

# **Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission**

## **Business Plan 2026-2027**



## Message from the Director and CEO

On behalf of the staff and Commissioners of the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission (the 'Commission'), I am pleased to present the Commission's 2026–2027 Business Plan. At a time when human rights issues are increasingly visible and deeply felt across Nova Scotia, this plan signals a clear moment of renewal.

Nova Scotians have told us they want a system that is easier to navigate, more responsive to lived experience, and capable of delivering timely outcomes without losing its human core. This business plan answers that call and advances the Commission's responsiveness in partnership with government, staff, and communities throughout the province.

Over the coming year, our focus is sharp and ambitious. The Commission will enhance access to justice by reducing backlogs in inquiry assessments, early resolution, and investigation processes. Efforts will also be directed towards building public confidence and advancing efficiencies. These initiatives will complement our ongoing dedication to human-centered, restorative service delivery and accessible public education. By investing in staff development, strengthening competencies, and optimizing operational strategies, we are increasing our capacity to address current challenges effectively and deliver meaningful outcomes for Nova Scotians.

Original signed by

Joseph Fraser  
Director and CEO

## Mandate

The Human Rights Commission has a unique role within Nova Scotia. It is an independent government agency tasked with administering the *Human Rights Act* (the 'Act'), a provincial statute created in 1969 and most recently amended in 2012. The Commission is mandated by the Act to help build inclusive communities and protect human rights in Nova Scotia.

The Act also sets out the specific duties of the Commission, primarily 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, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, physical or mental disability, irrational fear of contracting an illness or disease, ethnic, national or Aboriginal origin, family status, marital status, source of income, political belief, affiliation or activity, association with protected groups or individuals, sexual harassment, harassment of protected groups or individuals, or retaliation.

The Commission is also mandated to conduct and encourage research by universities and other bodies in the general field of human rights, provide advice to government departments and agencies regarding human rights issues, and assist individuals and private organizations concerned with human rights matters, offering recommendations on increasing awareness both within and outside the province.

Pursuant to the Act, the Commission reports to the Minister of Justice on its activities, and considers, investigates, or administers any matter or activity referred to it by the Minister or the Governor-in-Council.

## Priority Actions

The Commission continues to make changes that will enhance the administration of its dispute resolution process across the province. The Commission is committed to advancing a system that is more accessible, inclusive, and responsive, reflecting the diverse needs and experiences of individuals and communities throughout the province. This will not only improve the experience for those engaging with the system; it also supports government's priorities of creating safe and resilient communities across Nova Scotia

Over the coming year, the Commission will prioritize the protection of human rights and improve access to justice by addressing backlogs in inquiry assessment, early resolution, and investigation processes. While focusing on backlog elimination, the Commission remains committed to maintaining fair, consistent, human-centered service delivery grounded in restorative practices.

### Build Organizational Capacity

The Commission will strengthen service delivery by investing in organizational capability and continuous improvement. This includes ensuring staff have access to the training, tools, and resources required to consistently meet defined service standards for timeliness, clarity, and quality. Ongoing process improvements will be implemented to enhance efficiency and improve operational effectiveness.

### Eliminate the Intake Assessment Backlog

The Commission will prioritize prompt assessment of inquiries. By working towards the elimination of the intake backlog, the Commission will improve timely access to service, provide clarity to individuals seeking assistance, and strengthen public confidence through a timelier process.

### Reduce the Complaint Resolution Backlog

The Commission will ensure that accepted complaints move more efficiently through its processes toward resolution. By working to clear the backlog of cases awaiting early resolution and investigation, the Commission will improve overall process efficiency by reducing wait times and ensuring matters are concluded fairly and within a reasonable timeframe.

# Financial Summary

<b>Departmental Expenses Summary</b>			
<b>(\$ thousands)</b>			
<b><u>Programs and Services</u></b>	<b><u>2025-26</u></b>	<b><u>2025-26</u></b>	<b><u>2026-27</u></b>
	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Forecast</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
<b>Gross Program Expenses</b>	3,080	3,080	3,309
<b>Ordinary Recoveries</b>	16	16	-
<b>Funded Staff (# of FTEs)</b>	26.5	25.4	26.5
<b>Department Funded Staff</b>			

**Note:**  
 For Ordinary Revenues, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 2  
 For TCA Purchase Requirements, see Estimates and Supplementary Detail Book, Chapter 1