



Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

2006-2007

Final
November 15, 2007



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ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Accountability Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ended March 31, 2007, is prepared pursuant to the Provincial Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Office of the Ombudsman Business Plan information for the fiscal year 2006-2007. The reporting of the Office of the Ombudsman outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Office of the Ombudsman management.

I acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Office of the Ombudsman 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 Office of the Ombudsman Business Plan for the year.



Dwight Bishop
Ombudsman

MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

This has been a productive year. Staff commitment and organizational changes are the driving force behind our achievements. Complaints and inquiries are up, as is resolution through informal means. New initiatives with adult corrections and seniors have improved our service level in these areas. Increased efforts are also being expended in the Disclosure of Wrongdoing area. We will continue to work to improve our services and to ensure workload balance.

Dwight Bishop
Ombudsman

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the goals, priorities, and performance measures set out in the Office of the Ombudsman 2006-2007 Business Plan and should be read in concert with the 2006-2007 Business Plan. The 2006-2007 Ombudsman Annual Report submitted to the House of Assembly pursuant to Section 24(1) of the Ombudsman Act, similarly should be referenced.

This report is organized around our strategic goals and will outline the progress and accomplishments made towards achieving these goals and priorities. The final sections set out financial information and performance measures.

The Office is comprised of four sections: Investigation & Complaint Services, Youth & Seniors' Services, Disclosure of Wrongdoing, and Administration. All permanent staff are appointed by the Ombudsman and approved by the Governor in Council (Section 7(1) of the Ombudsman Act).

Benchmarks were established using 2005-2006 time frames for the completion of administrative reviews and formal investigations and to set targets for our education and outreach initiatives.

Mission

Fostering confidence in the public service by promoting the principles of fairness, integrity and good governance.

Mandate

The primary mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman is to review and respond to citizens' concerns arising from the administration of provincial and municipal laws in Nova Scotia. In recent years, the mandate has expanded to include a proactive role in relation to the province's programs and services for youth and senior citizens. Most recently, under the province's Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations, the Ombudsman has been given the authority to investigate claims brought forward by provincial civil servants about wrongdoing in the workplace.

PROGRESS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Strategic Goals, Priorities, and Accomplishments

The following identify key initiatives undertaken to achieve the priorities established in the 2006-2007 Business Plan:

Strategic Goal 1: Quality complaint resolution process

Priority 1: Complaint Processing

Receive and investigate complaints filed by citizens against provincial and municipal government departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, and work with departments and agencies to improve administrative services.

Our priorities for 2006-2007 were:

- to continue to improve complaint resolution processes to identify methods to provide more timely and effective administrative reviews and formal investigations
- to increase the number of settlements obtained using alternative dispute resolution processes and to increase the number of systemic reviews

Accomplishments

Our complaint process is continually monitored through individual file reviews, team meetings, and management updates and reviews. We improved our quality assurance program by increasing the number of files forwarded for management review. In addition, all administrative reviews and formal investigations in excess of three months are discussed at monthly management meetings. This has resulted in a decrease in the percentage of administrative reviews that exceeded four weeks to complete (29% in 2005-2006 to 22% in 2006-2007). These measures allowed us to determine priorities, define issues, and monitor time frames to ensure all complaints and inquiries are processed as efficiently as possible with existing resources.

We continue to have a high ratio of administrative reviews (98.6%) compared to formal investigations and system/policy reviews (1.4%). We maintained the 2005-2006 number of system reviews (own-motion investigations and policy reviews six (6) in total).

Complaints and inquiries examined by the Office increased 20% over the previous year. In part, this result suggested that our educational outreach efforts are having a positive effect.

Non-jurisdictional issues (those matters outside our authority) continue to decline and comprised 17.4% of the matters brought to our attention in this fiscal year. Complaints and inquiries examined by the Office increased 20% over the previous year. In part, this result suggested that our educational outreach efforts are having a positive effect.

Strategic Goal 2: Awareness, access, and understanding of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Priority 2: Education

Advise citizens of their right to access internal departmental, and external complaint mechanisms; their right to access the Office of the Ombudsman; and to access the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing complaint mechanism.

Our priorities for 2006-2007 were:

- to increase awareness of citizens, officials, and employees of the Public Service of the role of the Ombudsman.
- to increase awareness of the availability of our independent, objective review/complaint resolution mechanisms, including the Regulations respecting Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing, both of which are based on the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.

Accomplishments

We increased the number of contacts made by staff in-house via phone, correspondence, and walk-ins. We made a total of 489 presentations, community outreach and site visits, meetings, and staffed six information booths (such as the Seniors' Expo and the Boys and Girls Club Conference). Our efforts succeeded in reaching 2711 people, compared to 1975 in the previous fiscal year, and 1710 in 2004-2005 (36% and 60% increase respectively).

The number of administrative reviews conducted increased approximately 20% (from 944 in 2005-2006 to 1129 in 2006-2007).

During this fiscal year, we received 18 inquiries relating to the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations. This resulted in two (2) disclosure of wrongdoing investigations and three (3) reviews under the Ombudsman Act.

Strategic Goal 3: Fairness and accountability in public sector administration.

Priority 3. Public Service Administration and Good Governance

Office of the Ombudsman

Recommend and monitor amendments to policies, procedures, and legislation arising from investigations and reviews. Through the recommending and monitoring component, the Office of the Ombudsman advises and educates citizens, elected officials, and government employees about the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.

A priority in 2006-2007 was:

- to build on the successes of 2005-2006 regarding the development of mutual relationships of trust and respect with government authorities to ensure implementation of recommendations.

Accomplishments

Improved relationships with government authorities resulted in more timely and effective resolution of concerns raised by citizens through the administrative review process. The ratio of administrative reviews to formal investigations in this fiscal year is 98.6% to 1.4%.

We conducted one (1) system review (own motion investigation) and five (5) policy reviews in 2006-2007. The system review addressed offender transfer issues and resulted in policy development. Three (3) policy reviews are currently being monitored: one addressed the disconnection of the intercom system in a correctional facility; another focused on accommodating persons with disabilities in a correctional facility and a conflict of interest matter in a municipality. Two policy reviews are on-going: one involves a health program; and the second is reviewing the information provided to individuals who are appealing tax assessments.

Investigation results included:

- a review of policies regarding employee health and safety which resulted in improved and increased awareness of rights and responsibilities
- the adoption of guidelines to refer questions about programs between government bodies
- revised policies and procedures regarding paving roads
- adoption of a policy to provide written reasons for decisions
- revised terms and conditions and transfer of water withdrawal permits
- guidelines for staff consistency in determining natural watercourses
- adoption of safeguards when merging files with licencing issues
- adherence of building code requirements
- improvements in communication regarding safety issues with departments, contractors and residents.

We continued to collaborate with the Department of Community Services regarding their internal complaint process and have noticed a slight decrease in complaints and inquiries we received this

year (from 229 in 2005-2006 to 203 in this fiscal year).

Our role with the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations further enhances our ability to promote fairness, accountability, and good governance. We are working to ensure government employees are aware of and understand the regulations and the complaint process. Our focus this fiscal year included development of:

- a three (3) year work plan
- relationship building with federal counterparts
- training of staff
- implementing internal procedures and practices for investigations
- responding to inquiries

Initiatives which began in the last fiscal year with the Public Service Commission are ongoing. This Office continues to consult with the Public Service Commission to work towards identifying training requirements for managers/supervisors who may be responsible for conducting disclosure of wrongdoing investigations, identifying resources and support required to ensure consistent understanding of the disclosure of wrongdoing process by government employees, and the development of an information brochure.

Information packages are provided to government employees who are considering making a disclosure. Our toll free inquiry line and email address provide a confidential avenue for civil servants to obtain information. In October 2006, our second annual email was sent to government employees promoting awareness of the Ombudsman's role in the disclosure of wrongdoing process.

Strategic Goal 4: Promote initiatives such as government policy development and review, as well as initiatives focusing on youth, seniors, and cultural diversity

Priority 4. Complaint Prevention/Reduction

Provide a service that promotes early intervention while maintaining independence from government.

Our priority in 2006-2007 was:

- to increase requests from government officials to review proposed and existing legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures

Accomplishments

We continued to make recommendations to improve and clarify existing legislation, regulations, policies and procedures, both as a result of investigations and reviews and from requests received

outside of the investigation process.

With respect to our youth initiatives, we were asked to comment and provide input on the IWK Health Centre's draft conflict of interest policy for employees. We began surveying youth residing in provincial youth facilities and explored the feasibility of our involvement in establishing a provincial child death review committee with the Nova Scotia Medical Examiner Service and the Chief Medical Officer of Health. Both initiatives will continue in 2007-2008.

We also provided follow-up input to the draft Water Quality Assurance Process developed by the Department of Environment and Labour, and provided input on the handbook for offenders developed by the Correctional Services Division, Department of Justice. We continued to work with this Division and have implemented a female offender pilot project. Through this initiative we have established a regular presence in the province's only female correctional unit. We have also increased our service level to male adult offenders and began developing a strategy to allow the expansion of the service provided through the female offender project to the male offender population.

Youth Services Ombudsman Representatives continue to work closely with youth, residents, and staff of provincial care and custody facilities to establish and maintain a positive rapport that provides individuals with an opportunity to come forward with their concerns. This allows us to seek solutions to potential problem areas before they become the focus of a complaint.

With respect to cultural diversity, we continue to participate in the province's overall goal of recognizing cultural diversity and achieving it in our workplace. The Ombudsman is a member of the Diversity Roundtable (Interdepartmental Forum). The committee's purpose is to support and promote the corporate human resources goal to be a public service that is representative of the diverse community it serves, and to be a respectful and inclusive organization that recognizes diversity as its strength. The Ombudsman and staff were also able to attend ceremonies celebrating African Heritage month, as well as Mi'kmaq Treaty Day, and presentations by the offices of Acadian and African Nova Scotian Affairs.

II Human Resource Strategy

1. Office Demographics

As of March 31, 2007, our workforce profile data indicates that of the 14 permanent full-time employees (FTE's), four (4) or 28.6% are from designated groups. Our objective is to increase this percentage to a minimum of 30% by 2007-2008. In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman employs a number of individuals each fiscal year on a casual basis, including student placements. Five of these employees hired in this fiscal year are from a designated group.

The average age of permanent staff is 44 years, with the casual staff and students included, the

average age is 42 years. Of the permanent employees 10 or 71.4% are female and four (4) or 28.6% are male. The total office is comprised of 63% females and 37% males. The percentage of self-identified Affirmative Action (permanent) employees is four (4) or 28.6%.

We will continue to encourage individuals from the designated groups to compete for all new positions, including any positions that may arise due to permanent staff absences or vacancies.

All advertisements for vacant positions will continue to include a statement with our commitment to Diversity and Affirmative Action, and job postings were sent to the Affirmative Action/Diversity organizations in the Province. The Office of the Ombudsman continued to contact the Public Service Commission to determine if any eligible individuals from the diversity pool were available for positions.

All staff participated in regular reviews and annual performance appraisals. Staff were encouraged to discuss career development and any concerns they may have. Management strived to provide development opportunities to all staff based on budget allocations and individual and office requirements.

A secondment of a staff person to the FOIPOP Review Office ended in January 2007. A secondment of a staff person to the Department of Education occurred in November 2007.

The Office had no occupational health and safety incidents in the past fiscal year.

The Office of the Ombudsman has, or will, take the following steps to reach the goals contained in Nova Scotia's Corporate Human Resources Plan.

2. To make a difference through a skilled, committed, and accountable public service

The Corporate Plan's objectives include:

- fairness and access
- service excellence
- public opinion
- consistent policy application

The Office of the Ombudsman strives to promote these objectives. Our role is to promote accountability and fairness in the way municipal and provincial government services are delivered to the public. These objectives are evident in our logo which represents the arms of the public, the government, and the Office of the Ombudsman raised for fairness, integrity and good governance. Given that our role includes critiquing government entities in these areas, we strive to ensure our internal policies, procedures, and practices incorporate these objectives.

The annual internal employee survey was conducted. Sixteen surveys were distributed and all were returned with very positive results. The survey enables the Office of the Ombudsman to identify and celebrate our strengths as well as identify and address any areas requiring improvement.

Self assessment questionnaires and performance targets were completed within the first three months of this fiscal year. Work plans are in place for the disclosure of wrongdoing responsibilities, as well as for the seniors' and female offender pilot projects. A male offender strategic plan is under development.

3. To be a preferred employer

The Office of the Ombudsman has developed a staff training/orientation program for all permanent and casual staff. Each new placement receives an orientation program which includes an introduction to the Office of the Ombudsman outlining our services, role, and mandate, as well as presentations and job shadowing with Ombudsman staff. A staff training/orientation manual is also provided to all staff and policies are updated on a regular basis.

We met our objective for 2006-2007 of providing an orientation session to staff on our Intake Officer/Administrative Support casual roster. We also provided an orientation session for the Ombudsman Representative casual roster.

The Office hires students on a regular basis through the Career Starts Program (diversity, mentorship and co-op), and provides students with experience through work placements. In 2006-2007, nine (9) students had placements with this Office. We also employed one person for a one year term through the Career Starts Internship program.

4. To be a safe and supportive workplace

The Office of the Ombudsman maintained an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee this year to review current requirements, with a view to enhancing the current practices within the Office. The Committee focused on safe work practices and OH&S training requirements for staff. This Committee is also responsible for encouraging and implementing healthy workplace initiatives. One of the OH&S representatives is a member of the Healthy Workplace Committee. Healthy Workplace Committee Newsletters and communications from the Public Service Commission were distributed to employees, as well as Take Back the Lunch Break postcards.

The Emergency Management Office approved our draft Business Continuity Plan. The Business Continuity Co-ordinator attends meetings and workshops hosted by the Business Continuity Office and is updating the plan.

5. To be a diverse workforce

In addition to the demographics noted earlier, all advertisements for vacant positions will continue to include a statement with our commitment to Diversity and Affirmative Action, and job postings on the Nova Scotia Employment Opportunities website are sent to Affirmative Action/Diversity organizations in the Province.

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to contact the Public Service Commission to determine if any eligible individuals from the diversity pool are available for positions. During 2006-2007 we reviewed applications from the diversity pool.

The majority of staff have taken the Diversity and Employment Equity training and 50% have taken Aboriginal Perceptions training. All staff, including permanent, term, casual and student placements are encouraged to participate in events/training which will increase awareness of diverse cultures. Three (3) additional employees attended Aboriginal Perceptions training; five(5) employees attended Diversity and Employment Equity training, and seven (7) employees attended Respectful Workplace training during the 2006-2007 fiscal year.

We provided the opportunity for French Language training to one permanent employee. Some staff attended a Policy Review Focus Group to discuss the Fair Hiring Policy.

6. To be a learning organization

Employees of the Office of the Ombudsman are encouraged to take advantage of training and professional development opportunities. For permanent staff members, education plans are incorporated into their yearly employment evaluations, and options are selected with the goals of both the individual and the Office in mind.

As a small Office with a broad mandate, employees are encouraged to develop skills that will provide them with an understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of Ombudsman staff. These varied training plans provide opportunities for advancement within our Office, and develop skills to improve service to the public.

We continue to be represented on the GoverNEXT committee.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Office of the Ombudsman Budget Expenditures 2006-2007		
Core Business	Budget	Actual
	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Gross Expenses	1384	1384
Net Program Expenses	1384	1229
Salaries & Benefits	1090	1097
Staff (FTE's)	16*	15*

* The Central Registry position was not filled until June 2007

The Office of the Ombudsman spent 88.77 percent of the allotted budget. Delays in filling positions contributed to this lower utilization.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

This fiscal year was our first complete year operating under the reorganized structure. We expanded our outreach initiatives and made or exceeded the majority of the identified performance targets.

Core Business Area 1: Complaint Processing

Ensure citizen complaints are addressed in a timely, comprehensive, objective, and independent manner through:

- investigations, reviews, assessments, and referrals
- utilization of alternate dispute resolution (ADR) processes
- formal investigations
- recommendations to improve the delivery of government services

Outcome 1: An efficient and effective (quality) complaint resolution process.

Measure - the timely completion of administrative reviews and investigations.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

The time frame required to complete administrative reviews and investigations is one of the components which assists to determine our effectiveness.

Where Are We Now?

As 2005-2006 was the first year we operated under the revised office structure it has established our benchmark for the time frames for the completion of administrative reviews and investigations. (These time frames include youth contacts).

Office of the Ombudsman

Administrative Reviews Time Frames:

2005- 2006

1-7 days	687	55%
8 days - 4 weeks	182	15%
4 weeks plus	359	29%
Total	1228	100%

2006 - 2007

1-7 days	901	60.6 %
8 days - 4 weeks	252	17%
4 weeks plus	334	22.4%
Total	1487	100%

A comparison of these time frames revealed that in this fiscal year more administrative reviews were completed within 1-7 days whereas those completed within 8 days - 4 weeks increased which are due, in part, to the volume received. Those taking in excess of four (4) weeks to complete decreased.

This year, of the 1801 complaints and inquiries the Office received, 1487 (82.6%) were within our jurisdiction, while 314 (17.4%) were referred to outside organizations. Over the past fiscal year, jurisdictional complaints and inquiries received increased by 20%. In the last three years, we have seen the proportion of jurisdictional complaints and inquiries increase by nearly 30%. Total complaints and inquiries under the Ombudsman Act received this year was 1801, compared to 1698 last year.

An increase in the number of complaints and inquiries indicated that more Nova Scotians are aware of, have confidence in, and are accessing the services of the Office of the Ombudsman.

We opened 16 formal investigations, six of which were policy reviews. Twenty-two investigations were carried over from 2005-2006, for a total of 38 active investigations/reviews.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS, SYSTEM/POLICY REVIEWS

Investigations, system/policy reviews carried over into 2006-2007	22
Investigations, system/policy reviews opened in 2006-2007	16
Total active investigations in 2006-2007	38
Investigations closed with recommendations being monitored	7 (4 in 2006-2007, 3 from the previous year)
Investigations opened and closed in 2006-2007	4
Investigations opened in 2006-2007, and carried over into 2007-2008	7
Investigations opened prior to 2006-2007 and carried over into 2007-2008	2
Total investigations carried over to 2007-2008	9

The average age of the nine formal investigations, system/policy reviews closed in 2006-2007 was four months. The remaining seven that were carried forward into 2007-2008 had an average age of seven months (time frame to March 31, 2007). Of the 22 investigations carried over from previous years, 20 were closed during 2006-2007, after being open an average of 11 months.

The two formal investigations/policy reviews that were open before 2006-2007 and carried over into 2007-2008 averaged 16 months. When these are factored into the total, the average age of files carried over into 2007-2008 was slightly over 12 months.

Where Do We Want to be?

Our goal is to complete all administrative reviews, investigations, system/policy reviews within a one year period. We believe our enhanced quality assurance process and management reviews are working to ensure we meet this goal.

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of the role and mandate of the Office and an increase in public confidence and accountability of government.

The measures of this outcome are:

- reduction in the number of formal investigations
- increased usage of ADR

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Our focus over the last number of years has been to encourage the resolution of complaints informally. We continue to strive to ensure these resolutions are meaningful and address potential long term or systemic issues. This approach provides staff with an opportunity to identify and address systemic issues through policy and program reviews. The ratio of administrative reviews as compared to formal investigations and policy reviews indicates that staff of the Office of the Ombudsman are successfully addressing issues and that government officials are working cooperatively to improve service delivery.

Where are We Now?

This year, the Office processed 1129 administrative reviews, provided 314 referrals to non-jurisdictional inquiries, made 358 contacts with youth in care or custody of the provincial government, opened 10 formal investigations and six (6) policy/system reviews. We received 18 inquiries relating to the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations. This resulted in two (2) disclosure of wrongdoing investigations and three (3) reviews under the Ombudsman Act.

A significant number of administrative reviews resulted in changes in government policies, procedures and actions which contributed to improvements in the delivery of government services. We made a positive impact in the vast majority of cases.

Of the 16 formal investigations initiated in 2006-2007, one was a system review (or own motion investigation) and five (5) were policy reviews. These formal investigations comprised 1.4% of the complaint resolution process, thereby surpassing our goal of maintaining the ratio of investigations, policy/system reviews to less than five to seven percent in 2006-2007.

Office of the Ombudsman

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

TOTAL with Positive Outcomes*		914
Assistance Rendered to Complainant	575	
Resolved for the Complainant	221	
Resolved for the Public Body/Properly Implemented	114	
Settled between the Parties	4	
Discontinued/Withdrawn		201
Carried Over to 2007-2008		14
TOTAL Administrative Reviews		1129

*A positive outcome occurs when the Office has been able to resolve a matter, facilitate a settlement, or assist a complainant with their dispute. In the case of youth residing in provincial facilities, administrative reviews are resolved for the complainant in situations where the issue(s) brought forward have been addressed.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS and REVIEWS

Investigations opened in 2006-2007	10
System/Policy Reviews opened in 2006-2007	6
TOTAL Investigations/System/Policy Reviews	16

OTHER

Meetings -Youth in Care and Custody	358
Disclosure of Wrongdoing inquiries (2 of which resulted in Disclosure of Wrongdoing investigations)	18
Non-jurisdictional	314
TOTAL - Other	690
TOTAL - all inquiries, contacts, investigations, and reviews.	1835

Where Do We Want to Be?

We want to maintain the ratio of less than five to seven percent investigations as compared to administrative reviews. We also want to increase the number and scope of system and policy reviews, however we acknowledge additional resources are required to enable us to increase our capacity.

Core Business Area 2: Education

Promote citizen and government awareness and understanding of the Office of the Ombudsman. Our communications strategy clarifies our role and mandate, and increases citizens' accessibility through:

- presentations/meetings
- pamphlets/brochures
- group targeting (i.e., youth and seniors)
- increased media contact and coverage

The outcome is increased awareness of the role of the Office, including administrative fairness.

The measure is an increase in the number of individuals receiving information on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Increasing the number of individuals receiving information on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman ensures more Nova Scotians are aware of, and have a more accurate understanding of our Office.

Where Are We Now?

We increased the number of contacts made by staff in-house via phone, correspondence, and walk-ins. We conducted a total of 489 presentations, information sessions, community and site visits, meetings, and staffed six (6) information booths (such as the Seniors' Expo and the Boys and Girls Club Conference). Our efforts succeeded in reaching 2711 people, compared to 1975 in the previous fiscal year, and 1710 in 2004-2005 (an increase of over 30% and 55% respectively) .

These outreach initiatives included information sessions for seniors and staff in long term care homes, meetings with youth in secure and residential care facilities, as well as those incarcerated at the Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Youth Facilities. Through our female offenders pilot project, as well as our ongoing relationship with Correctional Services, we were able to visit adult correctional facilities throughout the province.

Community clinics were hosted in New Minas, Bridgewater, Antigonish, Cheticamp, Membertou, and in the Cape Breton and Halifax Regional Municipalities. Media releases were posted advertising the events, and the local area papers in New Minas, Bridgewater, Antigonish, and Sydney wrote articles regarding our visits. Articles regarding the Office of the Ombudsman were also featured in Stride (Seniors' publication) and the Youth in Care Newsletter.

We successfully targeted youth and seniors in many of the education initiatives listed above. We conducted 110 site visits to youth in secure care and in custody and issued 30 reports regarding youth issues. Twelve presentations reached 52 seniors. Approximately 525 people visited our booth at the Seniors' Expo, as well as approximately 459 people visited our information booth at seniors conferences. Ombudsman Representatives also participate on a variety of committees focusing on youth and seniors in order to increase our awareness of youth and seniors' issues; to provide input on program and policy development; and increase awareness of our Office and mandate.

Nearly 6500 pieces of communication material were distributed in this fiscal year. These were comprised of a combination of brochures and posters in English, French and Mi'kmaq, our lapel pins, the Ombudsman Act, annual reports, and refrigerator magnets.

Where Do We Want to Be?

In addition to the increased activity in the youth, seniors, and adult offenders areas, we want to increase our capacity to conduct more outreach initiatives in all areas covered under the Ombudsman Act. This will allow Ombudsman Representatives to meet with individuals in their communities thus increasing the accessibility of the Office to Nova Scotians.

Core Business Area 3: Public Service Administration and Good Governance

Promote fairness and accountability in public sector administration through:

- identification of specific and systemic issues
- research and investigate systemic issues
- issuance of recommendations and monitoring compliance
- education/training

The outcome is accountability in the delivery of government programs and services.

The measure is the number of recommendations accepted.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Acceptance of recommendations indicates that the Office of the Ombudsman is conducting effective investigations and reviews, properly identifying the issues and offering meaningful recommendations

and resolutions.

Where Are We Now?

In 2006-2007, the Office made thirty (30) recommendations, arising from sixteen (16) formal investigations, system/policy reviews and an additional eleven (11) from administrative reviews. Of these recommendations, nine (9) are being monitored for compliance and the remaining twenty-one (21) have been accepted.

During the year, we closed twenty-two (22) formal investigations, four (4) system reviews, and three (3) policy reviews.

- fifteen (15) investigations were resolved for the complainant, thirteen (13) of which resulted in changes to policies and procedures
- assistance was rendered in three (3) investigations, resulting in three (3) changes to policies and procedures
- four (4) investigations found that the public bodies had properly implemented the programs, however two (2) of these investigations still resulted in changes to policies and procedures
- four (4) system reviews resulted in changes to policies and procedures
- of the three (3) policy reviews, two (2) resulted in changes to policies and procedures, while one provided the Office with an opportunity to provide input on new conflict of interest legislation

Fifteen (15) outstanding recommendations from investigations carried into 2006-2007 have been implemented. Three (3) continue to be monitored. In addition, while we did not offer any recommendations in one investigation, we are still monitoring the intended implementation of a policy.

Of the sixteen (16) investigations, system/policy reviews initiated in 2006-2007:

- seven (7) are on-going
- four (4) have been closed
- five (5) investigations, system/policy reviews were being monitored

The investigations, system/policy reviews initiated in 2006-2007 resulted in nine (9) recommendations, three (3) were accepted, and we continue to monitor six (6).

Where Do We Want to Be?

Our goal is to continue to obtain 100% acceptance of recommendations, as well as to increase the number of positive outcomes of administrative reviews. In order to achieve this, we will continue to enhance our working relationship with government and to increase awareness of our role. We will

also continue to conduct thorough investigations and develop recommendations to resolve outstanding issues.

Core Business Area 4: Complaint Prevention/Reduction

Promote a problem-solving model that embraces prevention, early identification, consultation, and resolution of issues through:

- increasing Office of the Ombudsman presence, particularly with respect to target groups
- building relationships within government and segments of the community
- participating in policy development and review committees/processes
- utilizing ADR processes

Outcome 1: Increase the number of reviews of legislation, regulations, and policies.

The measure is the number of requests received by this Office from provincial and municipal government entities to reviews proposed amendments to legislation, regulations, and policies.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

Requests initiated by government bodies outside the complaint resolution process indicates that these entities consider our input to be meaningful. It also demonstrates that our efforts to increase collaborative working relationships are obtaining positive results.

Where Are We Now?

In 2006-2007, in addition to the six (6) system/policy reviews associated with the complaint resolution process, our input was sought and/or continued in the following areas:

- conflict of interest policy for employees
- role for the Office of the Ombudsman in the review of pediatric deaths
- provided follow up input in the draft Water Quality Assurance Process
- provided input on the handbook for offenders
- continued collaboration on an internal complaints mechanism

We also are working with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to identify what resources and supports are needed to ensure that employees are aware of the Regulations respecting Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing process.

Where Do We Want to Be?

We would like to continue to increase the number of requests from government officials for our advice and input as this demonstrates an increasing awareness and confidence on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman. We would also like to increase our capacity to expand these proactive initiatives through increased resourcing.

Outcome 2 : An increased presence in the areas relating to youth, seniors, and cultural diversity.

The measure is the number of site visits conducted.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

Site visits to youth and seniors’ facilities allows us to provide our services directly to many youth and seniors in care and custody of the province.

Where Are We Now?

In 2006-2007, 110 site visits were made to youth in care and custody facilities, an increase from 89 in 2005-2006.

Location	Site Visits	Reports Issued	Total Present
Residential Child-Care Facilities	56	2	219
Wood Street Centre (Secure Residential Facility)	28	12	101
Nova Scotia Youth Detention Facility (includes youth evaluation surveys)	22	13	226
Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility	4	3	7
Total	110	30	553

Other Site Visits

Senior residential facilities	4	n/a	12
Female Correctional Facility	7	3	28
Male Correctional Facilities	7	n/a	9
Other Total	18	3	46

The total scheduled site visits represents a 40 % increase over last year.

Outreach to seniors consisted also consisted of twelve (12) information sessions and presentations reaching 52 individuals. An additional 525 seniors visited our Information Booth at Seniors 50+ Expo.

With respect to cultural diversity, the Ombudsman is a member of the Diversity Roundtable (Interdepartmental Forum). Our Manager, Youth and Seniors Services was added to the Public Service Commission diversity interview panel pool.

The site visits to Cheticamp and Membertou were chosen as endeavours to increase awareness of our Office in the Acadian and Aboriginal communities. The Ombudsman and staff were able to attend ceremonies celebrating African Heritage month, as well as Mi'kmaq Treaty Day, and presentations by the offices of Acadian and African Nova Scotian Affairs. Our 2006-2007 Annual Report will be available in French and English.

Where Do We Want to Be?

We want to maintain the number of youth site visits while increasing the number of site visits and educational activities aimed at seniors by 10% in the next fiscal year. We will continue to increase awareness of our role and mandate among the various cultural communities and will increase the number of publications available in French. Additional outreach will require an increase in staff and resources.