

**Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Annual Accountability Report
for the Fiscal Year 2007-08**

November 13, 2008

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Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Office of Immigration for the year ending March 31, 2008, is pursuant to the Provincial Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Office of Immigration business plan information for the fiscal year 2007-2008. The reporting of the Office of Immigration outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements and opinions by the Office of Immigration.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the Office of Immigration 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 Office of Immigration business plan for the year.

Hon. Len Goucher
Minister

Rosalind Penfound
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

Each year more and more new immigrants arrive in Nova Scotia to begin new lives. They come here wanting to share their skills, their knowledge and their cultures with us. They help grow our economy, add diversity to our neighbourhoods and increase our understanding of cultural differences worldwide.

It is the role of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration to ensure that the number of new immigrants to our province continues to climb and to put in place policies and programs that make it possible for them to remain here.

In 2007, more than 2500 individuals landed in Nova Scotia, continuing a positive trend that began in 2003 with the introduction of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), a mechanism that enables the province to nominate individuals to the federal government for permanent residency. In four years, there has been a 75-per cent increase in the number of new immigrants arriving here.

In September, the Agreement on Canada-Nova Scotia Cooperation on Immigration was signed, which contains a new nominee agreement. This agreement removed all limits on the number of nomination certificates the province can issue each year.

Under the direction of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Council of Atlantic Premiers, we participated in the Atlantic Population Table, which seeks to collaborate on immigration projects among the four Atlantic provinces.

We maintained our level of funding for settlement organizations, allocating more than \$1.8 million to approved programs to help newcomers integrate into their new communities and the marketplace.

Thank you to the staff of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, our colleagues at Citizenship and Immigration Canada, settlement-providing organizations and all our immigration partners.

I am pleased to present the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration's 2007-2008 Accountability Report, which reflects the goals and priorities of the business plan for the fiscal year and our progress in meeting the targets outlined in the province's immigration strategy.

Thank you.

Honourable Len Goucher
Minister of Immigration

1. Introduction

1.1 Context

In January 2005, Nova Scotia released its Immigration Strategy. The Strategy provides the framework for the direction and actions of the Office of Immigration and contains the ambitious goals of:

- Achieving a 70% retention rate for the 2006-2011 census period.
- Attracting 3,600 immigrants per year within four years of full immigration implementation.

Recent census data has highlighted the significance population demographics will have on Nova Scotia's future. The confluence of an aging population, small population growth and the out-migration of youth could have the very real effect of increasing fiscal pressures in the province, with projected shortages of skilled workers.

Immigration can play a role in helping to alleviate Nova Scotia's population pressures. In 2006, Nova Scotia welcomed 2,585 newcomers. This is a 34% increase over the 1,929 we received in 2005. In 2007, the number of arrivals was 2,520 with 895 arriving through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. This continues an upward trend in total immigrant landings in Nova Scotia.

As immigration numbers are increasing, efforts to provide settlement support so that newcomers are able to stay and succeed, are also increasing. Historically, Nova Scotia has one of the lowest immigrant retention rates in Canada. Consequently, the province through the Office of Immigration is focused on attracting immigrants with the backgrounds and experiences that the province needs and who are likely to succeed in Nova Scotia. Funding has also increased for settlement support services necessary to ensure that they are able to stay and succeed here. To this end the Office of Immigration allocated more than \$1.8 million in settlement funding to approved programs in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. In 2006, our retention rate of immigrants increased to 63%, up from 40% in 2001.

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is used to select immigrants who can directly and positively impact the province's economy, based on industrial and economic priorities and labour market conditions. The program also recognizes the importance of encouraging the development of rural, Acadian and Francophone communities.

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program is open to skilled workers, international graduates, and other immigrants who meet community needs. These immigrants are nominated by the province to the federal government, who then conduct security, criminality and medical checks before giving final approvals and issuing Canadian permanent resident visas.

2007-2008 was the third full fiscal year of the existence of the Office of Immigration. During this year, we expanded on last year's efforts, further implementing the recommendations identified in the Immigration Strategy.

This accountability report is a measure of the Office of Immigrations actions in response to the goals, priorities and performance measures identified in the 2007-2008 Business Plan.

2. Department Progress and Accomplishments

2.1 Progress and Accomplishments 2007-2008

Core Business Area: Attraction and Recruitment

Manage the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), the province's primary immigrant attraction tool, and use it to address Nova Scotia's economic and labour force needs.

- Signed the Agreement on Canada-Nova Scotia Cooperation on Immigration which included a new agreement on provincial nominees. With this agreement, the NSNP becomes a permanent program and all limits on the number of nominations that can be issued have been removed. This has given the Office of Immigration greater flexibility in the operation of the program.
- In October 2007, the Residency Refund Option for Economic nominees was introduced to provide an alternative to the business mentorship.

In the 2007-2008 business plan, the following items were included under this priority:

Make operational an International Graduates' category aimed at international students, who have graduated from Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions and have related employment in the province.

This was actually completed in fiscal 2006-2007 - on March 31, 2007 - after the 2007-2008 business plan was published.

Re-design the Economic stream and implement a nominee category targeting business owners and managers who wish to create a business or invest and actively manage an existing business in Nova Scotia.

- A Discussion Paper was published and consultation sessions were held in February 2008, however, due to other priorities during the transition of the nominee program and the commitment to not make any operational changes to the NSNP until the final report of the Auditor General, the design of the entrepreneur category will be delayed.

Promote and market Nova Scotia, in partnership with communities, as an attractive immigrant destination.

- Obtained funding from the Government of Canada, to promote Francophone immigration which supported participation in immigration events in Belgium, France, and Tunisia in November 2007. The Office of Immigration and organizations representing the French community attended to promote Nova Scotia to potential Francophone immigrants.

- In March 2008, attended immigration fairs in England, Scotland and the Netherlands to promote Nova Scotia and provide information on the nominee program.

Core Business Area: Integration and Retention

Partner with existing funders and community agencies to support delivery of settlement and integration programming so that newcomers have better access to timely and quality information and services upon arrival.

- More than \$1.8 Million was allocated by the Office of Immigration to 27 approved projects providing services to immigrants, focusing on language training and employment related programming, ensuring that newcomers have access to the settlement services they need to succeed.
 - In 2007-2008, 13 projects served Halifax regional municipality, 6 projects served rural areas and 8 projects had province-wide impacts.
 - \$250,000 was transferred to the Department of Education to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) education in the public school system.
- Staff participated in a number of working groups and government committees addressing International Qualification Recognition issues including those faced by international teachers and health professionals.
- In the area of International Credential Assessment and Recognition, the Office of Immigration worked with the Department of Education and stakeholders on the following initiatives:
 - the development of legislation to ensure fair registration practices to assist immigrants with accessing regulated professions and trades. Consultations were held in Fall 2007.
 - an Atlantic initiative to explore the establishment of an International Credential and Competency Assessment and Recognition (ICCAR) centre in the region
- More than \$55,000 was granted to Federation acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse to build capacity to promote, recruit, welcome and integrate new French-speaking immigrants in the Acadian and francophone regions of Nova Scotia.
- Participated on French Language Services Coordinating Committee, and consulted with the Acadian and francophone community to identify current settlement services available to French speaking immigrants, and to identify gaps in service delivery.
- Just over \$91,000 was provided to 10 organizations to develop or enhance websites that help immigrants settle successfully in Nova Scotia. This funding was provided to the Province through the Government of Canada's Web Portal project.

In the 2007-2008 business plan the following item was included under this priority:

Implement action items identified through CEO immigration forums hosted in 2006-2007, designed to address some of the barriers businesses and labour face as they relate to hiring immigrants.

- Due to other priorities, this action has been postponed.

Raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of immigration to Nova Scotia's future.

- Office staff made a number of presentations on the Nova Scotia Nominee Program to regional development authorities, businesses, municipalities professional associations, among others, to promote and create awareness of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program and immigration to Nova Scotia.

In the 2007-2008 business plan the following item was included under this priority:

Promote the business mentor component of the NSNP, and recruit more qualified Nova Scotia businesses to help new economic immigrants gain Canadian work experience and develop their business networks in Nova Scotia.

- In October 2007, the Office of Immigration introduced a second option for Economic stream nominees called the Residency Refund option as an alternative to the business mentorship. The great majority of nominees are selecting this option.

Core Business Area: Leadership and Policy Development

Develop partnerships with all key stakeholders to leverage existing and new resources and create synergies to achieve our common goals.

- Signed the Agreement on Canada-Nova Scotia Cooperation on Immigration which formalizes the federal and provincial government roles in immigration and .
- Continued to collaborate with the other Atlantic Provinces, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Council of Atlantic Premiers and Citizenship and Immigration Canada on joint Atlantic Canada population initiatives.

Provide advice and support in policy, planning, research, interdepartmental coordination, and intergovernmental relations as they relate to immigration.

- Successfully negotiated a funding formula with Citizenship and Immigration Canada for allocation of additional settlement money for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009, to provide necessary settlement services so that newcomers have access to the services that will help them succeed.

Human Resource Strategy

The Office of Immigration is committed to representing the population in which it serves and this is demonstrated through the hiring process undertaken in 2005-2006. We have continued to be diligent in hiring the most qualified candidates, while valuing diversity, linguistic capacity and the benefits it brings. This also serves as an example to employers throughout the province that the Public Service is committed to hiring immigrants.

In support of the Corporate Human Resource strategy, in 2007-2008 NSOI accomplished the following actions:

- Began to implement performance management system for all staff.
- Allowed employees to enrol in French- language training and provide the time during the work day to attend classes
- Staff have attended mandatory diversity and human rights training in order to ensure cross-cultural competency when meeting with NSOI clients and the public.

Plans to hold a staff retreat have been deferred to 2009-10.

Budget Context

OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION			
	2007-2008	2007-2008	2007-2008
	Estimate	Forecast	Actual
Gross Expenses	\$3,728	\$3,400	\$3,340
Operating Costs	650.6	624	544
Grants and Contributions	1,792.6	1,912	1,931*
Salaries and Employee Benefits	1,279.8	1,162.3	1,146
Recoveries	0	(303)	(281)**
Net Expenses	\$3,728	3,400	3,340
Funded Staff (FTE's)	18	16.64	16.64

Budget Variance

*** Settlement Program Grants \$1,816,000**

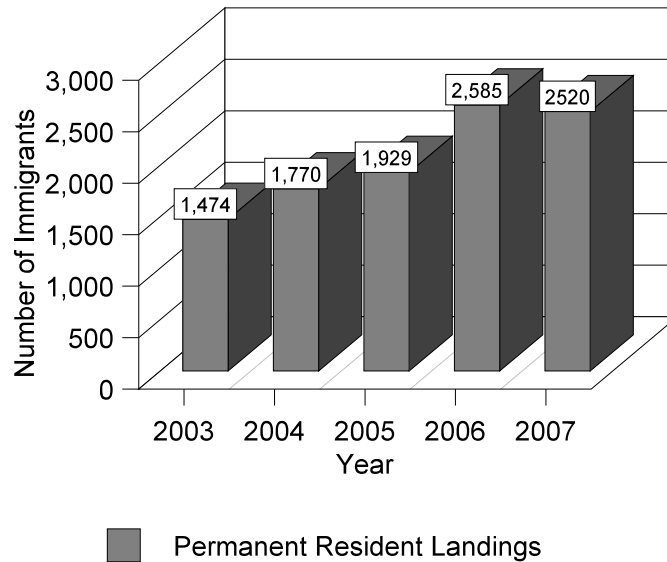
Discretionary Grants - \$ 115,000 - Citizenship and Immigration Canada web portal money used to help settlement organizations with web development.

**Monies recovered from CIC's web portal project; Atlantic Population Table for advertisement, registration related to Immigration Fairs; Destination Canada's French Immigration Fairs

4.0 Performance Measures

IMMIGRANT ATTRACTION

One of the goals outlined in the Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy is to increase the number of immigrants who choose to settle in Nova Scotia in order to address population and skilled workforce needs. As the following chart indicates, the total number of landings has increased over the past four years.



WHAT DOES THE MEASURE TELL US?

This measure shows the progress we are making in attracting newcomers to the Province of Nova Scotia and what the positive impact of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program has been since its inception.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

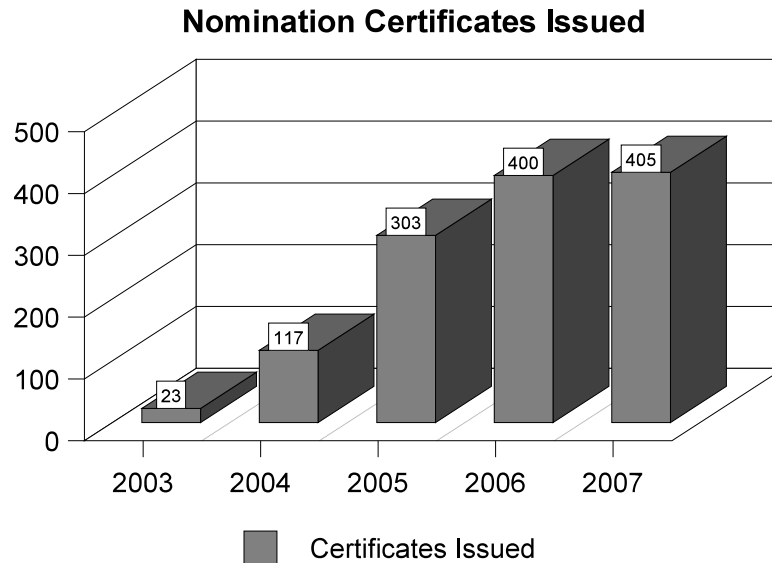
The above tables show that the number of immigrants choosing to make Nova Scotia their home is on the increase. Chart 1 shows that the total number of immigrants coming to Nova Scotia in 2006 has increased by 34% over 2005. This increase can be directly attributed to the increasing number of persons selected by the province under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. In 2007, 895 newcomers landed in Nova Scotia through the nominee program. The remainder came through Federal Government immigration streams. This number includes both the principal applicant and their family.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Our target for this measure is to attract 3,600 immigrants per year by the year 2010.

NUMBER OF NOMINATION CERTIFICATES ISSUED

In the 2007-08 Business Plan, the Office of Immigration had projected that 500 nomination certificates would be issued in the 2007 calendar year. However, due to other pressures placed on the Office of Immigration this target has not been met.



WHAT DOES THE MEASURE TELL US?

This measure shows the progress we are making in attracting and keeping newcomers to the Province of Nova Scotia and what the positive impact of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program has been since its inception.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

It was anticipated that with the signing of the new Provincial Nominee Annex agreement, which removed any limits on the number of nominations that could be issued per year, and the hiring of additional Nominee Officers, that the number of nominations would increase to approximately 500. However, with the closing of the Economic stream, uptake on the Family Business stream not being as large as anticipated, and an audit by the Auditor General, we did not meet this goal.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

The Office of Immigration will now be able to focus on marketing the nominee program with the aim of increasing the number of people applying to the NSNP, and therefore increasing the number of nominations.

IMMIGRANT RETENTION

One of the goals outlined in the Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy is to increase the retention rate of immigrants who choose to settle in Nova Scotia in order to address population and skilled workforce needs. According to the 2001 Census, this rate was approximately 40%. The Immigration Strategy goal is to increase this rate to 70% by the 2011 Census year.

WHAT DOES THE MEASURE TELL US?

This measure shows the progress we are making in attracting and keeping newcomers to the Province of Nova Scotia and what the positive impact of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program has been since its inception.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

According to the 2006 Census, the retention rate has increased to 63%. This increase can be attributed to the increased focus on providing settlement and language training programs. The Office of Immigration has provided \$1.8 million in funding to programs which directly assist immigrants in integrating into Nova Scotia life.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Our target for this measure is to retain 70% of our immigrants by the 2011 Census.

IMMIGRANT ENROLMENT IN SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

To track the number of participants in immigrant settlement and language training programs funded by the Province of Nova Scotia and to see the number of participants increase. For 2007-08 the target was to provide service to 2,800 clients. The clients can be individual people accessing more than one program. In 2005-06, our base year, the client count was approximately 1,900 client interactions.

WHAT DOES THE MEASURE TELL US?

This measure shows the progress we are making in retaining newcomers to the Province of Nova Scotia and that newcomers are able to access settlement and language training programs in a timely manner.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

According to the reports submitted to the Office of Immigration by settlement providing organizations, over 5000 unique client interactions in programs funded by the Province of Nova Scotia.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO GO/BE IN THE FUTURE?

Our target is to maintain or increase the number of client interactions at settlement service providing organizations either by funding additional programs or ensuring that immigrants are knowledgeable of the programs that are currently available.