



Accountability Report 2020–21

Public Service Commission

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Accountability Report 2020–2021

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Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----|---|----|
| 1.0 | Accountability Statement | 1 |
| 2.0 | Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner..... | 2 |
| 3.0 | Introduction | 3 |
| 3.1 | Interesting Facts about the Public Service Commission | 3 |
| 3.2 | COVID-19 Considerations: | 4 |
| 4.0 | Measuring our Performance | 5 |
| | Ministerial Mandate: Younger Workers | 5 |
| | Ministerial Mandate: Diversity & Equity..... | 6 |
| | Ministerial Mandate: Psychological Health & Safety | 8 |
| | Ministerial Mandate: Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions (Part 1)..... | 9 |
| | Ministerial Mandate: Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions (Part 2)..... | 10 |
| 5.0 | Financial Results | 12 |
| 6.0 | Report on Disclosure of Wrongdoing | 13 |
| 7.0 | Appendixes | 14 |
| 7.1 | Appendix A – Detailed progress for each strategic action..... | 14 |
| 7.2 | Appendix B – MyHR Data..... | 21 |
| 7.3 | Appendix C – Public Service Commission Commonly Used Acronyms | 22 |

1.0 Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission 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 NS Public Service Commission Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the NS Public Service Commission outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by NS Public Service Commission management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of NS Public Service Commission 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 NS Public Service Commission 2020-2021 Business Plan.

NS Public Service Commission

Original Signed By:

The Honourable Colton LeBlanc,
Minister of the Public Service Commission

Andrea Anderson,
Public Service Commissioner

2.0 Message from the Minister and Public Service Commissioner

Thank you for taking the time to read the Public Service Commission's (PSC) 2020-21 Accountability Report. We are pleased to highlight the PSC's achievements from the past year that have reinforced our commitment to hiring younger workers, diversity and inclusion, as well as psychological health and safety, and HR and employee engagement relations solutions.

In a year marked by the COVID-19 global pandemic and social justice movements in Canada and abroad, the dedicated staff of the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission (PSC) worked diligently to support Nova Scotia's 11,000+ provincial employees.

Our Ministerial Mandate continues to champion youth hiring and participation of younger workers aged 35 and under in public service. With this challenging year, we maintained the same percentage (18%) of provincial employees who are younger workers, and retained 96% of younger workers in permanent and part-time roles in the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

Meaningful action on diversity, inclusion, and equity remains a priority in our public service. In March 2020, the PSC officially launched the corporate strategy, All Together: An Action Plan for Diversity and Inclusion in the Public Service. We know that to really succeed in having a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace, we must focus on ensuring our leadership is accountable, developing our current and future leaders, identifying barriers and solutions, and measuring our progress.

The Office of Workplace Mental Health (OWMH) is working with government employees and managers to develop and leverage resources, tools and supports to help their mental health and wellbeing. This includes offering individual mental health navigation resources as well as mental health awareness training and programming. This 3- year pilot program, expected to conclude in March 2021, has been extended by one fiscal year.

Finally, we continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the PSC's client services by refining HR processes using lean practices, creating internal service standards and measures, and advancing technology solutions to assist client service delivery.

We are proud of our employees at the PSC who work to support all government employees and departments to create a public service that represents all Nova Scotians that we serve.

Minister Colton LeBlanc

Minister of the Public Service Commission

Andrea Anderson

Public Service Commissioner

3.0 Introduction

In a year marked by the COVID-19 global pandemic and social justice movements in Canada and abroad, the dedicated staff of the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission (PSC) worked diligently to support Nova Scotia's 11,000+ provincial employees.

This year's accountability report is based on the PSC's 2020-2021 business plan, which is available at: <https://novascotia.ca/government/accountability>.

3.1 Interesting Facts about the Public Service Commission

Each day, PSC employees work to ensure that the province has the human resources required to manage, create, and deliver excellent, high-quality programs and services to Nova Scotians. We regularly report on the following data to provide insight into how the public service in Nova Scotia continues to shift and evolve as a workforce.

Here are some interesting facts about Nova Scotia's Public Service and the PSC:

- The Province of Nova Scotia employed **11,771** people on March 31st, 2021 (the end of the fiscal year). Employee numbers fluctuate throughout the year however (due to seasonal demands) and the average number of employees for the 2020-2021 fiscal year was **11,699** people, including provincial employees who are a part of the NSGEU, CUPE, and those in Excluded Classification positions.
- Within the last fiscal year there were **899** instances of younger workers being hired or re-hired with the help of the PSC for full-time, part-time, casual, and seasonal employment. At year-end (March 31st, 2021) younger workers made up 18% of provincial employees.
- Between April 1st, 2020 and March 31st, 2021 there were **1,809** job competitions in departments across the public service, this equated to **3,266** job openings in permanent, seasonal, and casual employment (excluding hiring pools).
- Lifelong learning and professional development remain important values within the PSC. The Corporate Learning Centre and Leadership Development Programs facilitated **446** courses during the 2020-2021 fiscal year where **1,550** unique participants were trained, **64** of whom completed certificate programs.
- The Corporate Learning Calendar offered **66** distinct courses (excluding the courses offered within the Leadership Development Programs for Supervisors, Middle Managers, and Executives which served **249** employees). Twenty-five employees also completed the Administrative Professionals certificate, one of seven certificate programs offered by the PSC.

- The PSC connected with potential employees, current employees, and other users more than *1.6 million* times through the jobs.novacotia.ca website during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. *85,097* applications were processed through the website, furthering PSC's commitment to adopting digital, client-centred approaches to recruitment and client satisfaction.

3.2 COVID-19 Considerations:

Before proceeding with updates on the commitments made in the 2020-2021 Business Plan, it is important to note shifts in service and innovations developed in response to COVID-19 during the previous fiscal year. Across the PSC staff mobilized to support the province's workforce, as all public servants worked hard to support Nova Scotians during this challenging time.

The PSC's COVID-19 response included:

- A new cross-functional team that supported departments and the provincial healthcare sector with redeployment requests and temporary reassignments during the pandemic.
- HR innovations/supports in flexible working arrangements including a new 6-step streamlined process for initiating remote work.
- A redesign of all corporate learning and development courses to effectively engage learners and avoid disruption to employee development services.
- Procuring a virtual training platform and adoption of new virtual facilitation techniques.
- Shifts to virtual recruitment efforts, including virtual job fairs, career fairs, and mock interviews for students.
- New employee engagement and communication mechanisms, including: the Back to Better survey of provincial employees which aimed to better understand the employee experience at the beginning of the pandemic, and to gauge information that could inform longer-term planning.
- Earnings stability for employees with the creation of two new Pandemic Leave codes for those employees unable to be in the workplace and unable to work from home during the initial stages of the pandemic.
- Adjustments to medical certificates requirements to support absences due to illness or injury, including identifying alternate methods of determining restrictions and limitations.
- Procuring access to a new digital wellness platform called LifeSpeak for all government employees and their families in August 2020 to support mental health and well-being.
- Assisting all government departments with completing workplace hazard assessments to ensure a safe return to the office (led by our corporate Occupational Health and Safety team).
- Regular updates to employee resources such as Frequently Asked Questions related to COVID-19 and notifications about briefings from the Premier and Chief Medical Officer of Health.

4.0 Measuring our Performance

This section of the accountability report restates the priorities and performance measures outlined in the PSC's 2020-2021 Business plan, *a full list of strategic actions and progress on those actions* can be found in Appendix A.

Ministerial Mandate: Younger Workers

Priority: Continue to champion youth hiring and participation of younger workers aged 35 and under in the public service.

Progress Highlights:

The PSC completed year five of five of the Younger Worker's initiative during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. Launched in late 2015, the project set a target of 5% of new positions being extended to younger workers (35 years and younger). Over the course of the project, the province consistently exceeded this target.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19, in 2020-2021 recruiters for the PSC continued to find innovative methods of connecting with potential employees including younger workers. Virtual career fairs and recruitment initiatives included (but were not limited to):

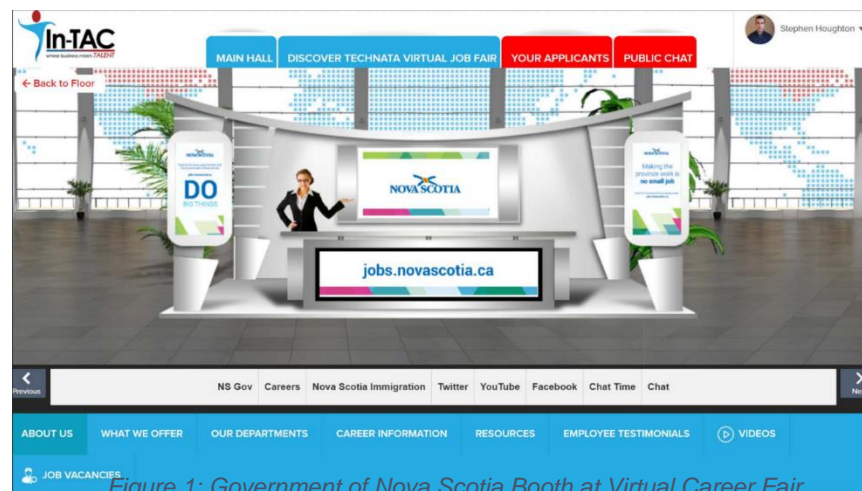


Figure 1: Government of Nova Scotia Booth at Virtual Career Fair

- The In-TAC virtual career fair hosted on October 6th and 7th which welcomed over 1,400 people from across Canada to the province's virtual booth. This job fair resulted in 500 applications over the two-day event and connected recruiters with international students throughout Canada among the many participants;
- The annual Halifax Universities virtual career fair on September 29th and the Opportunities Place job fair on August 12th, which connected the province with students and local job seekers in the Halifax Regional Municipality; and
- A Masters in Public Administration (MPA) hiring pool that interviewed and connected qualified candidates with work terms in the provincial government. Despite challenges caused by the pandemic, 15 first year students were placed in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, with 16 first- and second-year placements expected for the current year.

Progress on Performance Measures:

Improved ability to attract younger workers (aged 35 years and younger) to the public service.

During the 2020-2021 fiscal year the province maintained the same percentage of provincial employees who are younger workers (despite COVID-19 and the dramatic shifts in employment patterns in 2020). Younger workers continue to account for 18% of the provincial workforce.

Improved understanding of the barriers to youth hiring.

Through consultations at post-secondary institutions the PSC reached a stronger understanding of the career goals and needs of younger workers. This resulted in plans to relaunch the province's career website to better connect with younger workers and the implementation of candidate care experience improvements such as automatic notifications and opportunities to connect with recruiters.

Increased retention of younger workers (aged 35 and under).

38% of hires (or rehires) within the public service were younger workers in the 2020-2021 fiscal year, compared to 41% in the 2019-2020 fiscal year, a decrease of 3%.

- 15% of younger workers were employed on a permanent full-time basis, 1% were employed on a permanent part time basis, and the remaining 84% percent were casual, seasonal, relief, temporary or contract employees.
- Of the permanent full time/part time younger workers, 96% continue to be active and 4% withdrawn.
- 76% of the younger workers hired or rehired in 2020-2021 worked in 5 departments: Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (24%), Lands and Forestry (26%), Justice (8%), Department of Community Services (8%) and Service Nova Scotia & Internal Services (10%).

Ministerial Mandate: Diversity & Equity

Priority: Lead efforts to attract, retain, and celebrate diversity and equity within the public service and maintain focus on attracting, hiring, and promoting workers from diverse backgrounds.

Progress Highlights:

One year into the current [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#), the PSC maintains its commitment to the four goals outlined in that strategy: Senior Leadership Accountability, Leadership Development, Barrier Identification and Solutions, and Measurement of Progress. Progress on the strategy across the public service can be reviewed in the [Moving Toward Equity Report](#), prepared in October 2020.

In addition to consulting with departments to implement the strategy, the PSC also:

- Launched a new virtual anti-racism course available to all departments;
- Partnered with the Accessibility Directorate to develop employee engagement terms for the province's biennial employee census;
- Created a new Treaty Education training course, and
- Hosted the biennial provincial diversity conference.



Figure 2: Biennial Conference Theme: Inclusion and Intersectionality: Black Lives Matter

Progress on Performance Measures:

Improved ability to attract employment equity groups to the public service.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year the PSC:

- Distributed job postings through diverse community contact lists across the province;
- Supported departments in increasing the number of positions designated for employees from equity seeking groups. 48 positions were designated between April 1, 2020 to March 2021 compared to 27 in the previous fiscal year.

Improved retention of employment equity groups in the public service.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year the PSC:

- Delivered Diversity and Inclusion courses for leaders which explored how they can be inclusive and create inclusive work environments to ensure members of underrepresented groups feel welcome, and are fully engaged in the workplace (including 8 sessions with participants in the Leadership Development Program).
- Diversity Consultants assigned to each employee network provided tailored support to networks raising the concerns and needs of employees who identify as African Canadian, Indigenous people, 2SLGBTQI+, persons with disabilities, and immigrants/newcomers.
- The Corporate Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion unit also worked on a number of anti-racism initiatives, including partnering with the Office of Workplace Mental Health to develop culturally responsive resources.

An evaluation framework is being created for the Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which will identify measures and outcomes that will be included in this Business Plan.

The PSC will be using the Global Diversity and Inclusion Benchmarks' (GDIB) tiered evaluation standards to measure the progress and efficacy of the All Together diversity

and inclusion strategy. Departments will build an employment equity plan and use the GDIB to measure and evaluate their progress.

In the 2020-2021 fiscal year the PSC also:

- Redesigned the Moving Toward Equity Evaluation template to mirror the priorities and implementation steps outlined in the All Together diversity and inclusion strategy. The report will document each Department's progress and the PSC will evaluate it against the strategic priorities.
- Continued to track and monitor the number of designated positions (including a breakdown of Bargaining Unit and Excluded Classification positions).
- Led an employment systems review (that continues into the current fiscal year) to identify barriers affecting Employment Equity candidates during hiring and retention. This review will lead to baseline data that will help with creating measures and measuring progress after implementation of recommendations identified during the systems review.

Ministerial Mandate: Psychological Health & Safety

Priority: Continue to support the psychological health and safety of the Nova Scotia public service.

Progress Highlights:

The Office of Workplace Mental Health plays a key role in the PSC's work to support psychological health and safety for provincial employees. Since 2018 the OWMH has conducted 1,191 navigation appointments.

In addition to supporting individuals, the OWMH has also supported provincial employees through a variety of activities and initiatives during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, including (but not limited to):

- Hosting Mental Illness Awareness Week from October 5-9, 2020. The awareness campaign focused on highlighting the connection between diversity and inclusion and mental health.
- Releasing six e-bulletins/fact sheets on:
 - Psychological Health & Safety Workplace Factors
 - Self Compassion
 - Vicarious Trauma/Compassion Fatigue
 - Understanding Suicide & Prevention
 - Trauma & PTSD
 - Critical Incident Stress



Mental Health Hotlines

Help is available if you need to talk and you:

- are not feeling yourself
- are experiencing a crisis
- have emotional pain
- have thoughts of suicide
- know someone who needs help

The Trevor Project
Provides crisis and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ) young people under 25.
Trevor Lifeline: 1-866-488-7386 (for immediate support)
Trevor Text: Text START to 678-678 (confidential text messaging with a Trevor counsellor, 24/7/365)

Black Youth Helpline
Provides access to professional, culturally appropriate support for youth, families and schools
1-833-294-8650
Toll free: info@blackyouth.ca
<https://blackyouth.ca>

Association of Black Social Workers & Health Association of African Canadians (ABSW)
A toll-free number to assist African Nova Scotians across the province during COVID-19
Calls are in-person 8:30 - 4:30 Monday-Friday or leave a message after hours
1-855-732-1233.

Men's Helpline - 211
Available to adult men with concerns about their wellbeing, safety, safety of others
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Access to information, navigation, referrals, and brief intervention counselling

United Pause African Ancestry Support through the North End Community Health Center & Association of Black Social Workers
Mental health counselling services for Nova Scotians of African ancestry
Tues and Thurs 5 PM to 9 PM or leave a message: 1-800-598-5270

LGBT Youthline
Queer, Trans, Two-Spirit youth-led organization that offers confidential and non-judgmental peer support to youth (29 and under) through telephone, text, and chat services.
Sunday to Friday, 4 PM - 9:30 PM.
(647) 694-4275 / www.youthline.ca

Provincial Crisis Line
Need help now?
Call 1-888-429-8167 toll free (24/7)
Operated by Mental Health and Addictions, Nova Scotia Health Authority

Kids Help Phone
Available 24 hours a day to Canadians aged 5 to 29 who want confidential and anonymous care from professional counsellors.
Call 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) or text CONNECT to 686868.

Indigenous Hope for Wellness National Helpline
Offers immediate toll-free telephone and online mental health counselling and crisis intervention to all Indigenous peoples across Canada. 24/7/365. Services available in English, French, Cree, Ojibway and Inuktitut on request.
www.hopeforwellness.ca Toll free: 1-855-242-3310



Office of
Workplace Mental Health

(902) 424-2273
1-833-389-2273
owmh@novascotia.ca

CUPE NSGEU

- Initiating a self care challenge, where 675 employees were engaged and 92% of survey respondents said they are likely to continue self care practices after the end of the challenge.
- The OWMH started as a 3-year pilot program, expected to conclude in March 2021. The pilot has since been extended one fiscal year.

Progress on Performance Measures:

Improved understanding of mental health in the workplace among all employees.

In January 2021, the OWMH launched a government-wide survey as a part of its comprehensive evaluation plan to measure the impact of the office over the course of the pilot. Results from the survey indicated that employee awareness and knowledge of mental health (and the impact of OWMH's work on individual mental health) has increased over the last two years.

Enhanced mental health supports and services for all employees.

Another result of the survey was confirmation that mental health stigma is still a significant issue in our workplaces. The OWMH continues to work collaboratively across the public service to eliminate stigma and share resources for all employees.

Among the enhancements in the 2020 fiscal year was the hiring of an African Nova Scotian navigator to the dedicated team of navigators for the province, and a number of activities and events highlighted in the Psychological Health and Safety program updates and Appendix A (sections 3a, 3c, and 3d).

Ministerial Mandate: Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions (Part 1)

Priority: Continue to lead public service innovation by providing human resource and employee relation solutions.

Progress Highlights:

In 2020-2021, the PSC continued work to improve human resource programs and services by refining HR processes to add value for our client departments and improve the systems that support provincial employees. A sample of the work toward this priority included:

- Refining the FlexNS program into a six step process to facilitate increased access to remote work during the initial COVID-19 response,
- Over 200 enhancements made to the SuccessFactors system, and over 400 enhancements made to the SAP HR system,
- Refining and automating the Exit Survey process to allow employees who are leaving (retiring, resigning or lateral move) to provide feedback on their overall work experience,
- Automating results from the Count Yourself In provincial employee census to deliver results in a more timely manner to the Diversity and Inclusion team, and
- Initiating a sample onboarding survey to improve the onboarding process.

Progress on Performance Measures:

Improved ability to address clients' needs.

Throughout the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the PSC was engaged in Strategic Planning. Building on priorities identified in the client-centred project, as well as national and global trends in human resource administration for civil servants, the PSC developed a new vision, mission, and priorities. Spanning 2021 to the end of the 2023-2024 fiscal year, the PSC will focus on our new vision: a diverse and inspired public service, and four priority areas: People, Service, Workplace Agility, and Inclusion.

Efficiency

A new electronic records management system (ERMS) was launched in 2020. It serves as an example of the PSC's commitment to modernizing our HR information systems and embracing digitalization to more efficiently serve public servants.

Ministerial Mandate: Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions (Part 2)

Priority: Continue to lead public service innovation by providing human resource and employee relation solutions.

Progress Highlights:

In 2020-2021, the PSC also continued work to improve human resource programs and services by supporting employee engagement and internal communications. Efforts toward this priority included:

- Administering a Back to Better survey during the COVID-19 pandemic,
- Providing guidance and support on internal communications as leaders within the Internal Communications Network, and
- Maintaining key internal communications portals like the HUB.

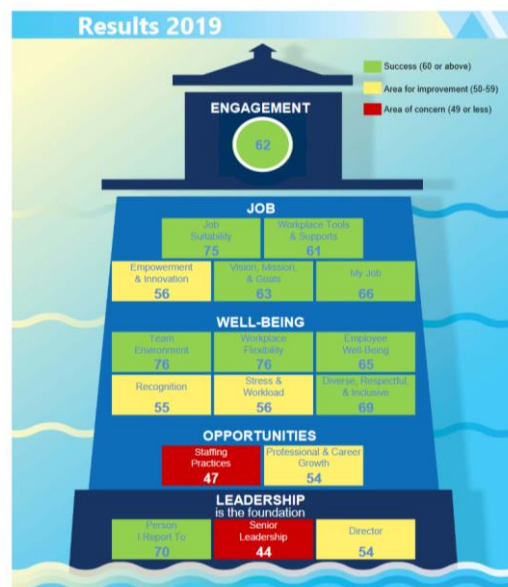


Figure 3: Snapshot of How's Work Going Results. Visit <https://novascotia.ca/psc/employeeCentre/employeeSurvey/> for results for each department.

Progress on Performance Measures:

Improved employee engagement in the public service.

Progress on employee engagement is measured biennially through the How's Work Going employee engagement survey. The next engagement survey is scheduled to be released in the Fall of 2021. The overall engagement index increased by five percentage points from 57% in 2017 to 62% in 2019.

Improved access to corporate information for all public service employees.

Strategic realignments occurred within the PSC during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, including the internal communications team joining the Corporate Services Division. The Corporate Internal Communications Unit (CICU) led (and continues to lead) strategic initiatives like the internal communications network, updates for the HUB (which surpassed 1 million visits the past fiscal year), and regular support for the Manager's Service Forum (supplying 40 program service related corporate emails last fiscal year).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, The HUB, the province's intranet site for employees, has been the official internal platform for all corporate COVID-19 information. This includes employee information like frequently asked questions, updates and resources, all Communications Nova Scotia signage, posters and flyers and recovery information as it relates to 'return to work' and Government's daily news releases and webcasts.

Enhanced internal and cross-departmental communications.

The PSC enhanced internal and cross-departmental communications through reviewing and providing strategic advice and direction on several key programs being launched across the organization. The CICU, through the Network, has assisted in communicating and supporting the delivery of the following programs or initiatives: the Back-to-Better pandemic check-in survey, Count Yourself In survey, Flexible Working Arrangements (FWA) pandemic program roll-out, LifeSpeak wellness platform, and the employee Exit Program.

From 2020 – 2021 the CICU was invaluable to the execution of several virtual events like the NS Government biennial Diversity Conference, the Pride Government Employee Network, Long Service and Premier Award of Excellence Awards ceremony, Innovation Week. The work of the CICU included communications support like event scenarios, speech writing, news broadcast messages, invites, organizing vendors and overall event execution.

Under the direction of the CICU, TheHUB (a key cross-departmental communications tool) continues to grow by sharing all Government communications that come out of Communications Nova Scotia (i.e. News Releases).

5.0 Financial Results

| | 2020-2021 Estimate | 2020-2021 Actual | 2020-2021 Variance |
|--|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Program & Service Area | <i>(\$ thousands)</i> | | |
| Departmental Expenses¹ | | | |
| Client Service Delivery | 6,194 | 5,858 | (336) |
| Employee Relations | 3,299 | 3,549 | 250 |
| Office of the Commissioner | 404 | 1,045 | 641 |
| People and Culture | 4,497 | 3,938 | (559) |
| Corporate Services | 5,789 | 5,738 | (51) |
| Total: Departmental Expenses | 20,183 | 20,128 | (55) |
| Additional Information | | | |
| Ordinary Revenue | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fees and Other Charges | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Ordinary Recoveries | 101 | 58 | (43) |
| Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries² | 101 | 58 | (43) |
| TCA Purchase Requirements | | | |
| Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)³ | 191.4 | 185.1 | (6.3) |

¹ Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Variance due to salary and operating efficiencies.

² Revenue, Fees, and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Variance due to recoverable salary absorbed by the department.

³ Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

Variance due to vacancy savings.

6.0 Report on 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 Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of this 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 counseling someone to commit a wrongdoing

During fiscal year 2020-2021, the Public Service Commission did not receive any disclosures of wrongdoing.

| 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 | N/A |
| Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing | N/A |

7.0 Appendixes

7.1 Appendix A – Detailed progress for each strategic action

This section of the accountability report restates the strategic actions and measures listed in the 2020-2021 Business plan, along with the progress the PSC has made in fulfilling the Minister’s mandate and addressing our department’s priorities.

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. Younger Workers</p> <p>Priority: Continue to champion youth hiring and participation of younger workers aged 35 and under in the public service.</p> <p><i>In 2020-2021, the PSC will be in its final year of a five-year commitment to provide younger workers with opportunities through various employment initiatives. Specifically, the PSC plans to complete the following actions:</i></p> | <p>1a. Implement the Younger Worker Strategic Plan, an ongoing strategy focused on: Attraction & Recruitment, Orientation & Onboarding, and Engagement & Retention.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continued effort to building meaningful connections with post- secondary education institutions across the province were hampered by pandemic restrictions, although the PSC was able to complete some consultations during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. ○ Efforts to recruit younger workers including community outreach and the use of digital recruitment tools evolved over the last year due to the pandemic. The PSC will continue to adapt and innovate to meet the needs of younger workers, including new approaches to career fairs and the province’s career website. |
| | <p>1b. Leverage social media to recruit more younger workers.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The PSC has deferred all social media activities to the 2021-2022 fiscal year as we assess feasibility of the approach, resources, and technologies. |
| | <p>1c. Reduce barriers for younger workers and employment equity candidates in the hiring process.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The PSC simplified and streamlined the hiring & retention process during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. ○ We also completed a review of the language used in postings to be more accessible to younger workers and obtained new technology to modernize recruitment marketing initiatives and create content that is meaningful to younger workers. |
| | <p>1d. Continue to support the Department of Labour and Advanced Education by participating in the Youth Senior Officials Working Group and other related subcommittees.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The PSC representative continued to actively participate in scheduled meetings of the Senior Officials Youth Working Group supporting the horizontal government collaboration on youth. |
| | <p>1e. Co-Lead a working group with Community Services to continue to provide summer employment opportunities for youth at risk referred by the Employment Support & Income Assistance (ESIA) program.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The PSC continued collaborative work with DCS to support summer employment for the ESIA Program. 20 youth were hired under this program between April 2020 and March 2021. |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
|--|---|---|
| <p>2. Diversity & Equity</p> <p>Priority: Lead efforts to attract, retain, and celebrate diversity and equity within the public service and maintain focus on attracting, hiring, and promoting workers from diverse backgrounds.</p> <p><i>In 2020-2021, the PSC will focus on the following diversity and equity activities:</i></p> | <p>2a. Implementation of the new Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which will promote increased engagement and responsibility for diversity and inclusion among senior leadership.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 85% of departments have participated in employment goal setting and diversity and inclusion implementation planning sessions with the PSC's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) unit. ○ The unit has also provided resources for inclusive leadership including resources on having difficult workplace conversations. |
| | <p>2b. Hosting the province's fourth biennial Diversity Conference.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The conference was held on the afternoons of October 26, 27 & 28th, 2020, via Cisco WebEx. The conference reached the maximum capacity of the program, with 1000 participants in attendance. |
| | <p>2c. Strengthening the capacity within Departments to champion diversity and inclusion, including accessibility and disability issues (in accordance with Access by Design 2030 commitments).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In the 2020-2021 fiscal year the EDI unit partnered with the Accessibility Directorate to improve the 2020 Count Yourself In corporate census, and in 2021-2022 continues to partner on new accessibility and accommodation training for employees and leaders (which will be implemented across government). ○ In response to COVID-19 the unit also adapted the in-person diversity and inclusion course to an online course serving 498 leaders between Sept 2020 and Mar 2021. |
| | <p>2d. Reviewing recruitment and selection training materials for hiring managers and ensuring the content reflects topics specific to recruiting, hiring, and retaining persons with disabilities within the Nova Scotia public service in alignment with Access by Design 2030.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Completed a full review of all recruitment training material and templates with a focused lens on inclusive language. ○ Created multiple recruitment training sessions to provide hiring managers with the knowledge and skills to hire and select with an inclusive lens on the process. |
| | <p>2e. Promoting diversity and inclusion through adoption of the new Employment Equity Policy and employment equity tools (e.g. designated positions and diverse hiring panels).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Review of the Employment Equity Policy has been deferred to the next fiscal year, however the EDI unit has actively promoted designated positions through a joint committee comprising the EDI unit, Employee Relations, and the Executives of NSGEU, to increase designated positions within Government and address any concerns /challenges. The unit has also provided additional support to Human resources Business partners during the designated request process in order to eliminate barriers hindering the process. |
| | <p>2f. Continue to evaluate, enhance and advance programs to support the career development of employees across all regions who identify as a member of the designated groups.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A corporate employment system review began in the 2020-2021 fiscal year continues into the current fiscal year to identify/mitigate barriers affecting employment equity seeking groups. ○ The PSC has also launched a talent management program which includes identifying and creating opportunities for employment equity candidates (EC 11 and higher) to progress into leadership roles. There has also been an |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
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| | | <p>increase in the number of leadership development program spaces reserved for employees from equity seeking groups.</p> |
| <p>3. Psychological Health & Safety</p> <p>Priority: Continue to support the psychological health and safety of the Nova Scotia public service.</p> <p><i>In 2020-2021, the PSC will continue the implementation of the Psychological Health and Safety Standards. Specifically, the PSC plans to complete the following actions:</i></p> | <p>2g. Commence planning for the next Count Yourself In public service census.</p> <p>3a. Continue to support the Office of Workplace Mental Health in promoting a positive and proactive approach to mental health for provincial employees.</p> <p>3b. Support the broad implementation of the Workplace Health and Safety Promotion Policy through the Departmental Ambassador Program (in all regions of the province).</p> <p>3c. Raise awareness and address psychological health and safety in the workplace through the provision of support and services to human resource staff, managers, employees, and provincial departments.</p> <p>3d. Host and encourage participation in training for managers and employees (e.g. the Working Mind, The Working Mind for First Responders, and related trainings including Respectful Workplace</p> | <p>○ The EDI unit and HR analytics units have collaborated to analyze results from the previous Count Yourself In corporate census.</p> <p>○ In addition to consulting with employee networks and stakeholders across the public service, the EDI unit also reviewed feedback from the previous survey with plans to address concerns/suggestions in the new survey (e.g. promotional materials like infographics and personal testimonies).</p> <p>○ Planning continues, with the next CYI census expected in 2022.</p> <p>○ Between its inception in 2018 and March 31, 2021, the OWMH supported public servants through 1191 navigation appointments.</p> <p>○ Corporate scores on the HWG item "workplaces are supportive of employee well-being" increased from 53% agreement in 2017, to 69% agreement in 2020.</p> <p>○ 77% of people who completed a survey for long-term navigation participants indicated they are more proactive in taking steps to address mental health issues since interacting with a navigator.</p> <p>○ The PSC's OH&S team continues to support the broad implementation of the Workplace Health and Safety Promotion policy through training and consultations. The Departmental Ambassadors Program was in place from April 2018 to April 2019, the year before the policy was to take effect, and that work has been completed.</p> <p>○ In 2020 the OWMH converted its "Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace Manager's Guide" into an electronic resource, in 2019 more than 2500 hard copies had been distributed to managers throughout the public service.</p> <p>○ An Afrocentric Resource List was created in June 2020, sharing local Afrocentric mental health service providers and other resources as people across North America grappled with anti-Black racism.</p> <p>○ The OWMH also launched a new Province Wide SharePoint site in January 2021, logging 2745 visitors in the first quarter.</p> <p>○ The OWMH hosted the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Microaggressions and their impact on Mental Health (October 2020) - Invisible Disability Day Panel Discussion (October 2020) - Part 1 Panel Discussion: Strengthening Your Support Network in Uncertain Times (January 2021) |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
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| | and Diversity & Employment Equity). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Part 2 Panel Discussion: Mental Health Practitioners: How are they different? How can they help you? (January 2021) o An additional 150 public service employees also participated in The Working Mind virtually in the 20/21 year. The Working Mind (TWM) is an evidence-based program designed to promote mental health and reduce the stigma around mental illness in the workplace. |
| <p>4. Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions</p> <p>Priority: Continue to lead public service innovation by providing human resource and employee relation solutions.</p> <p><i>In 2020-2021, the PSC will continue work on improving our human resource programs and services. Specifically, we will</i></p> | <p>4a. Refine HR processes using lean practices and evaluate opportunities for service innovation.</p> <p>4b. Implement a client centric framework for service delivery.</p> <p>4c. Implement the updated Respectful Workplace Policy.</p> <p>4d. Improve and refine our current technology and self-service solutions to assist client service delivery across multiple systems (e.g., MyHR, SuccessFactors –Recruitment and Learning Management System (LMS), and the Environmental Health & Safety Management (EHSM) Project).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The PSC began refining the HR planning process in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. A new streamlined set of resources and tools will be rolled out in the 2021-2022 fiscal year for client departments. The new process will align with the Business Planning cycle, allowing for an integrated process. o Work to review the PSC’s HR processes is always ongoing. Upcoming projects for the 2021-2022 fiscal year include: updates to the onboarding process for senior officials and a review of the PSCs services to Agencies, Boards, and Commissions). o The development of the client centric framework has concluded, including a focus on communication, collaboration, engagement, and feedback. o The principles and areas of focus identified in the framework are now incorporated into the PSC’s approach to client service delivery. o The updated Respectful Workplace Policy was approved and implemented in July 2020. Also introduced were Policy Guidelines and process-focused guidelines for HR professionals and for Managers. o Updates for the policy were communicated to leaders across the organization and to the Unions/Associations. o MyHR was updated with the new resources, and a new online training module was developed and is required to be completed by all employees. 60% of employees had completed the training by March 2021. Completion of the training is being tracked and monitored. o Technology and self-service solutions are continuously improved and refined. There are bi-annual platform updates applied to SuccessFactors and annual platform updates applied to SAP, enabling continuous improvements through the year. o Over 200 enhancements were applied to SuccessFactors in 2020-21, and over 400 to SAP, which cover new enhancements to Recruitment, Learning Management, Environmental Health & Safety (EHS), Manager Self-Service (MSS) and other system functionality. Some larger initiatives completed include new technology to support http://jobs.novascotia.ca, enabling more efficient updates, and the implementation of new supporting technology to assist in talent acquisition. |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition to the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system solution improvements, a new Electronic Records Management System (ERMS) was launched in June 2020. The ERMS is enabling the PSC to digitize an estimated 2.4 million pages of paper records into an electronic repository, which supports efficient client service delivery in a flexible working environment. ○ A usability review of MyHR was completed, in partnership with the Service Design team from Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services'. This review outlined strengths of the MyHR platform and opportunities to make the functionality more user-friendly, accessible, and more reflective of global standards for digital reference sites. Work has begun to transform content to a more digestible format. |
| | 4e. Improve Injury on Duty (IOD) outcomes. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Over the 2020-2021 fiscal year the province saw improvement in the timelines to get employees into treatment due to the expansion of WCB's Direct Access program and other IOD process enhancements. Previous work in partnership with representatives from Transportation and Active Transit and WCB during the previous fiscal year (related to IOD prevention and employee awareness raising) contributed to this result. ○ Regular monthly case conferences are held to increase communication and provide improved opportunities to reduce the duration of the Injury on Duty Absences. The participants in these case conferences are managers from TAT and DOJ (and other provincial departments), WCB case managers and PSC Absence Management team members. |
| <p>5. Human Resource & Employee Relation Solutions</p> <p>Priority: Continue to lead public service innovation by providing human resource and employee relation solutions.</p> <p><i>In 2020-2021, the PSC will focus on the following priority actions in support of employee engagement</i></p> | 5a. Develop and support leaders in the implementation of a multi-year Employee Engagement Strategy. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Project approvals, framework, governance structure and communication planning were near completion when COVID-19 shifted team priorities. ○ Efforts have been refocused into the Future of Work Strategy that will be undertaken by the Policy Unit. |
| | 5b. Continue to develop, implement and evolve programs such as FlexNS to modernize workplace and leadership practices that positively influence employee experience and address the unique challenges of middle management. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Early in the pandemic it became clear that middle managers required additional tools and resources to transition to a remote, productive working environment. A Remote Working Video Series was designed and developed to support managers and employees with this transition, using already-established material from the FlexNS program. This Video Series was hosted on MyHR. ○ The Organizational Development and Engagement Team continues to develop a variety of tools that will be available to managers and departments as they reach out for support. |
| | 5c. Lead the delivery, reporting and action planning for the results of the 2019 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Presentations sharing disaggregated How's Work Going results (by department or office) were delivered by Organizational Development |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
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| <i>and internal communications:</i> | How's Work Going? Employee Engagement Survey and supporting pulse surveys. | <p>Consultants (OCDs) and HR Business Partners (HRBPs) until March 2020, with a focus on departments with an Engagement Index below 55 or a significant drop from 2017.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Department level action planning was scheduled to occur in March of 2020, but many departments paused their action planning activity to focus on business continuity and recovery planning. ○ For departments who moved forward with action planning, OCDs and HRBPs facilitated action planning conversations and followed-up with customized consultation and training. ○ Action planning guides and templates were created to assist departments in interpreting results and to give direction on where to focus action planning efforts. |
| | 5d. Develop and support implementation of innovative programs to address opportunities identified by leaders and through the 2019 How's Work Going Survey. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Back to Better survey results collected in the summer of 2021 indicated departments were leveraging flexible working arrangements (FWA) during the recovery phase to ease back into operations. Based on this, focus was shifted to making it easier for managers and departments to access FWA during the recovery phase. ○ To help address these concerns, components of the FlexNS program were transformed into a 6-step process with guiding principles. Accompanying SharePoint site and implementation guide were developed to streamline information to leaders. Sample communication materials, toolkits, assessments, facilitation guides, as well as presentations and email templates were provided to support departments in expediting the transition to a hybrid work model. |
| | 5e. Support the ongoing implementation of iNSpire, a self-directed program that brings mentors and mentees together to support individualized career growth and professional development and enables employees to share and build on already established skills outside of their existing role. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This program was transitioned to Career Development early in the 2020/2021 fiscal year and is currently under review. Additional mentoring tools and resources are currently being developed to align with and support our existing suite of Career Development offerings. |
| | 5f. Create, support and guide the work of the government-wide Internal Communications Network. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Network celebrates its 3-year anniversary in 2021. It was an integral part of the COVID-19 communication initiative, coordinating messages and activities to support employees during the pandemic. |
| | 5g. Lead further development and evolution of government's key internal/employee communication tool, TheHub. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ TheHUB celebrated 1Million views near the end of 2020 and was a key platform in communicating information (guidelines, updates, FAQs, etc), during COVID-19. An additional feature called the COVID-19 Chronicles provided employees with 'good' news stories featuring employees doing 'above-and- |

| Ministerial Mandate | Strategic Action | Accomplishments and Progress |
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| | | <p>beyond' the call of duty work, promoting a positive outlook on the pandemic across the provincial government.</p> |
| | <p>5h. Guide and support corporate internal/employee communications projects, programs and campaigns including Managers Service Centre, Be the Change and Corporate Recognition Programs (e.g., Premier's Award of Excellence and Long Service Awards).</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Each of the recognition / employee engagement initiatives had to be virtual this year. The Long Service Awards and Premier's Award of Excellence featured vignettes, a visual history lesson in relation to years of services, and messages by Deputy Ministers of each of the 'winning' departments. Employees were able to access this online and celebrate with their colleagues, where normally they would not attend the in-person ceremony (usually reserved for the winners, their manager, and a guest). ○ Similarly, the United Way campaign went online with pledges and a rousing 'Nova Scotia's got Talent' activity that featured employees showcasing their talents and their colleagues pledging monies for their favourites. Although this activity was newly created as an alternate to some of the regular in-person fund-raising activities, this virtual event was so successful that it will be considered for future United Way campaigns. ○ The Managers Service Centre emails continued as a source of information for managers around COVID-19 and other important measures. |
| | <p>5i. Develop internal/employee communication resources and tools for cross-governmental use supporting leaders in sharing information.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The internal communications digital tool kit has been developed and features tools and tips to support internal communications leads and managers in communicating to their teams. This initiative supports the goal to provide a coordinated, consistent approach to internal communications and employee engagement across the provincial government. |
| | <p>5j. Guide and support departmental teams on individual internal communication projects to better communicate to employees.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Corporate Internal Communication Team is supporting departments on a variety of projects to ensure consistency in the approaches, tools, and methods used to communicate within departments. Some projects initiated in the 2020-2021 fiscal year (and ongoing) include: Talent Acquisition rebranding, Future of Work strategy, Public Service Orientation refresh, LifeSpeak wellness platform, How's Work Going survey, Count Yourself In survey, and Commissioner's Conference, to name a few. |

7.2 Appendix B – MyHR Data

MyHR Data for the Period April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021

The information below has captured, by month, the number of Users that have had at least one session on MyHR within the selected date range. Please note that if a User logs onto MyHR multiple times or with different devices, they will be counted multiple times (i.e. if they logged in on a desktop and a phone they would be counted twice).

| Month | Number of Users |
|---|-----------------|
| April 1 st – 30 th , 2020 | 7,578 |
| May 1 st – 31 st , 2020 | 7,879 |
| June 1 st – 30 th , 2020 | 8,826 |
| July 1 st – 31 st , 2020 | 9,338 |
| August 1 st – 31 st , 2020 | 10,143 |
| September 1 st – 30 th , 2020 | 9,618 |
| October 1 st – 31 st , 2020 | 9,706 |
| November 1 st – 30 th , 2020 | 9,411 |
| December 1 st – 31 st , 2020 | 9,007 |
| January 1 st – 31 st , 2021 | 12,148 |
| February 1 st – 28 th , 2021 | 9,491 |
| March 1 st – 31 st , 2021 | 11,313 |

7.3 Appendix C – Public Service Commission Commonly Used Acronyms

| Acronym | Meaning |
|---------|---|
| CNS | Communications Nova Scotia |
| DCS | Department of Community Services |
| EDI | Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion |
| ICTS | Information Communications and Technology Services <i>(currently called the Nova Scotia Digital Service)</i> |
| LMS | Learning Management System |
| OHS | Occupational Health and Safety |
| OWMH | Office of Workplace Mental Health |
| PSC | Public Service Commission |
| TAT | Transportation and Active Transit <i>(currently called the Department of Public Works)</i> |
| WCB | Workers' Compensation Board |