

Accountability Report

2018–2019

Human Rights Commission



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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (Commission) for the year ended March 31, 2019 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Commission's Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Commission's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by the Commission's management.

I acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Commission's 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 Commission's 2018-2019 Business Plan.

Signed "Christine Hanson"

Christine Hanson
Director and CEO

Message from the Director and CEO

I am pleased to present the Accountability Report of the Commission for fiscal year 2018-2019. Fiscal year 2018-2019 has been a year devoted to continued modernization and innovation at the Commission.

New initiatives to advance human rights in Nova Scotia were put in place. The Commission launched a new online course “Working with Abilities” to provide employers with support to accommodate mental and physical disabilities in workplaces. The Commission also continued to promote the online training “Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces” to help prevent and address sexual harassment in workplaces. So far, the Commission’s virtual classroom has provided free training to approximately 20,000 Nova Scotians. An interactive and mobile device friendly website was also launched to further enhance communication with the public we serve.

The Commission’s continued stakeholder engagement, collaboration, and partnerships with various community members throughout the fiscal year helped to improve the Commission’s ability to address existing and emerging human rights issues. In collaboration with the Board of Police Commissioners, Halifax Regional Police, the RCMP, and community members, the Commission released a high-profile independent report on March 27, concerning police street checks in Halifax. The report included analysis of twelve years of street check data, survey data, and information gathered from extensive community consultations and consultations with police.

Throughout fiscal year 2018-19, the Commission continued its commitment to service excellence and application of best practices in the protection and promotion of human rights in Nova Scotia. The Commission’s policy and procedures on dispute resolution went through an in-depth review and stakeholder consultation to improve how complaints are processed to ensure fair, effective, and accessible services for all Nova Scotians. A new strategic plan (2018-2023) was developed and approved to help guide the Commission’s work on advancing priority human rights issues in the coming years.

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.

Signed “Christine Hanson”

Christine Hanson
Director and CEO

Financial Results

	2018-2019 Estimate	2018-2019 Actuals	2018-2019 Variance
Human Rights Commission	<i>(\$thousands)</i>		
Departmental Expenses:			
Administration	906	814	(92)
Support Services	1,705	1,767	62
Total: Departmental Expenses	2,611	2,581	(30)
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenue	0	0	0
Fees and Other Charges	0	0	0
Ordinary Recoveries	0	38	38
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	0	38	38
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	24.8	23.2	(1.6)
<u>Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:</u>			
<u>Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:</u>			
Recoveries from education training			
<u>TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:</u>			
<u>Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:</u>			

Measuring Our Performance

2018-2019 Core Responsibilities and Services

#1

Outcome: Communities within Nova Scotia are more inclusive

Goals: Meaningfully engage, educate and support people and communities to raise awareness and address issues of systemic discrimination

Actions:

Proactive, strategic stakeholder engagement

1. The Commission focused efforts to increase strategic stakeholder engagement with Nova Scotians on human rights through partnerships, public events and social media.

Strategic partnerships and collaboration

2. The Commission worked with ongoing partners in the area of human rights and identified new strategic partnership opportunities to advance its mandate.
3. The Commission added new online courses to its virtual campus to continue to make human rights education and promotion more accessible to the public across the province.
4. The Commission continued to serve as co-chair of Partners for Human Rights, a committee made up of individuals, organizations and community groups dedicated to advancing human rights.

Support for Commissioners

5. The Commission facilitated a planning session with the Commissioners resulting in a five-year strategic plan (2018-2023) to guide the work of the Commission, including the enhanced engagement and participation of Commissioners on priority human rights issues.

Community Conversations Initiative

6. The Commission build upon the work of the Community Conversations initiative, focusing on research, communications and engagement activities within our African Nova Scotian communities on the issue of police street checks, to address issues of systemic racism in the province.

Inputs:

The Commission continued to work within its existing budget and staffing compliment to achieve this priority and complete the required actions. It engaged and continued to work with

community partners, stakeholders and other government departments and agencies to achieve this outcome.

Performance Measures:

- The staff of the Commission will reflect the diversity of communities throughout Nova Scotia.
 - In 2018-19, the Commission had a staffing complement of 25, with over half of its members reflecting the diversity of Nova Scotia’s communities.
- The Commission will develop two new online human rights themed courses to assist businesses in protecting and promoting human rights.
 - The Commission developed the online course “Working with Abilities” to support employers in accommodation of mental and physical disability in workplaces. The Commission now plans to launch the online course “Human Rights 101” next fiscal year.
- The Commission will organize up to five community meetings to engage the public on priority human rights issues, such as street checks and reconciliation.
 - The Commission hosted a total of ten community meetings relating to priority human rights issues, including street checks, systemic racism, and diversity and inclusion as it specifically related to Justice’s Agencies, Boards and Commissions.

#2

Outcome: The Commission will be known provincially as a leader and innovator in the protection and promotion of human rights

Goal: The Commission will demonstrate leadership in the protection of human rights through innovation and the use of best practices.

Actions:

Review and improve internal processes

1. The Commission continued to refine its dispute resolution processes and identified and acted on efficiencies in its delivery of services.
2. The Commission completed its assessment of the use of restorative approaches to human rights dispute resolution and updated the Commission’s policies and procedures to reflect best practices.

3. The Commission continued to monitor processing times for complaints and board of inquiry hearings to ensure a timely resolution of all matters.

Sharing best practices with its partners

4. The Commission maintained efforts to protect human rights by the sharing of best practices and knowledge of restorative approaches to human rights dispute resolution.
5. The Commission chaired the Education and Communication Working Group of the Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Associations (CASHRA) and launched CASHRA's new website and virtual classroom to provide training across Canada in both French and English.

Preventing and addressing sexual harassment

6. The Commission continued efforts to prevent and address sexual harassment, in partnership with the business community, through the "Safe Spaces Make Great Workplaces" education campaign.

Modernize the *Human Rights Act*

7. The Commission continued to work with the Department of Justice to modernize the *Human Rights Act* to reflect advancements in human rights law, as well as amendments to improve the dispute resolution process.

Input:

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

Performance Measures:

- The Commission will continue to ensure that investigations of complaints are completed within one year of receipt.
 - The Commission continued monitoring the investigation of complaints. During fiscal year 2018-19, the Commission revised its dispute resolution procedures to include a target of completing investigations in less than 200 days.
- The Commission will offer up to four free human rights education sessions throughout the province in the 2018-19 fiscal year.
 - During fiscal 2018-19, ten free human rights education sessions were offered throughout the province to provincial government and non-government employees, and community and non-profit organizations. This represents an increase in the number of sessions offered from those offered in 2017-18.

- The Commission will participate in a minimum of ten workshops, presentations and/or information sessions on topics related to human rights in the 2018-19 fiscal year.
 - A total of 28 workshops, presentations and information sessions were held during the 2018-19 fiscal year. A total of 1447 individuals attended these sessions. The quantitative increase in the number of sessions - is due to higher demand from the general public, however, the decrease in the number of attendees resulted from a lower number of youth attending the 2018 Youth Expo than in 2017.

#3

Outcome: The Commission is a preferred place of employment within the network of provincial departments and agencies.

Goals: The Commission is a respectful workplace that is dynamic, embraces differences and fosters continuous learning.

Actions:

Create and sustain a workplace of excellence

1. The Commission continued to focus on activities that enhanced its overall organizational development.

Support for staff

2. The Commission continued to invest in technological enhancements to improve internal communications.
3. The Commission operationalized its staff orientation manual.
4. Commission staff participated in regular learning opportunities and information sharing sessions.
5. The Commission continued to support workplace wellness initiatives for staff throughout the year.

Learning organization

6. The Commission continued to be an organization that demonstrated a commitment to continuous learning.

Inputs:

The Commission worked within its existing budget and staffing complement to achieve this priority and completed the required actions. The Commission worked with the Public Service

Commission to capitalize on existing training and learning opportunities, and support for a healthy workplace.

Performance Measures:

- All managers and staff of the Commission will complete learning plans and will have the opportunity to attend at least one professional development course or conference by March 31, 2019.
 - Learning plans were reviewed and updated for each manager and staff member at the beginning of fiscal 2018-19.
- Increased understanding by all staff of the various roles and responsibilities within the Commission.
 - The Commission held several informal in-house learning sessions on the various roles and responsibilities of the different departments within the Commission throughout 2018-19.
- The Commission will hold at least six training sessions for staff on issues including human rights education, complaints adjudication and healthy workplace practices.
 - The Commission held one training session for Commission staff during fiscal year 2018-19. Other training sessions were proposed, however, due to conflicts in scheduling and availability of presenters, some of these training sessions were deferred to the next fiscal year.

Appendix A

Annual Report under Section 18 of the Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011.

The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

Please use the following format to satisfy the disclosure obligation:

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2018-2019
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	NA
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	NA
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	NA