the former Town of Windsor and the former Municipality of the District of West Hants as they moved toward formal consolidation on April 1, 2021. MSD continues to work with the new West Hants Regional Municipality to ensure that the consolidation process is successful and continues to meet the needs of the residents and council of the new regional municipality. In addition, DMAH continued to promote regional cooperation and municipal modernization (including consolidation and dissolution) with municipalities across the Province. These conversations allowed municipalities to make informed decisions about structural change, and to consider the impacts of such change on their residents.
- MSD is providing direct support to the Department of Environment and Climate Change for the implementation of the Coastal Protection Act.
- MSD has completed several informal discussions with municipalities regarding minimum planning requirements.
- DMAH provided \$0.6M in funding for 10 projects through the Provincial Capital Assistance Program and \$0.2M for 5 projects through the Flood Risk Infrastructure Investment Program in 2020-2021 to support municipal infrastructure projects.
- MSD continues to support the Municipal Flood Line Mapping Project by establishing standard specifications and guidance for flood mapping to ensure consistency across municipalities and watersheds. A draft version of the municipal planning flood line mapping standard was completed in 2020-2021, and it is anticipated that final testing for the standard will be completed in 2021-22.
- MSD is developing asset management supports and are on the second iteration of our Infrastructure Registry for Municipal Assets (IRMA) system with supports in place to assist municipalities via Service Nova Scotia – Internal Services. A framework for building assets is being developed to be included in our asset management system to expand the reach and use of this resource. DMAH has launched the Nova Scotia Asset Management Policy Network (mentor & mentee network) to ensure sharing of knowledge and expertise amongst our municipal asset management participants and to foster collaboration.
- DMAH is conducting significant analysis on assessment growth for both residential and commercial market to support municipal finance including Financial Condition Indicators, Uniform Assessment, and provincial grants in lieu. Property assessment

and tax analysis was completed to support provincial initiatives, including: the Department of Inclusive Economic Growth's work on Hotel/Motel/Resort and Fast Food/Dining, the Department of Agriculture's work on farmland, and the Department of Infrastructure and Housing's study on public housing units.

- DMAH continues to refine the Financial Analysis Cash Projection Tool (FACT) to better project the financial health of municipalities for future years. New PSAB standards have been postponed and will be in effect as of April 1st, 2024. As a result, no changes have been made to the FRAM regarding PSAB standards at this time. The FRAM has been updated due to the Federal Safe Restart Fund that Municipalities received in November 2020. Municipalities are required to submit the Safe Restart Accountability schedules to report where the SRF was spent on.

## Appendix A: Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing

### 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 Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2020-2021
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A

There were no Disclosures of Wrongdoing received by the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing in 2020-2021.

## Appendix B: Employment Equity Statistics for the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2020-2021

- DMAH Headcount, 2020-2021: 179.
- DMAH posted 44 competitions (job requests) in 2020-2021.
- DMAH received a total of 2,467 applicants for those job requests – 1026 identified as employment equity applicants.
- Of those applications<sup>1</sup>:
  - 63 self-identified as Aboriginal
  - 92 self-identified as African Nova Scotian
  - 139 self-identified as a Person with a Disability
  - 528 self-identified as Racially Visible Persons (Other than Aboriginal)
- DMAH accepted 35 job offers in 2020-2021 for the competitions posted that fiscal year.
- Of those accepted job offers:
  - 12 offers were accepted by individuals who self-identified as employment equity applicants.

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<sup>1</sup>Note that applicants can self-identify in more than one of the Employment Equity groups. If an applicant identified as Aboriginal and a Person with a Disability, they would be counted in each group. Also, Employment Equity applicants are not obligated to select which Employment Equity group(s) they identify with when applying for a competition. There are a number of Employment Equity applicants who did not select any Employment Equity group when they applied for a competition and as such, they are included in the total number of applicants who self identified but not in the above listed figures for the various Employment Equity groups.