

**Nova Scotia Office of Immigration
Annual Accountability Report
for the Fiscal Year 2008-2009**

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Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Office of Immigration for the year ending March 31, 2009, 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 2008-2009. 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.

The Honourable Ramona Jennex
Minister

Rosalind Penfound
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

We Nova Scotians have a rich history in welcoming newcomers to our shores. For decades Pier 21 in Halifax was the gateway to Canada for more than one million immigrants. These newcomers virtually helped to shape our country's social, economic and cultural mosaic – so much so that the federal government recently named the famed ocean immigration shed a national museum.

The role of immigration in advancing the future well being of our province is more important than ever. These are challenging times for Nova Scotia – our population is shrinking and our ability to maintain cherished health care and social services into the future may be at risk. We need and want more and more newcomers to make Nova Scotia their destination point, not just their entry point.

The Office of Immigration works to ensure that the number of new immigrants to our province continues to increase and puts in place policies and programs that make it possible for them to remain here. This vital work continues to move the province ever closer to its immigration goals.

In 2008, 2,651 individuals arrived in Nova Scotia, a 75 per cent increase over the number of arrivals in 2003, when the Nova Scotia Nominee Program was implemented.

According to an analysis of 2001-2006 Census data by Atlantic Metropolis, Nova Scotia's retention rate has also improved and is now 63 per cent, up from 38 per cent during the 1996-2001 Census period.

The province's increased support for settlement services holds an important role in helping to improve Nova Scotia's immigrant retention rate. During the past fiscal year, funding for settlement purposes increased from \$1.8 million to \$2.3 million to help meet the needs of newcomers.

In 2008 and 2009, NSOI approved funding for four projects aimed at developing or enhancing other websites that help immigrants settle in Nova Scotia. A total of \$49,847 in funding was distributed to organizations that provide direct services to immigrants or those that have specific immigration activities. This funding helps to ensure that immigrants receive the initial support and services they require to become full contributing members of our communities as quickly as possible.

An immigration advisory council was appointed in August 2008 to help government identify immigration issues and develop policies and programs for addressing them. The 13 council members represent a wide spectrum of expertise and backgrounds. Among the appointees are business, municipal, labour and community leaders, many of whom left their homelands to build highly successful, rewarding careers in Nova Scotia.

NSOI's work with immigration colleagues in Atlantic Canada has led to a more coordinated approach to immigration recruitment by the region. This collaboration has resulted in a regional brand, supporting materials and the leveraging of opportunities to maximize the region and Nova Scotia's profile as an immigration destination of choice among potential newcomers overseas.

Thank you to the staff of the Office of Immigration and all of our immigration partners in helping the province build on its historic role, and helping us embrace the many social, economic and cultural advantages that result from increased immigration and diversity to our communities.

I am pleased to present the Office of Immigration's 2008-2009 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.

Ramona Jennex
Minister

1. Introduction

This accountability report is a measure of the Office of Immigrations actions in response to the goals, priorities and performance measures identified in the 2008-2009 Business Plan.

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 by 2010

There were numerous successes and achievements in 2008-2009 for which the Office of Immigration is proud.

In 2008, the number of arrivals was 2,651 with more than 800 arriving through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. This continues an upward trend in total immigrant landings in Nova Scotia and is a 75% increase over 2003 (prior to the implementation of the nominee program).

As immigration numbers are increasing, efforts to provide settlement support so that newcomers are able to stay and succeed, are also increasing. To this end the Office of Immigration allocated more than \$2.3 million in settlement funding to approved programs in the 2008-2009 fiscal year. We also allocated almost \$500,000 for employment related programs for immigrants under the Labour Market Agreement.

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. According to an Atlantic Metropolis analysis of the 2006 census, our retention rate of immigrants increased to 63%, up from 38% 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 (NSNP) is open to skilled workers, international graduates, immigrant family businesses and other immigrants who meet labour market 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.

In 2008-2009, the Office of Immigration's focus was drawn away from some of the priorities outlined in the business plan as we time was needed to respond to the information requests of the Public Accounts Committee, the Office of the Auditor General, and the media with regard to the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. As a result, a number of priorities identified in the 2008-2009 Business Plan were not achieved. This is outlined in the following Accountability Report.

2. Department Progress and Accomplishments

2.1 Progress and Accomplishments 2008-2009

Core Business Area: Attraction and Recruitment

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

In October 2008, the Expanded Residency Refund was introduced for immigrants in the economic stream of the provincial nominee program who are still living in Nova Scotia after 12 consecutive months.

Attended Destination Canada recruitment fairs in Francophone countries and actively participated on the Comité de l'immigration francophone en Nouvelle-Écosse to better attract French-speaking immigrants to Nova Scotia in partnership with Acadian and Francophone organizations and employers

Also included in the 2008-2009 Business Plan were the following items which NSOI was unable to achieve due to other emerging priorities.

Launch Entrepreneur stream of the Nominee Program, to attract experienced business owners and managers who wish to establish a new business or invest in and actively manage in an existing business in Nova Scotia.

The Entrepreneur stream has not been launched at this time and is under review.

Form strategic alliances with business, industry, labour and ethno-cultural organizations to better align recruitment efforts of the nominee program with labour market needs, with a specific focus on the employer driven streams of the nominee program.

In the 2009-2010 Business Plan, the Office of Immigration has identified the importance of working with partners to ensure we are attracting immigrants with education and employment experience that matches our labour market needs.

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

Participated in immigration fairs, including Francophone recruitment fairs, in England, Ireland, Scotland, Germany, the Netherlands, France and Belgium.

Developed promotional materials and a marketing plan in partnership with Atlantic Provinces and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, under the auspices of the Council of Atlantic Premiers. The "Canada's East Coast" brand was used at immigration recruitment fairs in Spring 2009.

Also included in the 2008-2009 Business Plan were the following items which NSOI was unable to achieve due to other emerging priorities.

Implement a marketing strategy aimed at attracting qualified workers to meet current and future skill shortages, by promoting the skilled worker, international graduate and family business categories of the nominee program.

Develop an international marketing strategy to promote Nova Scotia and the Nominee Program, especially the entrepreneur category to potential immigrants abroad.

In the 2009-2010 Business Plan, the Office of Immigration has identified the marketing as an important focus, including the development and implementation of a marketing plan to better promote the Nova Scotia Nominee Program both in Nova Scotia and internationally.

Promote the benefits of living in Nova Scotia and to provide information on employment, credential recognition, and settlement services through enhancements to the novascotiainmigration.com website.

Provide more information to potential immigrants so that they better understand the benefits of living in Nova Scotia and have be prepared for what to expect upon landing in the province.

Two projects are currently underway in 2009-2010, to improve the novascotiainmigration.com website including information on how to find employment or start a business, how to hire immigrants and the development of a Francophone website.

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.

Strategically invested \$2.3 million in settlement and retention programs and services with a primary focus on employment, enhanced language and outreach programming.

Doubled funding for settlement services in rural areas of Nova Scotia to over \$600,000, so that the benefits of immigration are equally distributed throughout the province.

Allocated approximately \$500,000 of funding under the Labour Market Agreement to assist unemployed immigrants with finding jobs in Nova Scotia.

In partnership with Labour and Workforce Development, the Fair Registration Practices Act was developed, introduced and passed. This legislation will assist in addressing credential recognition issues for immigrants.

Participated in multi-stakeholder groups working to address credential recognition issues in specific occupations such as teachers, health professionals, engineers and the skilled trades.

Provided funding for the development of materials, orientation and integration services, and awareness-raising and capacity building in rural Acadian communities in support of our efforts in developing welcoming communities in the Acadian and Francophone communities of Nova Scotia.

Organized and participated in a Job Fair for Immigrants with more than 350 job seekers and 35 employers participating.

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

Also included in the 2008-2009 Business Plan were the following items which NSOI was unable to achieve due to other emerging priorities.

Promote the social, cultural and economic benefits of immigration through the development and implementation of an intensive awareness campaign aimed at both communities and the general public, and employers.

This priority has again been identified in the 2009-2010 Business Plan.

Core Business Area: Leadership and Policy Development

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

In partnership with Nova Scotia Economic and Rural Development, the Nova Scotia Cooperative Council, Credit Union Central and local credit unions, the Immigrant Small Business Financing Program was developed and implemented. Operated by the Credit Union, this program is open to immigrants who have recently moved to Nova Scotia and are interested in starting, expanding or buying a small business.

Minister's Immigration Advisory Council was established to provide strategic advice to the Minister of Immigration on immigration-related policies and programs in Nova Scotia. Thirteen members were appointed.

Collaborated with federal and provincial governments in the Atlantic region to develop and implement an Atlantic Population Strategy to address population challenges facing this region.

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

Participated in federal/provincial/territorial working groups to address significant policy matters related to the federal immigration backlog, identifying occupations in demand, temporary foreign workers, and international students.

Also included in the 2008-2009 Business Plan were the following items which NSOI was unable to achieve due to other emerging priorities.

Finalize negotiations and sign a Annex Agreement on Temporary Workers, which would allow the province and Canada to work together to address the labour market and economic needs of the province by using the temporary foreign worker program.

Conduct detailed data and demographic analysis of Nova Scotia's provincial nominees and of all immigrants coming to the province.

These priorities will be addressed in 2009-2010.

Human Resource Strategy

The Office of Immigration is committed to representing the population in which it serves and will continue to be diligent in hiring the most qualified candidates, while valuing diversity, linguistic capacity and the benefits they bring. This also serves as an example to employers throughout the province that the Nova Scotia Public Service is committed to hiring immigrants. A nominee officer position has been designated as Francophone to better serve our Acadian and Francophone communities, immigrants and potential newcomers.

Staff have also attended mandatory diversity and human rights training in order to ensure cross-cultural competency when meeting with NSOI clients and the public.

The Office of Immigration has committed to assisting its employees with developing career and performance plans. This would include making funds available for training programs and courses to support these plans.

Financial Results

Budget Context

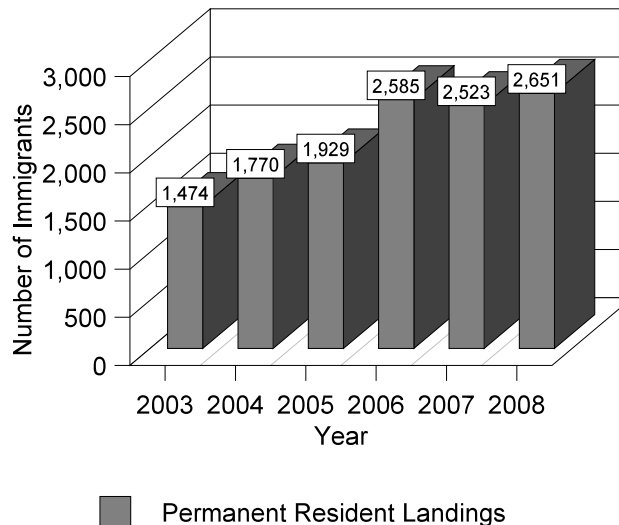
OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION			
	2008-2009	2008-2009	2008-2009
	(\$ thousands)		
	Estimate	Forecast	Actual
Total Program Expenses	4,998	4,284	4,196
Operating Costs	1,041.8	584	528
Grants and Contributions	2,297.6	2,885	2,864
Salaries and Employee Benefits	1,658.1	1,343	1,325
*Recoveries		(528)	(521)
Total Program Expenses	4,998	4,284	4,196
Funded Staff (FTE's)	22	18.1	18.28

* Recovery of \$487,000 from Labour and Workforce Development related to Labour Market Agreement grants
 Recovery of \$34,000 from Citizenship and Immigration Canada related to Web Portal Projects

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 2008 has increased by 80% over 2003. This increase can be directly attributed to the increasing number of persons selected by the province under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program. In 2008, 868 newcomers in Nova Scotia arrived through the nominee program. The remainder came through federal immigration streams. This number includes both the principal applicant and his/her family.

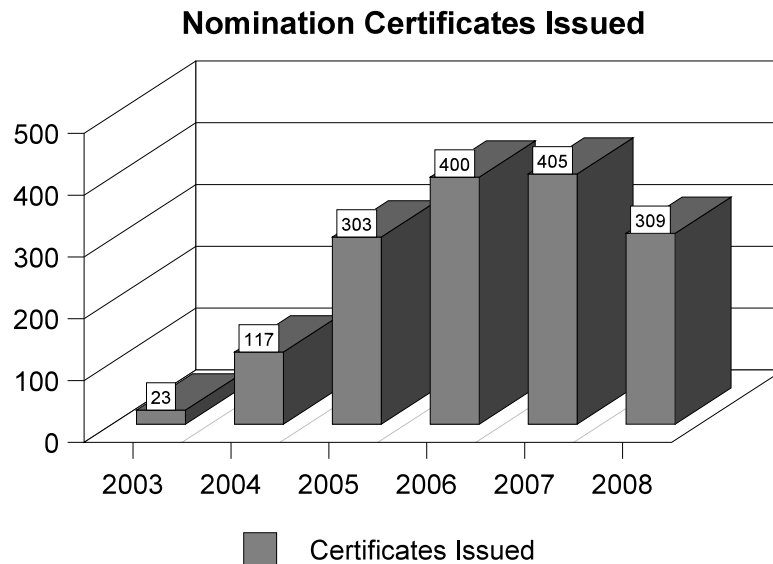
Our newcomers have come through various federal streams including Skilled Worker, Business Class, Family Class, and the Refugee Class as well as the nominee program. We are not overly dependent on any one of these categories. Of course, the nominee program is the main selection tool available directly to the province

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 2008-2009 Business Plan, the Office of Immigration had projected that 500 nomination certificates would be issued in the 2008 calendar year. However, with the closure of the Economic stream and postponing the development of the marketing plan, the Office of Immigration has amended its nomination target to 350 in 2009-2010.



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?

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. With the closure of the economic stream, the lack of an alternative recruitment strategy, and limited international marketing, the latter two of which were delayed as a result of other office pressures, the number of nominations declined by 100 in 2008 over 2007.

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 it, thereby increasing the number of nominations. Our target in 2009-2010 is 350 nominations with plans to increase to 500 upon implementation of the marketing strategy.

IMMIGRANT RETENTION

One of the goals outlined in the Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy in order to address population and skilled workforce needs is to increase the retention rate of immigrants who choose to settle in Nova Scotia. According to the 2001 Census, this rate was approximately 37%. 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 \$2.3 million in funding to programs that 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 retain 70% of our immigrants by the 2011 Census.

CLIENT INTERACTION VIA SETTLEMENT PROGRAMS

This measure has been discontinued.