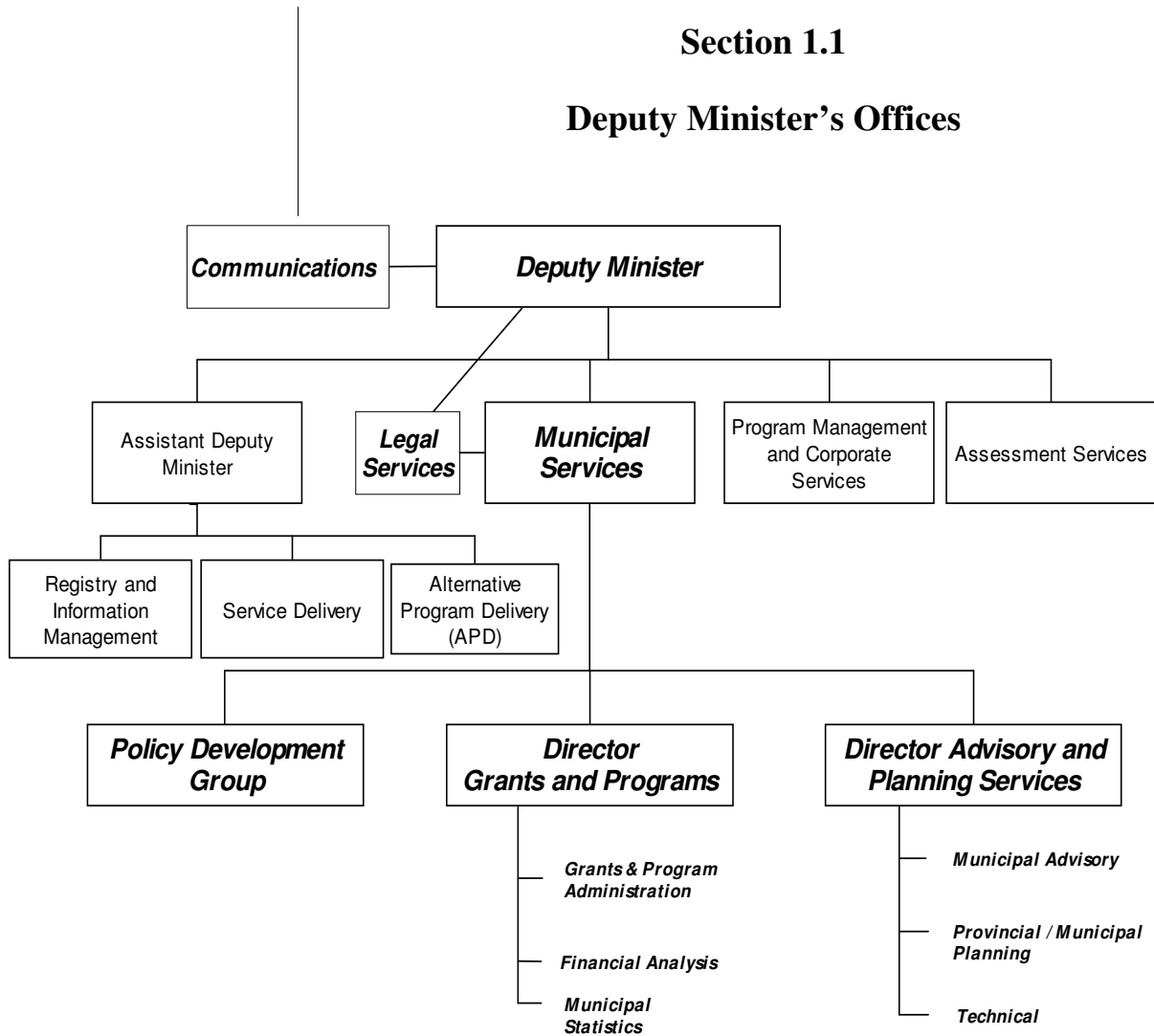


## Section 1.1 Deputy Minister's Offices



### Deputy Minister's Office

The Deputy Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is the senior public servant in the Department and reports to the Minister. The Deputy Minister's Office provides services necessary to support the Minister, the Deputy Minister and the Department.

The Department's five core businesses are consistent with its five divisions. The Department is organized on a matrix basis, meaning that it is organized around the function being performed such as service delivery or program management rather than on a sectoral or client

basis. The discussion below provides the major roles and functions (responsibilities) of each core business.

**1. Municipal Services** provides planning and advisory services related to municipal matters to the government and on behalf of the government to municipalities. The core business also operates many of the grant and other financial support programs offered to municipalities.

Programs within the Division include advice and support to municipalities in the areas of administration and finance and land use planning. The Division administers grant and financial programs for municipalities such as the Equalization Program and the Grants-in-Lieu of taxes program. In addition it also administers programs such as the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program, the Community Accessibility Program and Community Transportation Assistance Program, and the Provincial Capital Assistance Program.

Benefits derived from this business unit include municipalities that are more effective in their governance role and their ability to provide services to citizens, that are more financially viable, and able to support development which will provide long term benefits to the entire province.

**2. Program Management and Corporate Services (PMCS)** has responsibility for most of the programs offered by the Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. This includes providing strategic direction for program development, enforcement and public awareness. The Division is also accountable for related legislation, regulations and policies necessary for each program as well as for human resource support.

Currently, major program areas and activities of this core business include the Provincial Tax Commission, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Residential Tenancies, Corporate Collections, Consumer and Business Policy, Driver Safety, Corporate Development, and Audit and Enforcement in several program areas.

Benefits of these programs include a reduction in the number of deaths and injuries due to safer driving behaviour on provincial roads, a fairer and more efficient tax collection system, better consumer protection,

more effective program management by the Department, improved compliance by business with licensing requirements, optimized revenue collection by the Department on behalf of government and other departments, and a healthier and safer workplace for Department employees.

**3. Service Delivery** is responsible for delivering the programs and services offered by the Department. Service Delivery provides the majority of the direct interaction with customers on behalf of the Department. It is also responsible for the Department Call Centre, Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle offices across the province, along with managing the e-service channel. Major programs delivered by this core business include the Registry of Motor Vehicles, Residential Tenancies, Debtor Assistance and the Registry of Joint Stock Companies.

Benefits of this core business include easier access to an ever expanding number of information and other services offered by the Department on behalf of government. This is accomplished through either electronic or physical means which provide more timely responses to service requests and better quality service in terms of accessibility of the information required.

**4. Registry and Information Management Services (RIMS)** is responsible for registering and processing public records related to land, businesses and individuals. It is also responsible for the geographic information holdings of the Province and is the application and system owner of the Department's major databases.

This division operates or provides operational support to a number of registries including the Registry of Deeds, Personal Property Registry, Vital Statistics, the Registry of Joint Stock Companies and the Nova Scotia Business Registry. It leads the Province's strategy for geographic information management including developing, maintaining and distributing Nova Scotia's primary geographic information. Other major back office activities include processing for a number of programs offered by the Department such as fuel, tobacco and vehicle dealer registrations as well as support to programs offered by other departments including *Wildlife Act* licensing programs on behalf of the Department of Natural Resources and registrations on behalf of the Workers Compensation Board.

Benefits from the operation of this core business include improved efficiency in the provision of registration and processing functions on behalf of Departmental programs and external program owners, enhanced integrity and security around the information holdings of the Department, improved quality of the data contained in the holdings, easier access to that information and increased ability to share data with other government departments and agencies.

**5. Alternative Program Delivery (APD)** is responsible for the development of partnerships to deliver services on behalf of other government departments and to manage arrangements with non-government agencies to deliver services on behalf of government. Opportunities for delivery of other government services by SNSMR include transferring certain licensing and permitting functions from the Departments of Environment and Labour and on-line licence renewals with two departments as well as partnerships with several municipalities.

APD is examining, in consultation with municipalities, other delivery models for the provincial assessment program. The APD Division also delivers the Assessment Services program on behalf of the Department. Assessment Services is responsible for delivering an annual assessment roll to each of the 55 municipalities in compliance with the *Assessment Act*. The assessment roll is used by municipalities to generate revenue for services delivered by them, and the uniform assessment is used to calculate municipal contributions towards education, corrections and the distribution of provincial grants to municipalities. Legislation also requires assessment notices to be delivered annually to each property owner and to provide for an assessment appeal mechanism. The major activities in the assessment area include preparation of the annual assessment roll, a property inspection program, an appeal process, client relations and technology support.

Benefits of alternate program delivery include better quality, cost effective services being delivered to Nova Scotians and a more effective and efficient use of public resources. The Assessment section provides municipalities with a reliable and stable basis to generate revenue to fund the services required by the citizens of municipal units.

### **Additional Department functions**

In addition to the five core business sectors, other important areas of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations include:

#### **Communications**

Communications coordinates the Department's internal and external communications and media relations activities. These activities include:

- strategic planning of communications programs to support the goals and objectives of the Department
- advising the Minister, Deputy Minister and senior officials on communications issues and strategies
- issues management, identifying stakeholders and their positions on issues
- media relations, including preparing news releases, responding to media enquiries, monitoring and analyzing coverage of the Department and issues related to it
- media training for Department spokespersons to prepare them for dealings with the media
- writing speeches and speaking points for the Premier, the Minister, the Deputy Minister and senior officials; developing electronic presentations to support speeches
- preparing House statements and resolutions for the Minister
- managing the Department's advertising
- counselling other divisions and agencies in the Department with their communications needs.

Contact: Director of Communications (902) 424-6336

**Legal Services** provides guidance in the preparation and interpretation of legislation, and acts as a legal counsel to the Minister and the Department. Their activities include:

- drafting and reviewing new legislation
- representing the Department and the government in hearings and litigation
- reviewing, and approving Department contracts
- reviewing, preparing and approving Department regulations, Government-in-Council regulations, and reports and recommendations
- advising the Minister, Deputy Minister and Department staff on legal issues related to their functions

- assisting municipal solicitors with municipal law topics
- maintaining a by-law registry for use by municipalities and Department staff
- updating the Municipal Election Guides and advising the Municipal Elections Officer
- liaising with the legal community and stakeholder groups on legislative issues
- staying up-to-date on how other jurisdictions deal with legal issues facing the Department
- serving on Department, inter-department and inter-governmental committees
- delivering workshops, training, presentations and speeches on municipal law issues
- drafting letters related to legal issues for the Minister's and Deputy Minister's signatures

Contact: Please direct questions through your Municipal Advisor.

For further information on any of the services provided by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations contact our head office reception desk at 424-4141.