

Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Mission Statement

Municipal Affairs enables municipalities to build healthy, safe and viable communities, enhances fire and building safety, and works in collaboration with municipal, provincial and federal departments to strengthen provincial and municipal preparedness through planning, training and exercise.

Housing Nova Scotia (HNS) is the primary housing delivery agency in Nova Scotia. It is responsible for ensuring the availability of safe, suitable, and affordable housing for all low-income Nova Scotians.

Note: These are subject to change once Municipal Affairs and Housing have fully merged and a new/blended mission statement is created.

Responsibilities

DEPUTY MINISTER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER (HOUSING NOVA SCOTIA)

The Deputy Minister provides overall management and coordination of the activities and responsibilities of the department. As the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for Housing Nova Scotia, this position is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of social and affordable housing across the province.

Municipal Affairs – Divisions

GRANTS, PROGRAMS AND OPERATIONS

The Grants and Programs Section administers programs and distributes funding to municipalities to help build and revitalize local public infrastructure.

The Office of the Fire Marshal (OFM) establishes policies, regulations and programs to promote and enforce the principles and practices of fire and life safety for Nova Scotians. OFM advises persons or organizations, including Government regarding building and fire safety.

POLICY, PLANNING, AND ADVISORY SERVICES

Supports Nova Scotia's municipalities in their efforts to provide effective local governance and plan healthy and viable communities. Provides sound policy, planning, governance, and financial advice and services to municipal partners. Delivers operating funding and reports municipal statistics and financial condition for enhanced accountability and decision-making. Administers and supports the Regional Enterprise

Networks. Supports municipalities during municipal and school board elections. Provides policy and planning services to the Minister, Deputy Minister and divisions and agencies of the department. This includes leading coordinating or providing support for policy, legislative and regulatory initiatives; departmental business and operational planning.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE (EMO)

Enhance Nova Scotians' safety and well-being through innovative, collaborative, and integrated emergency planning and response. Enhances the safety and security of Nova Scotians, their property and the environment by providing for a prompt and coordinated response to an emergency. Working hand-in-hand with municipal authorities, EMO provides assistance in planning for emergencies, coordinates provincial resources when an emergency occurs, and assists with analysis and evaluation after an emergency.

Housing Nova Scotia – Divisions and Regional Offices

PUBLIC HOUSING

Public Housing is subsidized rental housing owned by the Province and operated by five regional Housing Authorities. Public housing is also considered and referred to as social housing. There are currently over 17,800 low-income tenants housed in 2,150 public housing buildings with over 11,300 units. Tenants must meet income eligibility thresholds to access these rental units. Rent is determined based on total household income, such that households contribute no more than 30% of total household income towards rent.

Through the Executive Director, Housing Authorities, HNS provides funding, oversight, and policy direction to five regional Housing Authorities which are responsible for the administration, operation, and maintenance of Nova Scotia's provincially-owned rental housing properties, as well as rent supplement agreements with private landlords and non-for-profit organizations. Each Housing Authority has a board responsible for tenant issues, such as approval of applicants for social housing, tenant transfers, renewal or non-renewal of leases, and responding to complaints or inquiries from tenants.

HOUSING SERVICES

The Housing Services division delivers a range of housing solutions to meet the needs of Nova Scotians with low or moderate incomes. This includes rent supplements, capital contributions for new affordable rental housing, financial assistance for low-income homeowners, supports for the community housing sector, and supports for

low to moderate-income first-time homebuyers. This division also provides funding and oversight for four Housing Services regional offices that deliver Housing Services programs including home repair/adaptation programs.

In addition to these programs, affordable rental housing is available in the private and not-for-profit sectors. HNS partners with providers in both sectors to support increased supply of affordable housing through the Affordable Housing Program, the Rental Preservation Program, and the Rental Rehabilitation and Repair Program, which provide capital contributions for new construction and preservation of affordable rental housing. Assistance is also available to landlords who provide affordable housing to low-income tenants with disabilities.

HNS, and community agencies work together to help reduce and prevent homelessness. HNS offers funding to community agencies to fund Housing Support Workers who help tenants remain housed through ongoing support services such as placing them in a unit with a rent supplement, eviction prevention support, and other support services.

HOUSING NOVA SCOTIA HEAD OFFICE

The HNS Head Office provides a number of services that support the delivery of housing programs across the province. These include Corporate Policy, Building Infrastructure and Asset Management, Building Design, Community Relations and Public Affairs, Mortgages and Loans, Real Property Services, and Financial Services.

Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

- 911 Cost Recovery Committee
- Cape Breton Island Housing Authority Board
- Cobequid Housing Authority Board
- Eastern Mainland Housing Authority Board
- Metropolitan Regional Housing Authority Board
- Municipal Finance Corporation
- Nova Scotia Assessment Appeal Tribunal
- Nova Scotia Building Advisory Committee
- Nova Scotia Fire Safety Advisory Council
- Nova Scotia Fire Services Advisory Committee
- Western Regional Housing Authority Board

Acts Administered

- *Assessment Act*
- *Building Access Act*
- *Building Code Act*
- *Ditches and Water Courses Act*
- *Emergency “911” Act*
- *Emergency Management Act*
- *Fire Safety Act*
- *Gas Distribution System Municipal Taxation Act*
- *Halifax Regional Municipality Charter*
- *Halifax Regional Water Commission Act*
- *Housing Nova Scotia Act*
- *Housing Act*
- *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act*
- *Municipal Elections Act*
- *Municipal Finance Corporation Act*
- *Municipal Fiscal Year Act*
- *Municipal Government Act*
- *Municipal Grants Act*
- *Municipal Housing Corporations Act*
- *Municipal Loan and Building Fund Act*
- *Oil Refineries and L.N.G. Plants Municipal Taxation Act*
- *Property Valuation Services Corporation Act*
- *Rural Fire District Act*
- *Wind Turbine Facilities Municipal Taxation Act*

Administrative update: **August 19, 2019**
