

Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Business Plan 2019-2020



Contents

Message from the Director and CEO 1

Mandate 2

Core Responsibilities and Services for 2019-20 3

 #1 3

 #2 4

 #3 5

Budgetary Context 6

Message from the Director and CEO



The Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission is fully committed to the creation of inclusive communities and the protection of human rights in Nova Scotia by fostering positive, productive and respectful relationships.

Fiscal year 2019-2020 will be a year devoted to continued modernization and innovation at the Commission. New initiatives to advance human rights in Nova Scotia will be put in place. These include the addition of a “Human Rights 101” online course to our virtual classroom, allowing the Commission to provide free training on a wide range of human rights issues to people and businesses in every corner of our province. The Commission will also develop and launch online tools to further improve the efficiency and transparency of our dispute resolution process.

Stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and partnerships with various community members will continue to improve the Commission’s ability to address existing and emerging human rights issues, such as racial profiling, sexual harassment in the workplace, and the conversation around reconciliation for Indigenous people.

An education campaign to increase awareness and promote accommodation of mental and physical disability in workplaces will continue this year in collaboration with the Nova Scotia business community. We anticipate that this campaign will result in the training of thousands of employees across the province using the Commission’s free online course “Working with Abilities”.

My sincere thanks go to the staff, management and Commissioners for their commitment and hard work to ensure the best possible service to the public throughout this period.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Christine Hanson

Director & CEO

Mandate

NSHRC has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency charged with administering the Nova Scotia *Human Rights Act*, a provincial statute created in 1969, with the most recent amendments in December 2012. The NSHRC is mandated by the *Human Rights Act* to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The specific duties of NSHRC are set out in the Act. NSHRC has the responsibility of administering and enforcing the provisions of the Act. In addition, it develops public information and education programs in the field of human rights to advance the principle that every person is free and equal in dignity and rights without regard to age, race, colour, religion, creed, ethnic, national or Aboriginal origin, sex (including pregnancy and pay equity), sexual orientation, physical disability, mental disability, family status, marital status, source of income, harassment (including sexual harassment), irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, association with protected groups or individuals, political belief, affiliation or activity, gender identity or gender expression.

NSHRC is further mandated to conduct and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights, and also works with government by advising and assisting its departments and agencies in regard to human rights.

NSHRC reports, as required, to the Attorney General and Minister of Justice on its business and activities, and also considers, investigates or administers any matter or activity referred by the Governor in Council or the Minister of Justice.

Core Responsibilities and Services for 2019-20

#1

Outcome: Communities within Nova Scotia are more inclusive

Goals: Advance Priority Human Rights Issues

Actions:

1. NSHRC will focus efforts on addressing longstanding issues of systemic racism related to people of African descent.
2. NSHRC will develop a framework and capacity to contribute to reconciliation with our First Nations communities.
3. NSHRC will increase visibility of the Commission in correctional facilities and address human rights issues identified in the corrections system.
4. NSHRC will continue to identify emerging human rights issues to guide the Commission in its work.

Inputs:

NSHRC will work within its existing budget to identify the necessary resources to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. It will engage and continue to work with community partners, stakeholders and other government departments and agencies to achieve this outcome.

Performance Measures:

- NSHRC will organize up to five community meetings to engage the public on priority human rights issues, such as systemic racism and reconciliation.
- Staff of the NSHRC will begin regular visits to provincial correctional facilities.

#2

Outcome: Leader and innovator in the protection and promotion of human rights

Goal: Modernize the Human Rights Commission

Actions:

1. NSHRC will expand its online training resources to provide free public education for the province on a wide range of human rights issues.
2. NSHRC will enhance the Commission's communication strategy and continue to expand our use of digital media platforms to promote human rights.
3. NSHRC will develop tools to enhance efficiency and transparency in human rights dispute resolution.
4. NSHRC will provide extensive training and development opportunities to staff.
5. NSHRC will fully incorporate restorative principles into all aspects of the Commission's work.

Input:

NSHRC will continue to work toward an improved and more effective implementation of the restorative approach to human rights dispute resolution. As the benefits of this model continue to be realized, NSHRC will be able to better direct its human resources to focus on the education and training needs component of its mandate.

Performance Measures:

- NSHRC will expand its virtual classroom by developing and launching a new online course "Human Rights 101".
- NSHRC will develop a Frequently Asked Questions section on our website and implement an online Intake Form to clarify dispute resolution processes and improve efficiency.
- NSHRC will continue to ensure that investigations of complaints are approached restoratively and are completed within one year of receipt.

#3

Outcome: Capacity is strengthened on human rights issues

Goals: Advance Dialogue and Human Rights Practices

Actions:

1. NSHRC will highlight and build upon advancements in human rights work by contributing to the national conversation surrounding human rights issues.
2. NSHRC will continue to strengthen government and media relations.
3. NSHRC will encourage the adoption of best human rights practices by:
 - a. strengthening connections with stakeholders such as professionals, volunteers, communities, businesses and organizations involved in human rights work;
 - b. providing tools, resources, and training that promote human rights;
 - c. contributing to a stronger national partnership of human rights commissions.
4. NSHRC will enhance mechanisms to give voice to affected communities, on human rights issues.
5. NSHRC will provide support for efforts to increase diversity within public institutions in the province.
6. NSHRC will work with stakeholders and police to advance the recommendations of Dr. Scott Wortley's Street Checks Report.

Inputs:

NSHRC will work within its existing budget and staffing complement to achieve this priority and complete the required actions.

Performance Measures:

- NSHRC will present on its experience with the use of restorative approaches to dispute resolution at a national human rights conference.
- NSHRC will participate in a minimum of ten workshops, presentations and/or information sessions on topics related to human rights in the 2019-20 fiscal year.
- NSHRC will continue to serve as co-chair of Partners for Human Rights, and to organize a day long consultation session on human rights with individuals, organizations and community groups dedicated to advancing human rights in the province.
- The staff of NSHRC will reflect the diversity of communities throughout Nova Scotia and Commission staff will provide support to the Public Service Commission in the development of a strategy to promote diversity and inclusion in the public service.

Budgetary Context

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)			
<u>Programs and Services</u>	<u>2018-2019 Estimate</u>	<u>2018-2019 Forecast</u>	<u>2019-2020 Estimate</u>
Gross Program Expenses	2,611	2,611	2,615
Ordinary Recoveries	---	11	---
<u>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</u>			
Department Funded Staff	24.8	23.2	24.5