Public Service Commission
Business Plan

2003-04

Success through People

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Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2003-2004 Business Plan for the Nova Scotia Public Service Commission.

A strong public service helps promote a healthy, prosperous, and self-sufficient Nova Scotia. This government has been working to ensure the public service has the capacity and resources to deliver the programs and services Nova Scotians rely on every day, in every community.

Whether they work at the Registry of Motor Vehicles or fight forest fires, our public servants must be service oriented, well trained, and versatile. Whether we are recruiting for a social worker or a budget officer, we need to attract and hire the most qualified person for the job. And whether the job site is an office or a snowplow, we must ensure our day-to-day workplaces allow employees to stay healthy, productive, and fulfilled.

The Public Services Commission's 2003-2004 business plan is about building a strong public service, now and in future. I would like to thank PSC staff, HR directors, and all government managers for their contribution to a healthy, strong public sector workforce in Nova Scotia.

Gordon Balser
Minister of the Public Service Commission

Message from the Public Service Commissioner

The Public Service Commission is well positioned this year to take on the human resource challenges facing the Government of Nova Scotia.

As our business plan outlines, we have adopted a new organizational structure and identified a series of operational priorities that will help both the PSC and line departments focus on what is most important in human resource management.

The Public Service Commission will become more of a strategic organization, setting HR policies and processes. Managers and HR professionals will have better tools at their disposal, and a planning context to guide them.

However, a business plan is only as good as its implementation. I look forward to working with PSC senior staff, HR directors and staff, and line managers across government to tackle all of our collective goals and priorities. Working together, I know we can get a lot done this year.

Vicki Harnish
Public Service Commissioner

Public Service Commission

The Vision of the Public Service Commission
Leadership and excellence in human resource management.

Mission
The Public Service Commission provides leadership, strategic direction and expertise in human-resource management to support the development of a strong public service.

Planning Context
The Public Service Commission is responsible for:

- developing and implementing corporate human-resource policy, programs and services;
- ensuring the quality and value of human-resource management practices through evaluation and audit;
- ensuring fair hiring and treatment of staff; and
- advising on and acting as government's agent in collective bargaining.

An organizational review of the Public Service Commission was conducted in the fall of 2002 to identify ways to improve the delivery of human resource services in government. The review concluded that PSC must shift its focus away from operational activities toward being the strategic leader of HR within the government. This would involve a new organizational structure and updated, clear business processes.

A new organizational structure will be launched April 1, 2003, and the commission will work to implement recommendations of the review report. One of the key activities will be defining the roles and responsibilities of the PSC and its partners in HR delivery: deputy ministers, department/corporate service unit human resource leaders, and line managers themselves. Operational transactions, such as processing job applications, will be shifted from the PSC to the line departments where possible, and the PSC will focus on strategic policy development and provision of generic HR tools and training for managers, such as performance management training. The PSC will ensure that policies and processes are being followed through an enhanced evaluation and audit function.

Demographic changes
The challenges facing the Nova Scotia public service are similar to those experienced in the public sector across Canada, and to some extent the private sector. Demographics mean the workforce is aging and many older workers are due to retire. In the Nova Scotia public service, 50% of the workforce is between the ages of 45 to 65. The average public servant is 45 years old, and the average age is 47 for the management group. In March 2001, more than 530 MCP employees reached eligibility for early retirement and that number will climb to more than 730 in the next four years; this represents 57% of the management workforce.

Government employees, like their private sector colleagues, are facing a more complex workplace. The public is demanding new and faster services, and technology is affecting how services are delivered. Employees are struggling to balance work and life responsibilities. The Public Service Commission must respond to these changes as it develops human resources plans, particularly for executive, senior managerial and professional positions. Through strategic workforce planning and effective human resource management, government must build a skilled, productive and multi-cultural workforce that reflects the diversity of Nova Scotians.

Fiscal Pressures

Salaries and wages make up a large percentage of the Government of Nova Scotia budget, and demand for increased wages continues to put pressure on limited budgets for government services overall.

There has also been an increase in the number of employees using sick leave and long-term disability plans, indicating a need to promote employee wellness.

Strategic Goals

- Provide leadership and support to ensure strategic human resources planning is part of the strategic priorities and policies of government.

- Improve recruitment and retention policies and practices to maintain a professional and effective public service.

- Improve policies and practices that help us to manage, recognize and reward performance of public servants who contribute to government's goals and priorities.

- Effectively co-ordinate collective bargaining processes for the civil service.

- Support the development of employees by offering and encouraging development opportunities.

- Improve policies and practices that promote a healthy and safe work environment and support the well-being of employees.

- Ensure effectiveness and compliance of corporate human resource policies and programs through evaluation and audit.

Core Business Areas

The Public Service Commission's core business areas reflect its mandate as defined in the *Public Service Act*:

- to lead, advise on and assist in implementing human resource management policies, programs, standards and procedures.
- to monitor implementation and audit human resource functions across government.
- to advise government on human resource management and collective bargaining in the public service.

1. Leadership and Strategy Development

Provide strategic guidance to government on human resource management issues and provide policies and strategies aimed at effectively developing the public service.

- Research in support of workforce planning, human resource policies, organizational effectiveness and collective bargaining.
- Policy development, formulation and implementation.
- Strategic and corporate human resource planning.
- Partnerships with and policy advice and assistance to government's human resources community.
- Advice to Minister and Government on human resource strategies

2. Employee Relations

Manage the employment relationships for government with its direct employees, including collective bargaining and setting terms and conditions of employment for non-bargaining unit employees.

- Advise government on collective bargaining in the broader public sector, ensuring fiscal responsibility and accountability within Government.
- Compensation (including salaries and benefits) and Classification
- Union/Management Consultation
- Collective Bargaining/Employee Relations

3. Programs and Services

Focus on recruiting, developing and retaining skilled and effective public servants through key human resource programs and services.

- Staffing & Executive Recruitment
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Training and Development
- Performance Management
- Disability Management
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Diversity Management
- Succession Planning

4. Evaluation and Audit

Improve the design, delivery and accountability of corporate human resource policies and programs, through consultation with the human resources community and other stakeholders.

- Ensure accountability for the effectiveness of and compliance with human resource programs and policies.
- Obtain accurate, objective, evidence-based information to support effective decision-making on programs and policies.
- Assess the relevance and effectiveness of policies and programs including an assessment of risk and alignment with departmental and government-wide priorities.

Priorities for 2003-04

Leadership and Strategy Development

1. We will complete the implementation of the recommendations of the New Directions and Opportunities Report, as outlined in the Commissioner's response to the report in Jan. 2003. This will involve:
   - structural and cultural changes within the Public Service Commission
   - a definition of human resource roles and responsibilities of the PSC, the human resource community in government, and managers in departments and offices
   - promotion of good HR management by line managers.

2. Effective workforce planning is needed to ensure that key positions in government are filled by qualified workers. We will develop a corporate succession management strategy that focuses on youth recruitment, development of feeder groups for key management positions and increased use of the electronic medium to support recruitment and training and development.

   Recruitment efforts will focus on areas of high need, including executive leadership, human resource professionals, finance professionals and young managers.

   This will include revamping Career Starts, an emphasis on job shadowing for key positions to ensure transfer of corporate knowledge, enhanced skill development for specific professions and initiatives to provide managers with information and training to carry out their operational responsibilities.

3. The General Civil Service Regulations will be reviewed and updated to better correspond to modern employment practices.

4. In collaboration with other central agencies, we will develop systems, processes and tools to support effective internal government-wide communications. This will ensure that employees have the information they need to do their jobs, ranging from details of government news and priorities to training and support information on human resource management.

Employee Relations

5. Begin to prepare for collective bargaining for direct employees of government and corrections employees, as these collective agreements expire during the year.

6. Advise government on collective bargaining issues in the broader public sector, e.g. for crown corporations and other provincially funded organizations such as school boards and health authorities.

7. Improve, through training, the labour relations knowledge and skills of both managers and the HR community to give them a better understanding of employer obligations and employee rights. This will include training programs for managers that will be incorporated into other training programs.

8. Complete the classification phase of the Management Compensation Project and continue with additional steps toward implementation. The MCP project has been under way for two years.

9. Finish the job evaluation phase of the Civil Service Bargaining Unit Classification Project and continue with additional steps toward implementation.

Programs and Services

10. Develop an employee wellness strategy to promote a healthy Government workplace. This project will include conducting a workplace environment survey to develop baseline data, promotion of healthy lifestyles and development of a proactive approach to disability management.

11. Continue to use and improve the effectiveness of the performance management strategy to help Government deliver on its goals.
    - Train managers to use performance management annually, including the widespread adoption of performance appraisals, to achieve their goals and the goals of government.

Evaluation and Audit

12. Continue to build the evaluation and audit function and develop and implement an audit plan to ensure consistent application of human resource policies and procedures across government.

Budget Context

Budget Context Chart Public Service Commission			
Estimated Expenditures		**2002 - 2003 Forecast (thousands)**	**2003-2004 Budget (thousands)**
	Total Program Costs - Gross Current	5,660.6	5,858.9(A)
	Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	4,095.0	4,940.0(A)
	Salaries and Benefits (Gross)	3,843.8	4,426.2
	Funded Staff (FTEs) (Gross)	66	92(B)

The Public Service Commission has undergone restructuring for 2003-04. Costs for 2002-03 have been restated to reflect the new structure.

(A) HRMS Operations budget ($562,000) was transferred to the Department of Finance, effective April 1, 2003. Also includes $700,000 for the Provincial Employment Program (PEP).
(B) Includes 32.4 FTEs for PEP

Core Business Area 1: Leadership and Development				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
1. *High quality work environment*	**Reduction in employee and manager absenteeism**	**1. Absenteeism rates**	**Absenteeism rate of 8.75 days/employee/year**	**Evaluate Attendance Management Policy**
	Reduction in incidences of work-related stress	**2. Incidences of work-related stress**	**15%**	**Track incidences of workplace stress**
	Reduction in staff turnover	**3. Employee and manager turnover rates**	**Continue to monitor trends and incorporate into decision-making**	**Track staff turnover**

Core Business Area 2: Employee Relations				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
1. *Improved Collective Agreement Administration*	***Managers and employees who fully understand the collective agreement(s)***	**1a) Percentage of HR Professionals who have received training.**	**To have delivered LR training to all HR Consultants, Managers and Directors**	**Develop training in consultation with HR community - Priority**
		1b) Percentage of line managers (availability to those who require) who have received training.	**To have delivered LR training to all line management requiring LR training**	**Support by providing time and resources to Staff Relations staff, adequate to meet the targets.**

Core Business Area 3: Programs and Services				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
1. ***Ability to attract and retain the most suitable individuals***	**Employee and manager learning and skill development is expected and supported**	**1. Percentage of employees and managers receiving performance assessment**	**100% of employees and managers receiving performance assessment by 2004/2005**	**Implement Corporate Human Resource Development Strategy** **Establish Deputy Ministers' Advisory Committee - Complete** **Involve HR Forum in developing and implementing the Corporate HR Plan - Ongoing** **Establish performance management framework and audit depts regarding their responsibility for establishing Public Service Commission Plans** **Assist departments in linking employee performance to government performance through effective use of the performance management system. - Priority** **Implement pay for performance for management employees (contingent upon increase in funding) - Priority** **Develop and implement 'Employer of Choice' polices and programs. - Priority** **Evaluate MPA (M) Program**
		2. Number of employees and managers attending HRD training	**Maintain**	
			Maintain	

Core Business Area 3: Programs and Services				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
1. *Attract and retain the most suitable individuals* (cont'd...)		**3. Voluntary staff turnover rate**	**Continue to monitor trends and incorporate into decision-making**	
	Success with initiatives which market the Nova Scotia public service as an attractive employer, provide work opportunities for youth and attract knowledge workers to the Nova Scotia public service.	**4. Number of Career Starts interns that continue to work for government upon completion of their internship.** **5. Number of youth receiving placement at the end of internship.**	**Increase to 50%**	**Implement initiatives which market the Nova Scotia public service as an attractive employer, provide work experience opportunities for youth and attract skilled workers to Nova Scotia public service.**
				Continue Career Starts Program and evaluate
2. Continuous learning opportunities for employees.	**Increase training and development activities and opportunities**	**1. Money spent by Gov't on corporate employee training and development**	**Maintain or Increase**	**Establish performance management framework and audit depts regarding their responsibility for establishing Department Human Resources plans and individual employee training plans.**

Core Business Are 3: Human resource Programs and Services				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
1. *Continuous learning opportunities for employees (cont'd)*		**2. Number of work experiences, co-op and internship placements**	**Increase *(contingent upon increase in funding)***	
2. *Workforce that values employee differences*	**Employees and managers are provided with diversity management education**	**1. Number of employees and managers attended Diversity and Employment Equity Education Program courses**	**95% of workforce**	**Continue to deliver Diversity and Employment Equity Education Program and evaluate**
3. *Ensure departments are positioned to respond to emerging human resources needs*	**Departments develop and implement leadership development and continuity strategies**	**1. Number of employees and managers attending "leadership development training"**	**Maintain**	**Work with departments to develop and implement leadership development and continuity strategies** **Implement Succession Planning - Priority** **Evaluate Performance Management Policy**
	Review and ensure effectiveness of the staffing process	**2. Number of days to fill a position**	**Average of 20 days from closing date** **PSC will reduce total time by 2-3 days, in order to reduce from 75 to 20. Line department (managers and HR) participation is required.**	**Work with departments to review and ensure effectiveness of the staffing process. - Priority** **Implement streamline staffing - Priority**

Core Business Area 3: Human Resource Programs and Services				
Outcome	**Indicator**	**Measure**	**Target 2004/2005**	**Strategies to Achieve Target**
4. ***An environment which supports the well-being of employees and managers***	**Employee wellness**	**Employee Assistance Program (EAP) utilization rate**	**Continue to monitor trends**	**Further promote EAP, increased awareness will result in increased utilization of this preventative program thereby reducing employee absenteeism**
		Time lost due to general illness	**GI/MD = 3.75 day/employee**	**Evaluate utilization rates of EAP Program thereby reducing employee absenteeism**
	Compliance with OH&S legislation	**# of workplace accidents**	**Reduce**	**Audit compliance with corporate OH&S policy**
		Time lost due to accidents/injuries	**Reduce**	