

Office of Immigration

Business Plan

2009-2010

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Message from the Minister and Deputy Minister

In 2009-2010 the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration will continue to perform a contributing role in dealing with economic and demographic challenges. Newcomers have technical skills and investments which Nova Scotia companies and communities need to remain innovative, productive and competitive.

Our goal is to attract twice as many immigrants to Nova Scotia and, more importantly, to keep them here.

Working with our partners and stakeholders, we will develop and implement a strategy that matches immigrants with the skills and professions required by business and labour unions in Nova Scotia. We'll continue to identify and reach out through international immigration fairs to those skilled workers who will match our labour market and economic development needs. We'll invest in initiatives that work to address barriers to social and economic inclusion and increase credential recognition.

We'll attract immigrants to our province by identifying opportunities and welcoming communities, and we'll market our province, including Acadian and Francophone communities, as an attractive destination.

As always, we'll help immigrants establish personal networks within Nova Scotia by supporting settlement and language programs that will enable them to live, work and succeed in our province.

We will support all of these actions with a refreshed website to provide in-depth information to potential newcomers on employment opportunities and how to start a business in Nova Scotia.

We will continue developing a new *Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy* that guides our work and helps achieve our goals. The current *Strategy* has brought new people, new skills and new ideas to Nova Scotia; has helped grow our population; has expanded our global connections; and has helped grow our economy. The new *Strategy* will contain fresh energy and new ideas to make our province an even better place to live, work, do business and raise a family.

The staff of Immigration are commended for weathering the challenges of the past year and thanked for their commitment to the mandate and to their clients. Along with prevailing against the unexpected in 2008-2009, the Office of Immigration succeeded in implementing the Expanded Residency Refund and hired additional nominee officers to better meet demand under the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.

We expect this same exemplary staff, armed with improved processing systems, even greater wisdom and renewed vigor, to achieve great progress against the goals we have set for 2009-2010.

Nova Scotia values and needs new immigrants to help our communities thrive, our economy grow, and enrich our understanding of the world around us. All Nova Scotians have a role to play in helping us attract newcomers and encouraging them to build their futures with us.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Ramona Jennex
Minister of Immigration

Original signed by

Rosalind Penfound
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 and slow-growing population 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, new skills and new ideas to Nova Scotia, to help grow our population, expand our global connections and grow our economy.

The Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), under the Government of Canada's Immigration and Refugee Protection Act - Economic Class, is a tool that allows the province to nominate potential immigrants for permanent residency who meet Nova Scotia's economic and labour-market needs. Newcomers through the program provide much-needed skills, help businesses and organizations seize market opportunities and remain competitive in the global arena. In short, newcomers can help Nova Scotia create the economic climate necessary to secure its future growth.

Preliminary landing numbers from Citizenship and Immigration Canada show a slight 5% increase in total landings from 2,523 in 2007 to 2,651 in 2008. Of these, 868 landings were people selected through the provincial nominee program.

In 2008-2009 the Office of Immigration expanded the residency refund option to include those nominees who participated in the business mentor program and can show continuous residency in Nova Scotia.

In 2009-2010 the Office of Immigration will continue to build on past progress and work with the Auditor General to implement appropriate improvements to the operations of the Nova Scotia nominee program.

The Office of Immigration will continue to connect with business and labour to promote the benefits of hiring immigrants who are already living in Nova Scotia and having a diverse workplace. Any recruitment of foreign workers will be mindful of the economic situation in Canada, however, it is recognized that there are still existing skills shortages in certain professions, and anticipated shortages in the future.

Attracting immigrants to our province by identifying opportunities and welcoming communities is critical if we are to ensure that Nova Scotia can continue to grow and thrive.

Strategic Goals

The Nova Scotia Immigration Strategy provides the guiding policy to the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, and will guide us for the next two years with each year building upon the success of the previous. By consulting with our many stakeholders through the development of the strategy, our goals and targets were formulated and supported, and constitute the underpinning of NSOI'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 3,600 per year by 2010.

The 2009-2010 strategic goals of the Office of Immigration are to:

- Review the existing Nova Scotia Nominee Program streams to ease the arrival of skilled worker immigrants required to meet labour market and economic development needs
- Market Nova Scotia as an attractive immigration destination
- Help immigrants integrate into Nova Scotian society by supporting settlement and language programs that will enable them to live, work, and succeed in Nova Scotia.
- Encourage immigrants to stay in Nova Scotia by working with business, labour and other partners to address barriers to social and economic inclusion that prevent them from finding meaningful work and making Nova Scotia their permanent home.
- Develop on-line content on Office of Immigration website to provide in-depth information to potential immigrants and newcomers on the application and settlement process.
- Work with Acadian and Francophone communities to increase immigration of French-speaking individuals.

Core Business Areas

The core business areas, which form the backbone for all NSOI 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:

- manage the nominee program, the province's primary immigrant attraction tool, and use it to help address Nova Scotia's economic and labour force needs.
- promote and market Nova Scotia, in partnership with communities, as an attractive immigrant destination.
- align with business, industry and labour to better utilize the nominee program to meet skill shortages.

Integration and Retention

This core business area focuses on helping newcomers settle successfully, 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

Since its inception, NSOI has met with numerous community, business and cultural organizations, providing critical information about the importance of immigration and of the province's immigration targets. This information, along with our strategy, goals and policy positions, have also been communicated to our government partners in other provinces and at the national level, to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).

The priorities of this core business area are to:

- develop partnerships with key stakeholders to leverage existing and new resources, to create synergies that achieve our common goals within 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 NSOI in 2009–2010, 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 NSNP, 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 2009-2010 include:

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.

Better attract French-speaking immigrants to Nova Scotia in partnership with Acadian and Francophone organizations and employers.

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 2009-2010 include:

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.

Participate in immigration fairs and trade missions, which provide maximum opportunities to promote NS as an immigration destination.

Enhance the novascotiaimmigration.com website to include better information on finding employment, working, and starting a business in Nova Scotia.

Develop a section of the novascotiaimmigration.com website to provide specific information about living in Nova Scotia to potential and existing Francophone immigrants.

Core Business Area: Attraction and Recruitment					
OUTCOME	MEASURE	DATA	TARGET 2009-2010	ULTIMATE TARGET	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Increased Number of New Immigrant Landings in NS	Number of new immigrant landings	Base Year: 2003 2003: 1474 2004: 1771 2005: 1929 2006: 2585 2007: 2520 2008: 2653	Target: 2009 3,000	Ultimate Target 2010 3,600	Strategic Actions - Participation in immigration fairs - Better information and increased promotion of programs
Increased number of nomination certificates issued	Number of certificates issued	Base Year 2004: 117 2005: 303 2006: 400 2007: 408 2008: 309*	2009: 400	2010: 500	- Better alignment of NSNP with labour market needs

* with the closure of the Economic category it was anticipated that a slight drop in nominations would occur

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 2009-2010, NSOI will:

Strategically invest in settlement and retention programs and services with a primary focus on employment integration, enhanced language and outreach programming.

Expand availability of settlement services in rural areas of Nova Scotia, so that the benefits of immigration are equally distributed throughout the province.

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

Support welcoming communities initiatives within French-speaking regions of the province.

Begin work to develop an immigrant job strategy to assist immigrants with entering the labour market. This would take into consideration employment specific language training, upgrading of education, and recognition of international credentials.

Public Awareness

Raise awareness and educate the public about the importance of immigration to Nova Scotia's future. In 2009-2010 actions planned to implement this initiative are to:

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.

Demonstrate to employers and communities how hiring and attracting immigrants can assist in meeting workforce and economic challenges.

Core Business Area: Integration and Retention					
OUTCOME	MEASURE	DATA	TARGET 2009-2010	ULTIMATE TARGET	STRATEGIC ACTIONS
Increased retention rate	# of immigrants staying in Nova Scotia	1996-2001 census: 37% 2001-2006 census: 63%.	Not applicable as target is based on Census data.	2011 Census: 70%	- investment in enhanced language and employment readiness programming - strategically aligning NSNP recruitment with labour market needs of the province - Work with stakeholders to address credential recognition issues

* number of client interactions as reported by settlement service providers.

Leadership and Policy Development

Leadership

Develop partnerships with key stakeholders to leverage existing and new resources and create synergies to achieve our common goals. Priority 2009-2010 actions to help accomplish this longer term initiative are to:

Develop a new strategic plan for immigration as follow-up to the Immigration Strategy released in 2005.

Utilize 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.

Continue to collaborate with federal and provincial governments in the Atlantic region to develop and implement 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 2009-2010 to accomplish this longer term initiative will be to:

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 for NSOI use and in support of the International Framework being developed by Intergovernmental Affairs.

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. 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.

In support of the Corporate Human Resource strategy, in 2009-2010 the NSOI will:

Corporate HR Plan Goals and Department Objectives:

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

Goal #4: To be a diverse workforce				
Department Priority	Objective	Strategy/Action	Outcomes	Measures
Diversity training for 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	Team 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 NSOI represents the clients it serves	Hire the most qualified candidates and encourage eligible immigrants to apply for vacant positions	A stronger, multicultural, multilingual office that recognizes the benefits of diversity	Office composition data

Goal #5: To be a learning organization				
Department Priority	Objective	Strategy/Action	Outcomes	Measures
Implement plan for staff training	Employees 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
Access French-language training for staff	Improve the French-language abilities of employees	Encourage employees to enrol in French- language training and provide the time during the work day to attend classes	French-language ability for staff members interested in developing capacity in this area.	Services provided to the public are responsive to needs in both official languages

Budget Context

OFFICE OF IMMIGRATION			
	2008-2009 Estimate	2008-2009 Actual	2009-2010 Estimate
Program and Service Area	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)	(\$thousands)
Office of Immigration			
Total Program Expenses	\$4,998	\$4,194	\$4,691
Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)	22.4	18.1	21.0