

# **Office of Immigration**

**Business Plan**

**2006-2007**

**April 13, 2006**

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## **Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister**

Immigrants enrich the social, cultural and economic fabric of our lives. We want to encourage individuals to choose Nova Scotia as their new home. We also need immigrants.

Slow population growth, an aging population, low birthrate, out-migration of our young people, urbanization are all issues that challenge us to find a means of sustaining the way of life we know and enjoy. Increasing the number of immigrants to our province is essential for building our future.

Our government understands this reality and has put in place a five-year immigration framework for attracting and retaining newcomers.

What follows is the 2006-2007 Business Plan in support of the strategic framework. It is intended to provide Nova Scotians with an overview of the new Office of Immigration's priorities in support of the strategy and government's overall goals, objectives and vision for our province.

The plan builds on the solid foundation put in place last year – year one of the strategy. Thank you to the staff of the Office of Immigration and all our partners for making the office's first year a success.

In 2006-2007, we will continue to build partnerships by starting new and strengthening existing ones critical to our work in achieving the province's long-term immigration objectives. Our focus will be on working with businesses and labour organizations across Nova Scotia to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants and to identify and help remove potential barriers that may prevent businesses from doing so.

Building on the success of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, we have asked CIC to permit us to raise our target by a minimum of 100, for a total of 400 families that the province can nominate to the federal government. We will also expand the program by introducing a family business category and explore the benefits of adding entrepreneurial and international student categories.

We will continue to negotiate a new funding formula with Ottawa to ensure that settlement funding grows as immigrant numbers grow and that any increased funding provided by Nova Scotia enhances services for newcomers.

In 2006-2007, we will also launch a new website – one that is easier for our clients to navigate, more interactive and comprehensive with key information available in both French and English.

As outlined in the immigration strategy, we have four guiding principles: community-based, Nova Scotia approach, fair and inclusive, and accountable. These principles continue to guide us as we work to implement this business plan and make Nova Scotia an attractive destination and a welcoming community for newcomers. Our progress will be reported in the office's next accountability report.

Thank you.

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Honourable Ronald S. Russell, CD  
Minister of Immigration

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Richard (Rick) C.J. Nurse  
Deputy Minister of Immigration

## **Mission**

To take a lead role in engaging and working with partners to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants, recognizing the important contributions they make to our social, economic, and cultural fabric.

## **Planning Context**

An aging population and slowing population growth have increased the importance of immigration to Nova Scotia's future. Failure to address these challenges may have serious implications for our province including lost economic opportunities, declining communities, growing fiscal pressures, and potential labour market shortages. Immigration can help reverse current trends by bringing new people and new ideas to enhance Nova Scotia's population and communities.

Since the mid-1990s, the province has not fared well in attracting immigrants. Between 1995 and 2003, the number of immigrants to our province dropped nearly 60 per cent, with only 1,474 immigrants landing in Nova Scotia in 2003.

Yet there are signs of improvement. In the last two years, our immigrant numbers have started to increase with 1,770 individuals choosing to make Nova Scotia their home in 2004 and 1,927 in 2005 (preliminary numbers from CIC). Also shown in CIC data, our provincial nominee program has contributed to this increase with over 300 nominees arriving in Nova Scotia in 2005 as permanent residents.

In January 2005, the Office of Immigration was established and a Minister of Immigration was appointed. In the Office's first year of operation a budget was established that more than doubled the amount of money available to help immigrants settle; a team of multicultural, multilingual professionals were recruited to work with provincial partners on immigration priorities; and a permanent office was established.

In 2006-2007, we plan to build on these successes by continuing to improve the Nova Scotia Nominee Program and by focusing on relationships with key partners, specifically, provincial, federal and municipal governments, service-providing organizations, regional development authorities, university and college partners and ethnic communities. In particular, connections will be made with business and labour to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants and having a diverse workplace, as well as providing information on how to employ immigrants using the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.

In early 2006, a new government was elected federally. Continued strong partnerships with our federal counterparts are key to ensuring that Nova Scotia's immigration goals continue to be met. In particular, during the federal election campaign, the elected party indicated that international credential recognition would be a priority in order to improve immigrant outcomes and ensure successful economic integration. Nova Scotia looks forward to receiving further information about this plan and working with our federal colleagues and provincial regulatory bodies to move this agenda item forward.

Attracting immigrants to our province by providing opportunities and welcoming communities is critical if we are to ensure that future generations of Nova Scotians can live and thrive here.

## **Strategic Goals**

### **Government Priorities**

The Nova Scotia Government's overall vision for the province is of a healthy, prosperous, self-sufficient Nova Scotia. Immigration is one path by which this will be achieved.

The government's *Blueprint for Building a Better Nova Scotia*, included the commitment to build on the Nova Scotia Nominee Program by developing an immigration strategy. This initiative was completed in January 2005, with the release of the *Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy*, the appointment of a Minister and Deputy Minister, and the creation of the Office of Immigration.

Government priorities supported by the 2006-2007 goals and priorities of Office of Immigration include:

- *Economic Development/Infrastructure*

Attracting skilled and innovative people to settle in Nova Scotia contributes to the economic growth and diversity of the province. The Office of Immigration will work with business to understand the value of a diverse workplace and to give information about how future skills shortages can be addressed through immigration. Immigration also helps to address future skills shortages and needs of our employers through the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, which will be expanded to create new selection categories allowing more people to qualify under Nova Scotia's program.

- *Youth, Families and Community*

Integration of our newcomers into all our communities is key to their retention. Through the funding of programs offered by not-for-profit organizations, that facilitate settlement, newcomers have access to language training and employment integration services to help them be successful. Children also should have access to second language training at school, as well as assistance integrating into a new learning environment. Funding provided by the Office of Immigration addresses these needs of our newcomer children, families and the communities wishing to welcome them.

### **Office of Immigration Priorities**

The immigration strategy will guide us for the next 5 years with each year building upon the success of the previous years. By opening up lines of communication with our many stakeholders through the development of the strategy, our goals and targets were formulated and supported, and constitute the underpinning of the Office of Immigration's activities.

Our targets are to retain 70% of immigrants during the 2006-2011 census period and increase the number of immigrants choosing Nova Scotia as their home to 3600 per year within 4 years of full strategy implementation.

The strategic goals of the Office of Immigration are to:

- Assist immigrants in integrating into Nova Scotia society by helping them access necessary settlement services to help them live, work, and learn in Nova Scotia.
- Retain immigrants by working with partners to address barriers to social and economic inclusion that allow them to make Nova Scotia their permanent home.
- Market and promote Nova Scotia as an attractive immigration destination.
- Encourage a welcoming community for newcomers by educating Nova Scotians about the contributions immigrants make to our social, cultural, and economic prosperity.

## **Core Business Areas**

Many of the Office of Immigration's activities are joint initiatives of the Program Division, Policy, and Communications, with overall direction from the Executive Director, Deputy Minister and Minister. The core business areas that have emerged, which form the backbone for all the office's activities, are attraction and recruitment, integration and retention, and leadership and policy development. The related core business functions are identified for each of these areas below.

### **Attraction and Recruitment**

This core business area is integral to meeting our goal of increased numbers of immigrants choosing to make Nova Scotia their new home. By providing information about the province, and the tools to immigrate, more people from around the world will begin to realize the benefits of living and working in all areas of Nova Scotia.

The functions of this core business area are to:

- oversee the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, the province's primary immigrant attraction tool, and use it to address Nova Scotia's economic and labour force needs.
- promote and market Nova Scotia, in partnership with communities, as an attractive immigrant destination.

### **Integration and Retention**

This core business area focuses on ensuring newcomers are able to successfully settle, find employment and create a new life in Nova Scotia, therefore, working to meet our retention goals.

The main activities to be undertaken in this area are to:

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

## **Leadership and Policy Development**

In order to build and engage partnerships, in 2005-2006, the Office met with over 50 community, business and cultural organizations, providing information about the importance of ensuring the immigration strategy is successful. Our strategy goals and provincial policy positions have also been strongly communicated to our partners in other provinces and to Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

The priorities of this core business area are to:

- develop partnerships with all key stakeholders to lever existing and new resources and create synergies to achieve our common goals within the province of Nova Scotia.
- provide advice and support in policy, planning, research, interdepartmental coordination, and intergovernmental relations as they relate to immigration.

## **Priorities**

The following are the priorities for the Office of Immigration in 2006–2007, as they relate to each Core Business Area. Many of the following priorities are multi-year initiatives.

### **Attraction and Recruitment**

#### **Nova Scotia Nominee Program**

*Manage the Nova Scotia Nominee Program, the province's primary immigrant attraction tool, and use it to address Nova Scotia's economic and labour force needs. The major actions to be taken in 2006–2007 include:*

- Negotiate with Citizenship and Immigration Canada to further increase the number of nominee certificates that can be issued by Nova Scotia under the Canada-Nova Scotia Provincial Nominee Agreement.
- Establish clear guidelines and effective materials for the Community Identified category, in partnership with the Regional Development Authorities, Francophone community partners and other key municipal stakeholders.
- Create an International Student category aimed at international students who have graduated from Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions and have related employment in the province.
- Design an Entrepreneur category targeting business owners and managers who wish to create a business or invest and actively manage an existing business in Nova Scotia.
- Strengthen business mentor component of the Economic category by developing a resource guide for business mentors and surveying economic nominees and business hosts to evaluate the benefits of the employment contract.
- Implement the Family Business category to allow family members of Nova Scotia business owners to be considered for nomination under the NSNP.



## **Promotion and Marketing**

***Promote and market Nova Scotia, in partnership with communities, as an attractive immigrant destination. This is a multi-year initiative. The major actions to be undertaken in 2006–07 include:***

- Develop a marketing plan, targeted at potential immigrants, to promote the benefits of living and working in Nova Scotia.
- Expand the novascotiainmigration.com web site to promote the benefits of living in Nova Scotia and to highlight employment, credentials, and settlement services. This will address some settlement issues pre-arrival. Content to be provided in English and French.

## **Integration and Retention**

### **Settlement and Integration**

***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.*** This is a multi-year initiative. In 2006–2007 the office will:

- Negotiate, with Citizenship and Immigration Canada and our colleagues in the other Atlantic provinces, a new settlement allocation model to ensure that immigrants in Nova Scotia have better access to services.
- Address the very large and complex issue of credential recognition by
  - providing input and advice to the Council of Atlantic Deputy Ministers of Education and Training (CADMET) on developing a coordinated approach to assisting immigrants with having their credentials assessed.
  - participating on tables, organized by our settlement partners, to address credential issues in the health, engineering and other professions and build on successes already achieved
- Strategically invest in settlement and retention programs and services with a primary focus on employment integration and language acquisition.
- Inventory existing services for French speaking immigrants, in partnership with Francophone community partners in order to improve referral services to Francophone newcomers and identify service delivery gaps.

### **Public Awareness**

***Raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of immigration to Nova Scotia's future. In 2006–2007 actions planned to implement this initiative are to:***

- Promote the benefits of immigration and demonstrate to employers and communities how demographic and future labour market challenges may be precluded by hiring and attracting immigrants and demystify the process of recruiting immigrant skilled workers.

- Promote community involvement and economic development (focusing on the benefits and opportunities brought by immigration) by conducting presentations to municipalities, regional development authorities, and other community organizations in regions outside the Halifax Regional Municipality.

## **Leadership and Policy Development**

### **Leadership**

*Develop partnerships with all key stakeholders to lever existing and new resources and create synergies to achieve our common goals. Priority 2006–2007 actions to help accomplish this longer term initiative are to:*

- Establish federal-provincial and interdepartmental working committees with government partners in Nova Scotia to ensure good communication, collaboration and coordination on corporate initiatives that have cross departmental jurisdiction.
- Establish a process for the Office of Immigration to seek feedback from business, labour, immigrants and community leaders on immigration matters.
- Collaborate with federal and provincial governments in the Atlantic region to develop an Atlantic population strategy to address population challenges facing this region.

### **Policy Development**

*Provide advice and support in policy, planning, research, interdepartmental coordination, and intergovernmental relations as they relate to immigration. Actions in 2006–2007 to accomplish this longer term initiative will be to:*

- Enter into negotiations with Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to develop a Canada-Nova Scotia Immigration Agreement which would develop structured consultation mechanisms and identify areas of partnership.
- In partnership with federal-provincial/territorial partners, identify improvements to federal immigration processing issues which were raised by immigrants, business and settlement providing agencies.

## Human Resource Strategy

Staffing of the Office of Immigration was a key priority in 2005-2006. Job descriptions were drafted, rated and competitions were held. A team of 12 multicultural, multilingual, highly qualified young professionals was in place at January 2006. An orientation and training program for new staff is in place. Performance plans for each employee are in place and performance reviews will be conducted at year end.

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

Due to the size of the office, an OHS committee is not required, however, a staff member has been assigned responsibility to help coordinate the development of our occupational health and safety plan.

In support of the Corporate Human Resource strategy, in 2006-2007 the Office of Immigration will:

### Corporate HR Plan Goals and Department Objectives:

<b>Goal #1: To make a difference through a skilled, committed, and accountable public service</b>				
<b>Department Priority</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Strategy/Action</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Measures</b>
Implement comprehensive performance management system	Develop plans for all employees	Provide introduction to performance management.  Work with each employee to develop personal and job related goals.	Staff motivated to progress and work together.	All staff have a completed performance plan and review.  Personal and task oriented goals are met.

<b>Goal #4: To be a diverse workforce</b>				
Department Priority	Objective	Strategy/Action	Outcomes	Measures
Access French language training for staff	Improve the french language abilities of employees	Allow employees to enrol in french language training and provide the time during the work day to attend classes.	Increased french language ability for all staff members interested in developing capacity in this area.	Services provided to the public are responsive to needs in both official languages.
Encourage diversity training to all new staff.	An office with strong cross-cultural awareness and sensitivity to newcomers.	Ensure that all new staff enroll in, or have taken, mandatory diversity training.	A work force that recognizes the benefits of diversity and treats all people equally.	All staff have this training.
Maintain or grow existing diversity composition of staff.	Ensure that the Office of Immigration represents the clients it serves.	Hire the most qualified candidates and encourage eligible former immigrants to apply for vacant positions	A stronger, multicultural, multilingual office that recognizes the benefits of diversity.	Office composition data.

<b>Goal #5: To be a learning organization</b>				
Department Priority	Objective	Strategy/Action	Outcomes	Measures
Implement plan for staff training	Employees to have access to training opportunities to improve their skills.	Employees to self identify through performance management, gaps in skills that they would like to address.	Staff who are engaged in their employment growth and are engaged in self-directed career path management.	Staff know about, and take advantage of, training opportunities, and are able to take courses without worrying about work load.

<p>Team Development Plan</p>	<p>To work together as a strong team where all perspectives are valued.</p>	<p>Hold a followup to the staff retreat and team building session held in February 2005.</p>	<p>Staff who are engaged in the development and growth of the Office of Immigration.</p>	<p>Staff who are enthusiastic about the work we do and continue to provide input in to initiatives.</p>
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## Budget Context

<b>OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION</b>			
	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2005-2006</b>	<b>2006-2007</b>
	<b>(\$ thousands)</b>		
	Estimate	Forecast	Estimate
Gross Expenses	\$ 2,728	\$ 2,181	\$ 3,290
Net Expenses	\$ 2,628	\$ 1,991	\$ 3,290
Salaries and Employee Benefits	718	535	825
Funded Staff (FTE's)	10.8	8.4	13.0

## Outcome/Performance Measures

Outcome	Measure	Data	Benchmark	Target Year	Strategies to achieve the target
<b>To take a lead role in engaging and working with partners to attract, integrate, and retain immigrants, recognizing the important contributions they make to our social, economic, and cultural fabric.</b>	By the target year, increase immigrant intake to Nova Scotia to 3,600 immigrants per year	CIC Landing Data	1,748 (2004)	2010	<p>Optimize the Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP).</p> <p>Create and implement additional NSNP selection categories.</p> <p>Develop a marketing plan and materials to promote Nova Scotia as an attractive immigration destination.</p>
	Retain 70 percent of immigrants arriving in Nova Scotia.	2011 Census Data	40% (1991-2001)	2011 Census data (released in 2012)	<p>Strategically invest in settlement and retention programs and services with a primary focus on employment integration and higher levels of language acquisition.</p> <p>Initiate partnerships with employers, labour unions, universities, regulatory bodies, and professional associations for the purposes of showing immigrants how to enter the labour force in their chosen professions.</p> <p>Address the need for settlement supports for french speaking immigrants, in partnership with Francophone community.</p>