



Accountability Report 2019–20

Community Services



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Accountability Report 2019–2020

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Contents

Accountability Statement.....	2
Message from the Minister.....	3
Financial Results.....	5
Our Mandate, Programs and Agency.....	7
Measuring Our Performance.....	7
2019-20 Business Plan Accomplishments.....	7
Client-focused Outcomes.....	7
Clients will be supported to have more control over their own lives.....	7
Clients will be better able to meet their basic needs.....	7
Clients are safe from abuse and violence.....	8
Clients will be more included in their communities.....	8
More clients will be attached to the labour market.....	9
System-focused Outcomes.....	10
Supports and services are delivered efficiently.....	10
The system of supports and services is a balanced mix of prevention and intervention.....	11
Supports and services are accessible.....	12
DCS staff and delivery partners are empowered to make a positive difference in people’s lives ...	13
Future Initiatives.....	13
Appendix A: Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act.....	15

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2020 is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Community Services' Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department of Community Services outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Department of Community Services management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Community Services 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 Department of Community Services 2019-20 Business Plan.

Minister: Honourable Kelly Regan (Original signed by)

Deputy Minister: Tracey Taweel (Original signed by)

Message from the Minister



At the Department of Community Services, we believe all Nova Scotians want to provide for themselves and their families, contribute to their communities, and lead fulfilling lives.

At times, however, the challenges of doing so can be overwhelming. Sometimes these challenges are economic – a lack of access to food, shelter, and transportation.

Other times, there can be a need for services or family supports, for example, to help parents raise their children and keep them safe and healthy or a need for services to help heal after fleeing domestic violence.

Poverty affects people in different ways and our role is to provide effective supports and assistance for people so that they can live happy and fulfilling lives. The services we provide play a significant role in contributing to better futures for Nova Scotians and improving the overall health and well-being of communities throughout this province.

This past year, we introduced the Standard Household Rate, which saw all income assistance clients move to the policy maximum and receive an increase of either 2 or 5 per cent. This change represents the largest increase to the income assistance budget ever.

Investments in our youth are fundamental to breaking the cycle of poverty that manifests generation after generation. We know there are a number of measures that help children in low income families achieve success as adults. Within our department, Employment Support Services focus on providing access to skills-upgrading, training, education and job opportunities to help young people avoid the need for income assistance.

Within this program, there are a suite of services that help young people as they move into adulthood. They are supported through this transition into the workforce with a continuum of programs.

In recent years, we have invested significantly in targeted interventions focused on better meeting the needs of these youth. For example, in 2018-2019, we introduced EDGE, an employment pilot program for Nova Scotians aged 18 to 26 who receive income assistance. The program, designed in part by young people, is a first for Nova Scotia. Additionally, high school-aged students who are clients of the department and are looking to gain work experience and explore careers within their community now have more opportunities through the Career Rising program.

Another key area of our work at Community Services is supporting Nova Scotians with disabilities and their families. The Disability Support Program is committed to providing participants with the ability to live in community and the choice of services that will allow them to do so. We recognize that people are best supported when they are living in a community, where they are true community members with opportunities for personal growth. To that end, we'll create 50 new community-based living placements in 2020-21, at an annualized investment of \$11.4 million.

Department of Community Services Accountability Report 2019-20

Safe and healthy children, youth, and families are key to building a stronger Nova Scotia. We need to ensure children and youth are protected and families are supported.

At Community Services, we often support families and children when they are in crisis. Our goal is to move to a Child Welfare system that focuses more on prevention and early intervention and away from crisis.

That is why government is increasing its investment, over the next three years, to expand and enhance programming in Prevention and Early Intervention. This additional investment, amounting to more than \$7.6 million annually by year three, will mean that total Prevention and Early Intervention funding will almost double by 2022-23. New programming in the first year will support children, families, and community in a number of different areas. This includes four new Parenting Journey sites and the expansion of existing sites. Parenting Journey is a home visitation program that provides individual support for families experiencing complex social, emotional, and familial challenges.

These are just a few of the initiatives we have undertaken to help Nova Scotians lead their best lives. Please read more about this work here in the Department's 2019-2020 Accountability Report.

In closing, I wish to offer my personal thanks to the staff of Community Services. Through their dedication and commitment, they're making lives better for the Nova Scotians we serve.

Thank you.

Kelly Regan, Minister, Community Services

Financial Results

Accountability Report - Financial Table and Variance Explanation			
Department of Community Services			
For the Year Ending March 31, 2020			
Program & Service Area	2019-20	2019-20	2019-20
	Estimate	Actuals	Variance
(\$ thousands)			
Departmental Expenses:			
Senior Management	949	925	(24)
Policy and Innovation	9,985	9,929	(56)
Corporate Services Unit	4,055	4,126	71
Service Delivery	93,452	101,484	8,032
Strategic Services	12,874	13,467	593
Disability Support Program	369,070	384,711	15,641
Child, Youth and Family Support Program	96,240	118,027	21,787
Employment Support and Income Assistance Program	349,011	354,033	5,022
NS Advisory Council on the Status of Women	12,268	12,383	115
Total: Departmental Expenses	947,904	999,085	51,181
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	0	13,809	13,809
Fees and Other Charges	3	9	6
Ordinary Recoveries	15,732	17,610	1,878
Total Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	15,735	31,428	15,693
TCA Purchase Requirements	985	1,101	116
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	1,550.2	1,613.4	63.2

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Community Services expenses were \$51.2 million or 5.4% per cent higher than Estimate primarily due to increases of \$21.8 million in the Child, Youth and Family Support Program as a result of an increase in the number of placements for children with complex needs; \$15.6 million in Disability Support Programming due to growth in programs supporting DSP clients in their homes, additional customized/complex placements, funding to service providers to enable long service award pay outs, and one-time capital contributions to several Adult Service Centres; \$8.0 million in Service Delivery due to increased demand for supports for children in care and \$5.0 million in Employment Support and Income Assistance due to increased caseloads, and one-time emergency payments related to COVID-19.

Ordinary Revenues Variance Explanation:

The Department's revenues variance is entirely due to the transfer of real property from Housing Nova Scotia to Department of Community Services as a result of the Housing transfer from Department of

Department of Community Services Accountability Report 2019-20

Community Services to Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing effective April 1, 2019. This revenue entry has been eliminated upon Consolidation of the Public Accounts.

Ordinary Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department's recoveries variance is primarily due to higher than anticipated Assignment of Maintenance recoveries.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

The Department's TCA variance is due to approved timing changes required to complete the initial phase of the Digital Services project. The project commenced in late 2018-19.

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The Department's FTEs were higher than Estimate primarily due to increased demand for supports for children in care of the province.

Our Mandate, Programs and Agency

The overall mandate of the Department of Community Services is to provide effective supports and assistance for people in need so that they can live happy and fulfilling lives. The services provided by the Department form Nova Scotia's social safety net and play a significant role in contributing to better futures for Nova Scotians and improving the overall health and well-being of communities throughout the province.

The Department has three core business areas: Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA); Child, Youth and Family Supports (CYFS); and the Disability Support Program (DSP). The Department is also responsible for Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

Detailed information regarding our core programs can be found in the 2019-20 Business Plan.

Measuring Our Performance

2019-20 Business Plan Accomplishments

The following describes key accomplishments against actions identified in the 2019-20 Business Plan. The accomplishments are presented in the context of the overall outcomes the Department aims to achieve:

Client-focused Outcomes

Clients will be supported to have more control over their own lives

- The Department made significant investments in community-based programming for individuals living with disabilities – including Independent Living Support, and Alternative Family Support. These investments contributed toward an increased number of participants accessing their preferred support option, giving them more independence and the opportunity to live the life they choose.
- In partnership with Heartwood Centre for Youth Development, a provincial Youth Round Table was established. Workshops were held in 2019 to bring youth from around the province together to discuss various Departmental projects that impact youth in care. While consistent attendance was a barrier, the youth voice helped to inform various CYFS Transformation projects related to youth and children in care. The Department has plans to continue with the Youth Roundtable with the intention that it becomes a long-term model to incorporate the voice of youth in ongoing program and policy design.

Clients will be better able to meet their basic needs

- The Department introduced the Standard Household Rate (SHR). SHR is a simplified approach to provide assistance to ESIA clients. It increased the rates for people on Income Assistance to the maximum level of assistance as determined by their household composition. Assistance rates were further increased by 5% for single clients who own or rent their shelter and are disabled; are fleeing an abusive situation; have a chronic mental, cognitive or physical condition that limits participation in employment services; are 55 years of age or older; or are youth aged 16-18. All other clients received a further 2% increase to their rates. Our data shows that the implementation of Standard Household Rate has resulted in:
 - 100% of IA recipients and DSP clients received an increased basic rate after the first month of implementation in January 2020.
 - More clients chose to work and/or work more hours – Between October 2018—March 2020, there was a greater proportion of ESIA and DSP participants who were working, and the average wages of these clients were consistently higher than previous years.

Department of Community Services Accountability Report 2019-20

- Clients gain financial independence and are no longer on Income Assistance – From October 2018–March 2020, there was a steady number of exits from Income Assistance for long-term employment, with a significant increase in early 2020. The fiscal year 2019-20 saw a monthly average of over 400 Income Assistance clients exiting the program.
- In 2019-20, in conjunction with the introduction of the Standard Household Rate, the Department increased the income threshold eligibility for the Poverty Reduction Credit (PRC) to \$16,000. This means that all clients who were eligible for the PRC remain eligible following the implementation of SHR. In 2019-20, more than 14,000 income assistance clients were eligible for the PRC and have an enhanced ability to meet their basic needs
- Grants were provided to a wide range of organizations and communities to test innovative poverty reduction projects and develop capacity in communities across the province. Grants supported initiatives aimed at supporting youth, employment, families at risk, people with disabilities, and low-income earners. Funding also supported initiatives such as a Rural Transportation Subsidy Program, Mobile Food Market, and an African Nova Scotian Youth Employment Lab. Evaluation is a key component of this work in order to learn and share best practices.

Clients are safe from abuse and violence

- As part of the redesign of Nova Scotia's child welfare system, the Department expanded and diversified placement options to help ensure children can be placed according to their needs. Hope Landing, a child-caring facility, opened in the spring 2019. Children and youth placed at Hope Landing have on-site programming, as well as access to supports and services through a network of community-based service providers. Our data shows that:
 - Children and youth are placed according to needs: Linked to the success of the program, all children and youth placed at Hope Landing met the profile of who the program was intended for. Between March 2019 to March 2020, there were 11 children placed at Hope Landing, all of whom required the specialized supports offered.
- In 2019-20, the Department completed a review of the foster care program to determine how best to recruit and retain the next generation of foster families, while improving the lives of children in care through supportive and nurturing families.

Clients will be more included in their communities

- Further work on expanding community-based options, such as Small Option Homes has continued and will continue in the coming year. Three of eight new homes we began developing in 2018 are up and running today. The remaining five homes are in various stages of construction with completion scheduled over the course of 2020-21.
- The Department trialed new day programming options for youth. Fourteen service providers developed programs to enable youth with disabilities, aged 16-24, to participate in meaningful activities that helped them work toward their goals in their community. The project was extended for an additional nine months due to positive feedback from service providers and participants.
- The Department invested in community-based programs such as Alternative Family Support and Independent Living Support. This enabled more than 31 participants to move into the community-based support option of their choice with supports that were individualized to meet their needs. Three other participants received an increase to their support hours, enhancing their ability to engage in the community.

- The Department worked with partners at the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW), the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), Diverse Abilities NS, program participants, families, and other community stakeholders to develop a transition plan to move away from large, facility-based programming, toward more community-based supports. To that end, an extensive plan that considers the financial implications and best practices associated with making this transition has been developed and approved.
- The Department piloted two different programs aimed at enhancing and increasing supports and services available to families caring for a child with a disability at home. The Enhanced In-Home Support Pilot offered a range of new services for families with children with high support needs aimed at ensuring the child could remain in the family home. The services offered included a multi-disciplinary outreach team, respite services provided by qualified staff hired by service providers, intensive support planning and case management, and increased funding to purchase supports and services. A total of 8 families with 10 children participated in this pilot. The Youth Day Program Pilot offered new programs and services to ensure young people had meaningful activities once they leave high school. These programs provided employment supports, life skill development and recreational opportunities for youth living with disabilities across the province. Both pilots were hugely successful and will inform future programming. In 2019-20, 135 youth participated in the pilot.
- In 2019-20, the Department worked to develop a range of services for children and youth with disabilities, and to provide more support to families to help them avoid or delay out-of-home placements for their children. New service ideas were piloted, and extensive consultations were conducted to gather information on a range of services that will benefit Nova Scotian children living with disabilities.
- The Department created 11 homes for children and youth living with disabilities who were previously living in temporary settings. These new homes have standards and expectations which are aligned with the disability-related needs of children and youth. These homes ensure the children are well cared for in a supportive environment and their goals and aspirations are considered.
- The DCS Bus Pass is a pilot project in partnership with the City of Halifax that offers free bus passes to all eligible Income Assistance (IA) clients in HRM. In 2019-20, over 16,500 Nova Scotians benefitted from the bus pass pilot. The pilot has been extended for another two years so that annual bus passes continue to be issued to all eligible recipients, spouses and dependent children between the ages of 13 and 18 (with parental consent). Children age 12 and under do not receive a bus pass as they can ride the bus for free when accompanied by a pass holder.

More clients will be attached to the labour market

- The Educate to Work program provides full funding for ESIA clients to attend NSCC or private career college programming. Supports include tuition, books, mandatory fees, transportation, childcare, tutoring, and supplies. Wage subsidy funding is also available to support ESIA students in gaining valuable work experience in their field of study. Work placements provide increased field experience for ESIA students, help build confidence and ultimately better position the student to achieve a successful employment outcome in the province. In 2019-20, there were 217 Nova Scotians participating in the program.
- Inspiring Success was expanded to support more ESIA clients and DCS-attached youth to gain invaluable government work experience through the summer months. The work experience supported participants to increase their work readiness, establish new employer

networks/contacts and succeed in the labour market. There were 51 students and 16 participating Departments and Agencies in this program.

- In 2019-20, the Department undertook an evaluation of the EDGE Program, an early intervention pilot for new youth intakes to ESIA and ESS. The evaluation results showed the program is achieving very positive outcomes, with high completion rates and labour market attachment. It also indicated that further support is required in order to meet rural transportation and mental health needs of participants. Integration of enhanced supports in these two areas will be the focus of 2020-21. In 2019-20, there were 125 participants in the program.
- The ongoing renewal of the Work Activity Program continues to improve and expand service offerings to more barriered ESIA clients who are interested in engaging in work. The program provides access to training in a learning environment that provides a holistic and supportive approach to attaching to work. In 2019-20, there were 577 participants in the program.

System-focused Outcomes

Supports and services are delivered efficiently

- Foster families are a foundational component of a sustainable and effective child protection system. In 2019-20, the Department worked on a project to address a new Foster Parent Screening and Approval Process to make it quicker and more efficient to approve foster families. Recommendations were identified and work is now underway preparing for implementation of this project. DCS continues to work to attract and retain more foster families through various initiatives. Starting in January 2017, there were increased numbers of foster parents, reversing a long-term trend.
- In 2018-19, a new Alternative Family Care Program (AFC) was launched that included financial support (through a basic monthly payment) for caregivers of children or youth under a third-party supervision orders or where custody has been transferred because of child protection issues. Throughout 2019-20, DCS anticipated and saw an increase in the uptake of private families and guardians into this program. This means more children will be cared for by a trusted family member or friend, thus making it more likely they will remain in their home community rather than coming into care of the Minister of Community Services. Our data is showing:
 - More family and community members and becoming caregivers – In fiscal year 2019-20, there was an increase of approved caregivers in this program, with a total of 259 approved AFC caregivers by March 2020.
 - Fewer children are brought into care – Linked to the success of this program, there was an overall decrease in the number of children in temporary care in fiscal year 2019-20.
 - More AFC children returning home – In fiscal year 2019-20, there was an increase in children returning home. In March 2020, 35% of children in the Alternative Foster Care program had returned home.
- The Department developed a new placement information collection tool, which collects information about the attributes of children and youth in care and streamlines processes to support improved outcomes and responses to each child's identified needs. In 2019-20, our data has shown there was reduced duplication of data collection and data entry. Linked to the success of the program, there was increased efficiency in the placement process.
- The Department implemented a new Placement Policy that will ensure services are delivered in a more consistent and efficient manner. Preliminary evaluation results indicated most DSP staff and service providers agree that efficiency has increased since being managed by a Provincial Placement Coordinator and there has been an improvement in data collection that will inform

future decisions regarding DSP services. Data collected from new processes associated with this policy will also ensure the Department is better able to predict demand for services.

- A high-level outcome-based framework for Prevention and Early Intervention programs has been completed. The work associated with measuring the impact of community-based programs will specifically align with Prevention and Early Intervention expansion activities occurring in 2020-21.
- Projects were advanced in 2019-20 that will make it easier for Nova Scotians to connect with programs and services, including on-line options. New approaches to be launched in 2020-21 will reflect the needs and experiences of Nova Scotians served by the Department.

The system of supports and services is a balanced mix of prevention and intervention

- The Department remains focused on improving and expanding preventive supports to youth at risk to disrupt the cycle of inter-generational poverty. Programming has been designed to support youth attached to DCS as dependents of ESIA clients and youth in care in a comprehensive career-focused way from the age of 12 through to post-secondary and labour market attachment. In 2019-20, the department provided initiatives to support youth at risk:
 - In 2019-20, a total of 83 participants fully completed the Career Rising program and are eligible to access educational funds upon post-secondary enrollment. The Career Rising Program provides skills development camps, work experience within predominantly resource-based sectors, and a post-secondary grant to dependents of ESIA clients and youth in care ages 15-19.
 - The Youth Development Initiative (YDI) provides career-focused, project-based programming and wage subsidies for work experience to dependents of ESIA clients and youth in care ages 12-20. In 2019-20, 78 youth participated in the wage subsidy component and 312 youth participated in the project component.
 - The department also provides employment-focused support to help youth ages 15 and over who are living in residential facilities. This program supports approximately 40 youth annually.
- The Disability Support Program trialed expanded services for families caring at home for a child with a disability through the Enhanced In-Home Support (EIHS) Pilot. These supports focused on preventing the need for more intrusive services such as residential placements. The EIHS project presented a unique learning opportunity to work closely with select families, Service Providers, and Department of Community Services (DCS) Care Coordinators to learn together and try new ways to meet the needs of the child(ren) with disabilities and their families. By design, the EIHS project put the child and family at the center and focused on trialing the following 4 enhanced in-home supports: Intense Family Support Planning (IFSP), Agency Delivered Respite (ADR), Disability Needs Funding (DNF), and Outreach Support (OS). A total of 8 families participated in the pilot.
- In 2019-20, the Department continued its work to strengthen its Child Welfare prevention and early intervention efforts so that children, youth, and families get the right help at the right time, to reduce instances and impact of abuse and neglect. The focus during 2019-20 was to make updates to the “Nurturing Strong African Nova Scotian Families” parenting program. This was done in collaboration with the African Nova Scotian facilitators of the program and was based on both parent and facilitator feedback. A plan to train more facilitators to support implementation of the program in more locations is underway.
- In 2019-20, the Department finished operationalizing the Sexual Violence Prevention and Supports program, which includes: programming for youth who have been sexually exploited/trafficked; outreach to young people in marginalized and underserved communities

through relationship building and engagement; community mobilization led by and for marginalized communities; and ongoing promotion of the online training and public awareness campaign. A new training module focused on African Nova Scotian Perspectives was added to the online training course, Supporting Survivors of Sexual Violence. Another module on sexual exploitation is in development. In 2019-20, our program saw:

- Increased contracts in Contracted Foster Care program for sexually-exploited youth (CFC YSE) –Contracted Foster Care for Youth who have experienced Sexual Exploitation is a placement option for youth with unique needs to be placed with foster families who have the specialized skills and commitment to meet those needs. Between May 2019 and March 2020 there were several new CFC contracts for sexually exploited youth which aims to meet the increasing demand for placements.
- Children are placed based on their needs rather than availability – Linked to the success of the program, almost all children and youth who were in the program and required a placement based on their needs, received one of these specialized placements.
- The Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women continued its work with partners across government and community to build relationships, knowledge, and understanding to develop *Standing Together*, the province’s coordinated approach to prevent domestic violence. Fiscal year 2019-20 saw the conclusion of the second year of this provincial commitment. To date, \$5 million has been invested in projects and initiatives that are finding innovative approaches and working in more integrated ways to disrupt cycles of violence and address this complex issue.

Supports and services are accessible

- Accessing therapeutic services and other supports can be challenging for children in care. In 2019-20, the Department initiated a pilot to test a new approach to accessing these services. The pilot is scheduled to run for 18 months and will be evaluated after this period to determine its effectiveness.
- Respite funding enables individuals to purchase supports that provide primary caregivers breaks from continuous caregiving responsibilities. Respite funding can also be used to purchase supports specific to a participant’s disability-related needs and goals, and to promote the participant’s independence, self-reliance, and social inclusion. Some individuals and families eligible for respite funding struggle to find respite workers to fulfill this role. As a result, the Department implemented a Respite and Supports Navigation Service in December 2018, aimed at helping families find suitable workers. In 2019-20, the Department collected data to evaluate this service to determine the effectiveness of the matching service. Our data for 2019-20 has shown there were:
 - Consistent new respite matches – New respite matches were made every month in 2019, peaking with 64 new matches in September of that year.
 - Respite matches sustained for 3-months and greater – In 2019, a monthly average of 55% of these matches were sustained beyond three months.
 - An increase in available respite workers – Linked to the success of the program, there was a significant increase in the number of available respite workers from January 2019 to January 2020. The trend has been consistently moving upward, with December 2019 seeing a total of 136 respite workers available.
- Public consultations on changes to adoption records legislation were completed and involved 11 community information sessions, with a total of 104 attendees; key stakeholder meetings; 25 written responses; and 2,733 completed surveys. Most participants were in favor of moving towards open adoption records legislation. Many respondents expressed the importance of

treating all adoption records and parties to an adoption equally, regardless of when the adoption occurred.

- The Mi'kmaw Nation was consulted through the KMKNO (Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn Negotiation Office).
- Culturally-specific consultations also occurred within the African Nova Scotian (ANS) community and engaged 73 African Nova Scotians on three specific areas of change – birth siblings and relatives, birth fathers, and supports and services.

DCS staff and delivery partners are empowered to make a positive difference in people's lives

- The Department piloted a new foster care contracted funding model and is aiming to increase the pilot to include additional foster families in the coming year. The model aims to reduce administrative burden for both foster parents and staff, eliminate the need for foster families to pay out of pocket for children in care expenses, and serve as an incentive to foster youth with highly specialized needs.
- Across all DCS divisions, the establishment of an agreement with Service Providers is now part of the established process for new and expanded programs as they are developed and implemented. These agreements support both the Service Provider and Department to better measure and track client and Department (system) outcomes. Work continues with Service Providers that deliver existing programs to establish agreements, ensuring accountabilities are clearly outlined and expected outcomes and reporting are developed.
- A review conducted to assess the administrative work that Social Workers at DCS are currently doing, with the goal of providing more time to work with children and families by redistributing this work to other existing positions. Meetings were held with Social Workers throughout the province and a survey was administered for input. Analysis and next steps have been developed, with implementation planning to follow.

Ongoing Initiatives

- Department leadership and staff are committed to working restoratively to understand, heal and build stronger, deeper, more appreciative and respectful relationships with our African/Black colleagues, clients and families. Staff throughout the Department will continue learning and responding to the outcomes of the Restorative Inquiry and systemic racism by undertaking a review of programs, policies and services through an Afrocentric lens.
- Nova Scotia continues to work with Mi'kmaw partners to address immediate priorities and develop a forward path to respond to the Calls for Justice in Nova Scotia. The principles that guided our approach during the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry—honouring relationships, keeping families at the centre, and collaboration—continue to inform our work and actions taken to date. In 2020-21, we will continue to work with Mi'kmaw, Federal, Provincial, and Territorial colleagues to explore how we can address root causes and move forward together. Specific future priorities include:
 - Supporting NSNWA to re-open the Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre in Sydney, as part of government's enhanced investments to prevent and address human trafficking. This includes a commitment of \$150K per year over the next five years dedicated to the Jane Paul Centre.
 - Through *Creating Communities of Care Through a Customary Law Approach*, we continue to collaborate with urban Indigenous and African Nova Scotian partners to develop and provide culturally appropriate supports and spaces for healing for women and their families experiencing gender-based violence. This is a 4-year, \$2M co-investment with WAGE Canada through *Standing Together*.

- Working differently with community to find new ways of preventing violence, supporting victims, and addressing systemic barriers through *Standing Together*. Supporting Indigenous women and girls remains to be a priority area for the provincial plan to prevent domestic violence.
- DCS is piloting a new person-directed planning service for persons with disabilities. Person-directed planning is the process of assisting persons with diverse abilities to build meaningful and inclusive lives in the community through the identification and direction of their goals and aspirations, with the support of family, friends and community. The main purpose of the pilot project is to provide person-directed planning services in communities across Nova Scotia. It will support persons with disabilities to engage in the process of developing and directing their own plan for the supports and services they want to assist them to achieve their life goals and dreams.
- As part of the 5-year Provincial Approach to Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation in Our Communities, Community Services created specialized placement options for children in care who are at risk of, are being, or have been, sexually exploited. Community Services has delivered training to more than 500 social workers, foster parents, and residential care staff to increase awareness and understanding of this issue so they may better support young people.

Appendix A: Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

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 disclosing employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour 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

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Community Services.

Information Required under Section 18 of the <i>Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act</i>	Fiscal Year 2019-20
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	