

# DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

*Building strong, healthy communities together*

## ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2009-2010



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## 1.0 ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The accountability report of the Department of Community Services for the year ended March 31, 2009, is prepared pursuant to the *Provincial Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against Community Services' business plan information for the fiscal year 2009-2010. The reporting of Community Services' outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements, and opinions by the department's management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the management of the Department of Community Services and, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the department's business plan for the year.



Denise Peterson-Rafuse  
Minister, Department of Community Services



Judith F. Ferguson  
Deputy Minister, Department of Community Services

## 2.0 MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

It is my pleasure to present the 2009-2010 Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services. This report provides an overview of the department's progress and accomplishments in fulfilling its 2009-2010 Business Plan commitments and the results achieved in meeting its performance targets.

A number of significant activities were completed over the last year, consistent with the department's ongoing commitment to provide a sustainable social service system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve. For example, the Department was able to increase a number of supports for families with children and people in need of affordable housing and embark on a redesign of the Employment Support and Income Assistance Program, as part of the province's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

I hope you will find the information helpful in understanding the important work of the Department of Community Services.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Denise Peterson-Rafuse". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath.

Denise Peterson-Rafuse  
Minister, Department of Community Services

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

The annual Accountability Report for the Department of Community Services reports on the progress achieved by the department towards the goals, priorities, performance measures and financial targets established in the 2009-2010 Business Plan. The 2009-2010 Business Plan is available on Community Services' website at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/coms/department/Publications.html>.

In establishing its priorities, the department was guided by its mission statement, strategic goals and outcomes:

### MISSION

The Department of Community Services is committed to a sustainable social service system that promotes the independence, self-reliance, and security of the people we serve.

This will be achieved through excellence in service delivery, leadership, and collaboration with our partners.

### STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Self-reliant people, strong families, and inclusive communities
- Strong, responsive, and sustainable social support system
- Integrated, quality service delivery system
- Strong provider relationships and collaboration
- Leadership and the continuous pursuit of excellence
- Skilled, flexible workforce

## 3.1 REPORT STRUCTURE

This report is organized into three main sections. The first section outlines the department's progress and accomplishments against the priorities identified in the 2009-2010 Business Plan. The next section provides a summary of the financial results for the fiscal year and the final section provides details regarding performance measures and the results achieved.

## 4.0 PRIORITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On a day-to-day basis the department delivers a wide range of social programs and services to Nova Scotians in need. These programs and services contribute to better futures for the province's youth, families and their children, persons with disabilities, and communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Section 4 describes the progress and accomplishments of the department against the priorities identified in the 2009-2010 Business Plan along with some additional accomplishments.

### 4.1 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

The focus of the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) core business area is to provide financial assistance and other supports to persons in need and to facilitate their movement towards employment, independence, and self-sufficiency.

**Priority:** *Preventing Poverty, Promoting Prosperity, Nova Scotia's Poverty Reduction Strategy*

2009-2010, was year one of our poverty reduction plan to break the cycle of poverty and improve the standard of living for low-income Nova Scotians. 2009-2010 initiatives focused on making life more affordable for low-income Nova Scotians.

#### **Nova Scotia Child Benefit**

To reduce poverty and promote labour force attachment for families with children, the department increased the eligibility threshold of the Nova Scotia Child Benefit. This resulted in an increase in the number of children eligible for the program as well as an increase in the amount of the benefit. This \$2.5 million investment benefitted approximately 7,500 children, an average monthly increase of 5 percent compared to the previous year.

#### **Low Income Pharmacare Program for Children**

The department funds a Low Income Pharmacare for Children (LIPC) that provides prescription drug coverage for children of low-income families. In 2009-2010, the department increased the threshold for the program so more families would be eligible to receive pharmacare. Approximately 150 more children, represented by 100 families, are now able to receive prescription drugs under the program.

## **Personal Allowance Rate**

For the sixth consecutive year, the department increased the monthly basic personal allowance rate to help people with the cost of meeting their basic needs. The October 2009 adjustment, based on the Consumer Price Index, resulted in \$6 monthly increase. Approximately 31,000 eligible beneficiaries received the increase at an annual cost of \$2 million.

## **Child Care Subsidies**

In 2009-2010, more than \$13 million was invested in the Child Care Subsidy Program. This includes the Poverty Reduction Strategy commitment to inject a further \$3.5 million annually to help make licensed child care more accessible and affordable. This investment supported the creation of 550 new subsidies bringing the total number of subsidies in Nova Scotia to 3,977.

## **Measurement Framework**

An interdepartmental working group drafted a suite of measures to help monitor the progress of the poverty reduction strategy while ensuring all government action is focused on achieving results. The premise used in developing the framework is that poverty is multi-dimensional and as such indicators and measures go beyond measures of income poverty. Therefore, in addition to a variety of income measures, e.g. prevalence and number of people in low-income, also included are measures regarding social inclusion, housing, child care, labour market participation, education, and public awareness.

The measurement framework will be used to identify the relevant policy instruments available to influence change, as criteria in helping to choose the best possible policy options, and to identify priorities for action.

## **Employment Support and Income Assistance Redesign**

The overhaul of the Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) program is one of the major pieces of work under the poverty reduction strategy. In 2009-2010, work began on the first phase of the project which included an assessment of Nova Scotia's ESIA Program and an examination of the ESIA models in other jurisdictions. More specifically, an examination of income assistance rates and benefits; asset levels and exclusions; chargeable income; cohabitation; disability definitions, allowances, and specialized supports; transitional supports; wage incentives; child benefits; pharmacare; supports for volunteer and community activities; support for post secondary education; career development and life skills programs; and service delivery models was completed.

This information lays the foundation for the next stage of the project which will include recommendations on how to:

- transform income support to encourage workforce attachment, enhance quality of life, and broaden support for the working poor and those at risk of

- poverty;
- break the cycle of poverty by focusing on children; and aligning supports like subsidies and incentives for low-income Nova Scotians;
- create a new client-centered model focused on improved service delivery.

## 4.2 HOUSING

A range of housing programs are available to ensure that more households in Nova Scotia have access to safe, appropriate, affordable and sustainable housing. In the 2009-2010 Business Plan, a number of priorities were identified to increase and preserve Nova Scotia's supply of affordable housing and to help those most in need.

### **Priority: Increase and Preserve the Supply of Affordable Housing**

The department's 2009-2010 investment of \$85 million in affordable housing significantly advanced the department's housing and poverty reduction objectives as well as provided a major stimulus to the economy.

Details on this investment are outlined below and in the following section titled, Housing Authorities and Property Operations.

#### **Affordable Housing Programs**

In April 2009, the federal and provincial governments extended the Canada/Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement to provide an additional two years of funding (ending March 31, 2011), totaling \$13.3 million.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations and the private sector, the department committed \$8.2 million in the creation/preservation of 239 units across the province. The investments included:

- New Rental Housing 124 units
- Rental Preservation 69 units
- Home Preservation 11 units
- Rent Supplement 35 units

#### **Cooperative and Non-Profit Housing**

In 2009-2010, the department committed \$11.4 million for repairs to 552 units in cooperatives and non-profits housing projects. This investment helped to ensure that the supply of affordable housing is both physically and financial sustainable.



## **Housing for Seniors and Persons with Disabilities**

As of March 31, 2010, \$21.43 million has been committed to the construction of 159 affordable housing units for seniors and persons with disabilities. Units are located in Sydney, Port Hawkesbury, North Preston, Sackville, Spryfield, New Minas, and Middleton. The projects include duplexes, triplexes and three storey apartment buildings. There are also another fifteen units in the planning and design stage.

## **Renewal of Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program**

On April 29, 2009, Canada and Nova Scotia signed amendments to the Canada/Nova Scotia Renovation Program Agreement for a two year extension of the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Programs (RRAP). The purpose of these programs is to preserve in good condition, existing housing occupied by low-income households; and to modify and adapt homes so that low-income seniors and persons with disabilities can live independently.

As of March 31, 2010, the department had committed approximately \$9.15 million in the upgrading/adaptation of 818 dwelling units and 196 bed-units.

### **Priority: Property Tax Rebate**

In 2009-2010, the Senior's Property Tax Rebate program was enhanced. The Property Tax Rebate for seniors living in their homes was increased from \$400 to \$600. The program is available to all seniors receiving the federal Guaranteed Income Supplement, who live in their own homes and had their previous year's property taxes paid in full. Approximately 14,500 seniors benefitted from the program in 2009-2010.

### **Priority: Review of Housing Repair /Adaptation Programs**

Community Services assists approximately 2,400 households with home repair and adaptation programs annually through various housing programs. In 2009-2010, the department completed a review of the housing programs' regulations, policies, and procedures.

In 2010-2011, the department will be moving forward on a number of recommendations that will ensure the housing programs continue to meet client needs in a timely and effective manner.

## **4.3 HOUSING AUTHORITIES AND PROPERTY OPERATIONS**

This core business area provides direction and support to the department and the Nova Scotia Housing Development Corporation in the planning and management of approximately 11,300 public housing units and other residential facilities owned by the department.

**Priority: Capital Asset Management Plan**

The Capital Asset Management Plan (CAMP) helps ensure the vitality and sustainability of the public housing portfolio. By maintaining a long-term plan, the department is able to extend the useful life of public housing through the completion of needed repairs, reducing operating costs through energy efficiencies, and adaptations to help seniors to continue to live independently. In 2009-2010, the department invested \$34 million in 950 public housing projects.

**Priority: Greening Plan**

The department developed a greening plan to reduce consumption and greenhouse gas emissions in the public housing portfolio. The plan identifies short, medium and long term initiatives such as upgrades to building components and systems, improved operating practices, and better choices when procuring products and services.

In 2009-2010, the department invested approximately \$22 million to complete short term and medium term projects such as natural gas conversions, window replacements, and insulation upgrades.

**Priority: Aging in Place Plan**

In 2009-2010, an Aging-in-Place Plan was prepared to identify physical improvements to seniors public housing that will enable residents to continue to live independently. To develop the plan, the department:

- inventoried existing aging-in-place features across Nova Scotia
- developed criteria to prioritize selected features
- determined the cost of installing the aging-in-place features
- prepared a delivery plan/schedule to install the features as part of the renovation/retrofit the public housing portfolio.

Implementation of this plan began with an initial investment of \$2 million and included elevators, power operated doors, wheel chair ramps, piezo buzzers, interior handrails, and bathroom and kitchen upgrades.

**Priority: Generator Installation Plan**

The safety of senior residents in public housing is an important concern. The department has prepared a plan for the retrofit of auxiliary power systems in seniors' public housing. To develop the plan, the department:

- inventoried existing generators across Nova Scotia
- developed criteria to prioritize the installation of generators
- determined the cost of installing the generators
- prepared a delivery plan/schedule to install generators.

The plan includes the installation of either permanent or portable generators according to defined criteria. In 2009-2010, short term and medium term priorities were addressed through Federal Provincial Economic Stimulus Program funding.

### **Priority Radon Testing and Mitigation Program**

The department completed the final phase of radon testing in public housing buildings in the spring of 2010, two years ahead of schedule. earlier than promised. There is no immediate health risk from exposure to radon gas. However, as recommended by Health Canada, buildings not meeting the guideline will be remediated within one to two years.

## **4.4 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**

This core business area focuses on the provision of safe and nurturing environments for children, youth and families to enable them to develop to their full potential. As well, a range of services for children and adults with an intellectual disability, a long-term mental illness, a physical disability, or some combination of the three disabilities are also available.

### **Priority: More Accessible, Affordable and Inclusive Child Care Options**

In 2009-2010, the department spent over \$50 million in Early Childhood Development and Early Learning and Child Care. Funds were delivered in a way that benefitted Nova Scotia's children, families and licensed child care professionals.

#### **Child Care Subsidy Program**

The Child Care Subsidy Program helps low-income families access licensed child care. In 2009-2010, more than \$13 million was invested in the Child Care Subsidy Program. This includes the Poverty Reduction Strategy commitment to inject a further \$3.5 million annually to help make licensed child care more accessible and affordable. With the creation of 550 new subsidies, there are approximately 3,977 subsidies in Nova Scotia as of March 2010.

As well in 2009-2010:

- all subsidies became portable - a subsidy is attached to the child and can be taken to any licensed full day child care centre or family home day care that accepts subsidies and has an available space.
- a new streamlined process and forms were rolled out to eligible families and the licensed child care sector to ensure that all families in Nova Scotia, regardless of location, get a uniform, high quality service.

## **Licensed Child Care Spaces**

In 2009-2010, the department, through the Child Care Expansion Loan program approved the creation of 283 additional child care spaces in new and existing licensed child care facilities. Currently, there are approximately 14,300 licensed day spaces in Nova Scotia, delivered in 404 child care centres across the province.

## **Streamlined Grant Programs and Processes**

In 2009-2010, the Child Care Operating Grant and the Stabilization Grant were consolidated to form the Early Childhood Enhancement Grant. By combining grants, the department is saving time and money while improving efficiency and productivity.

## **Recruitment and Retention**

To support quality early learning child care, the department invests approximately \$1 million annually to help the child care sector recruit and retain staff through three major programs:

- Continuing Education Program - up to \$5,000 per year is provided to child care staff of licensed child care centres and family home day care agencies to facilitate their continuing education. In 2009-2010, 120 early childhood staff participated in the program.
- Early Childhood Education Assistance Program - a debt reduction incentive is provided to eligible Early Childhood Education graduates who successfully complete an Early Childhood Education diploma/degree program. Participants can be reimbursed up to \$5,000 per year for a maximum of four years. During 2009-2010, 25 early childhood staff participated in the program.
- Early Childhood Training Initiative - provides funding to institutions to deliver support services and professional development training to the early childhood development sector.

## **Supported Child Care Grant**

The Supported Child Care Grant provides a stable source of funding to licensed, full and part day child care facilities to create or sustain inclusive child care programs. Inclusive childcare enables children to interact within their peer group and receive supports that encourage successful early learning experiences.

For 2009-2010, the department invested approximately \$4.1 million in funding to support children with special needs in child care settings. Funding was provided to 163 licensed child care facilities across Nova Scotia; 32 more facilities than the previous year.

**Priority: Child Welfare Placement Redesign**

Under the child welfare redesign project the department is making improvements that benefit children in care by providing quicker access to services like foster care, adoption and residential placements.

To advance the goals of the redesign project, in 2009-2010, the department:

- conducted an on-site standards compliance review of all Child Welfare Agencies and District Offices to ensure quality child welfare service delivery and consistent case practice across the province
- integrated two more children's aid societies for a total of ten children's aid societies. The remaining three societies will integrate with the department in 2010-2011. The benefits of integration include improved service quality and greater organizational effectiveness.
- developed service agreements and drafted new residential standards with residential service providers, resulting in an improved continuum of residential placement and treatment services.

**Priority: Service Standards for Adult Residential Programs**

In 2009-2010, service standards for Adult Residential Programs were drafted with the goal of enhancing the quality of life of residents of licensed Homes for Special Care facilities and funded and approved residential options. These standards will also ensure consistent service delivery between the two residential programs. In 2010-2011, the new standards will be reviewed with Community Services' residential service providers.

Also, in 2009-2010, the department worked on changing the Homes for Special Care Act to provide additional safeguards to individuals residing in these homes. These changes will help protect persons in care by giving the department the ability to repeal or suspend a facility's license if they are not in compliance with regulations. The Department of Community Services will also have the ability to appoint someone to take over or oversee operations until the license is re-instated. This change will be implemented in 2010-2011.

The amendments will also expand the number of homes that are covered under the Homes for Special Care Act. Funded and approved Small Option Homes with three or more residents will now be licensed. Currently, only homes with at least four residents are licensed. Licensing these homes brings another 192 Small Option Homes and 576 residents, under the mandate and protections afforded under the Protection of Persons in Care Act. This will ensure that any allegation of abuse or neglect received by the Department of Community Services is investigated under the rigors of this Act.

**Priority: Services for Persons with Disabilities Outcomes**

In 2009/10, the Services for Persons with Disabilities (SPD) Program hired a Coordinator of Program Audits as an additional safeguard for persons residing in homes licensed or approved and funded by the department. This position is accountable for the development and implementation of policies, standards, procedures and guidelines for SPD funded residential homes in Nova Scotia. The Services for Persons with Disabilities Program completed and released two audit reports in 2009-2010, which have led to additional protections for vulnerable adults and enhanced quality of life.

## **4.5 HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY**

Community Services is committed to providing a healthy workplace that promotes healthy lifestyle practices, a positive and supportive workplace culture, and a safe physical environment.

**Priority: Security Risk Assessments**

The environment in which people work has a major influence on employee health and safety. The department is committed to creating an environment that prevents the occurrence of incidents such as workplace violence, injury and illness. This includes conducting workplace security risk assessments of occupational health and safety issues such as air quality and noise control. In 2009-2010, the department assessed about half of Community Services offices across the Province with the remainder scheduled for completion in the summer of 2010.

**Priority: Integrated Framework for Healthy Workplace Initiatives**

In September 2009, the department launched a new integrated *WorkingWell* strategy via a video/webcast event on September 30, 2009. This strategy brought together the department's organizational excellence initiatives such as Healthy Workplace, Employee Recognition, Occupational Health & Safety, and Client Services under a new structure called the *WorkingWell* program. *WorkingWell* is designed to foster a supportive workplace culture, creating happy, engaged employees and thereby providing high quality client services.

**Priority: Employee Satisfaction Measurement Initiatives**

The department recognizes employee engagement as a critical element to the department's success in delivering its programs and services. With the understanding that our employees have a wealth of knowledge and ideas on how to improve service delivery, in 2009-2010:

- a staff satisfaction survey tool and pilot was completed by targeted program staff to assess the effectiveness of the new licensing operational model that

was implemented in December 2009. The survey will be conducted in May 2010.

- in central registry, a tool was developed to measure staff satisfaction with Central Registry services. The survey will be conducted in June 2010, the three year anniversary of the opening of the Central Registry.

By serving one another better, we can ultimately serve our external clients and third party stakeholders better.

**Priority: French Language Services**

A French-language capacity survey was completed to identify areas requiring improvement in the delivery of our services to francophone communities. This information will ensure our French resources are utilized to their fullest.

In 2009-2010, 113 employees participated in French language training. The department is also working towards the development of a directory of employees who are capable and willing to provide French language services. The directory will include employee names by office, region, program and fluency.

## **4.6 OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

The following initiatives are additional accomplishments that were not identified in the 2009-2010 Business Plan.

### **Target 100**

Nova Scotia's co-operative sector identified a labour market shortage over the next five years in the areas of customer service, warehousing, marketing, management and skilled trades. To address the shortage, the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council and the department have partnered on an initiative called *Target 100*.

Under this initiative, 100 ESIA clients will be recruited, trained and hired in the co-operative sector over the next five years. The department will work with clients to prepare them for these opportunities.

This investment in job creation is in line with Nova Scotia's Poverty Reduction Strategy.

### **Ten Day Service Standard**

Community Services is committed to reducing the wait times associated with its licences. This commitment includes meeting a government-wide service standard of ten business days.

In December 2009, the new model for the licensing of day cares, family home day care agencies, child-caring facilities, and homes for special care became fully operational. Since this time, almost 100% of our licenses and their renewals were processed within ten business days. The new licensing operational model encompasses tracking systems, streamlined processes, simplified forms, and the revisions to related policies and procedures.



## 5.0 FINANCIAL RESULTS

The department's gross expenditure budget estimate for the fiscal year 2009-2010 was \$945.8 million. Under expenditures of the federally funded Early Childhood Development program and savings in salaries and other administrative costs were redirected to partially offset pressures related to Income Assistance payments, Maintenance costs related to Children in Care, and Services for Persons with Disabilities expenditures.

Department of Community Services Estimated & Actual Expenditures For the Year Ending March 31, 2010				
Operational Area	Estimate 2009-2010 (\$thousands)	Actual 2009-2010 (\$thousands)	Variance	Notes
<b>Gross Departmental Expenses:</b>				
Senior Management	1,511	1,248	263	
Corporate Services Unit	13,865	12,122	1,743	1
Policy and Information Management	4,692	5,699	(1,007)	2
Field Offices	12,716	11,466	1,250	1
Services for Persons with Disabilities	235,673	239,513	(3,840)	3
Family and Children's Services	190,840	181,518	9,322	4
Housing Services	136,399	137,276	(877)	
Employment Support & Income Assistance	342,433	348,079	(5,646)	5
Housing Authority and Property Operations	7,684	8,013	(329)	
<b>Total Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>945,813</b>	<b>944,934</b>	<b>879</b>	
<b>Fees and Other Charges</b>	<b>(442)</b>	<b>(562)</b>	<b>120</b>	
<b>Ordinary Recoveries</b>	<b>(124,850)</b>	<b>(120,939)</b>	<b>3,911</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>TCA Purchase Requirements</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>750</b>	
<b>Provincial Funded Staff (FTE's)</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>1,392</b>	<b>103</b>	

Notes to the Estimated & Actual Expenditures for the Year Ending March 31, 2010

1. Under spent primarily due to savings in salaries and travel as a result of staff vacancies.
2. Over spent due to the transfer of staff to this Division from Services for Persons with Disabilities re: Licensing Services.
3. Over spent due to a number of factors including increasing costs due to the increasing complexity of cases, and the impact of rate review for residential service providers. This more than offset savings resulting from the transfer of staff to Policy and Information Management re: Licensing Services and savings in salaries and travel as a result of staff vacancies.
4. Under spent due primarily to delays in the implementation of components of the federally funded early learning and child care plan as well as savings in salaries and travel as a result of staff vacancies. Federal funds deferred are available to offset expenditures in future year(s). This more than offset pressure in Maintenance of Children in Care costs resulting from increased caseloads and case complexity.
5. Over spent due to rising income assistance caseloads and an increase in the average cost per case related to special needs. This more than offset savings in salaries and travel as a result of staff vacancies and savings in Nova Scotia Child Benefit Program enhancements that were budgeted for a full year but not effective until July 2009.
6. Under achieved, primarily, as a result of the under expenditure in Family and Children's Services as explained above in Note 3. Federal Early Learning and Child Care Trust funding is held by the Department and moved to Ordinary Recoveries to match expenditures incurred (Note 4). This under Persons with Disabilities as well as higher than anticipated recoveries related to the Affordable Housing Program..

## 6.0 PERFORMANCE MEASURES

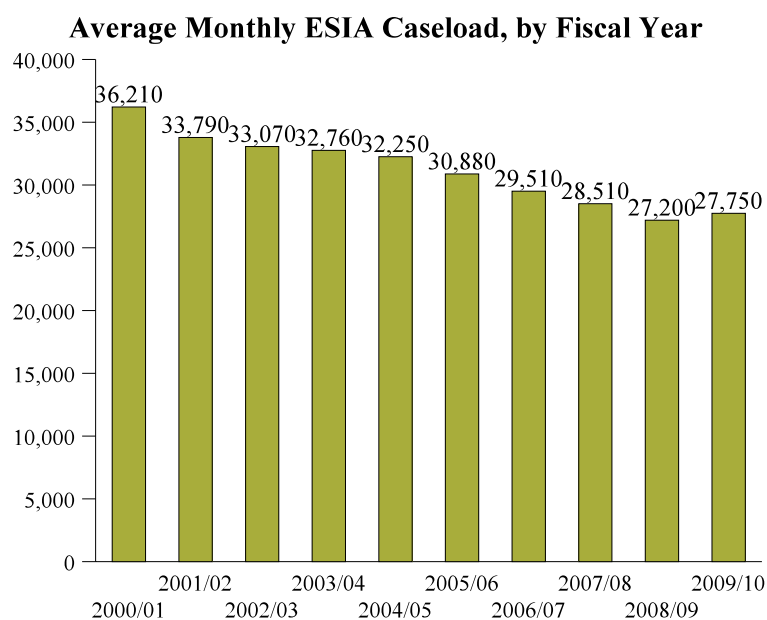
This section provides detailed information on the outcomes and measures of the department's core business areas and our effort to advance the goals and objectives of the Government Human Resource Plan.

### 6.1 EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT AND INCOME ASSISTANCE

The focus of Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) is to provide assistance for individuals and families in their efforts to become self-sufficient.

As depicted in the accompanying chart, the average monthly caseload had been trending steadily downward, falling from 36,210 cases in 2000-2001 to 27,200 in 2008-2009, a reduction of 25 percent. In 2009-2010, the average monthly caseload increased by 2.0 percent, as a result of a slowing economy.

Several interrelated performance measures are used to help track progress of the ESIA program. The first measure - average monthly beneficiaries as a percentage of the NS population - is an indicator of self-sufficiency. The next three measures provide an overview of the success of Employment Support Services (ESS) in addressing the employment-related needs of clients - percentage of income assistance recipients participating in ESS; percentage of income assistance recipients participating in ESS with wage income; percentage of youth (16 - 24) in receipt of income assistance assisted to enhance their employability.



#### **Measure: Average Monthly Beneficiaries as a % of the NS Population**

The average number of people on the department's income assistance caseload each fiscal year as a percentage of Nova Scotia's population represents the percentage of low income households dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs in the context of Nova Scotia's population.

### What does this measure tell us?

A reduction in the number of persons dependent on income assistance is an indication of better outcomes for low income people. It represents the number of persons who have moved or are making the transition into the work force.

### Where are we now?

In 2009-2010, 4.6 percent of Nova Scotia's population was dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs. This result is consistent with the previous year and meets the department's performance target of 5.0 percent or less.

Average Monthly Beneficiaries as a Percentage of the Nova Scotia Population				
2005-2006 (Base Year)	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
5.5%	5.1%	4.8%	4.6%	4.6%

### Where do we want to be in the future?

The department is striving to decrease the number of low income households dependent, in whole or in part, on income assistance to meet their basic needs. In 2010-2011, the department will begin the next stage of the ESIA Redesign project which will include recommendations on how to transform income support to encourage workforce attachment, break the cycle of poverty, and the creation of a new client-centered model focused on improved service delivery.

### Measure: Participation in Employment Support Services

Many income assistance recipients are involved in programs to enhance their skills and personal potential. A variety of programs are available including literacy and upgrading programs, as well as, specialized courses assisting people to acquire job specific skills. Participation in training and employment activities gives people an opportunity to become more self-sufficient.

### What does this measure tell us?

This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services which can help individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become, and remain, self-reliant. Education and job related skills are significant barriers to employment for our clients.

### Where are we now?

21.5 percent of income assistance recipients received services, at some point during the year, from Employment Support Services. This is up slightly from the previous years results of 20.5 percent but slightly short of the 2009-2010 target of 22 percent.

Employment Support Participation		
2007-2008 (Base Year)	2008-2009	2009-2010
21.6%	20.5%	21.5%

In 2009-2010, in partnership with Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, the department announced a new initiative call *Target 100*. Under this program, 100 ESIA clients will be recruited, trained and hired in the co-operative sector over the next five years.

### Where do we want to be in the future?

The department will continue to collaborate with other labour market related federal and provincial departments on improving access to skill development and employment opportunities. The department is actively going to pursue an increase in the number of income assistance recipients participating in employment support programs.

### Measure: Employment Support Participants with Wage Income

Employment Support Services helps eligible people on income assistance to become more self-sufficient. Involvement in employment activities such as volunteer or part-time work or career planning not only reduces reliance on income assistance but also enables individuals and families to achieve a greater degree of self-reliance and independence.

### What does this measure tell us?

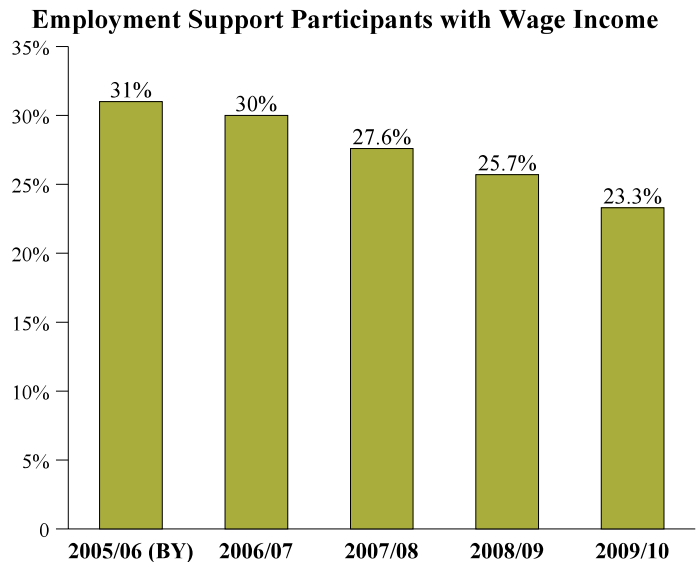
This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients participating in Employment Support Services who have wage income. Included in this calculation are individuals who are still receiving income assistance at a reduced amount because their wages earned are not sufficient to completely exit the program.

### Where are we now?

The department offers a variety of programs, such Return to Work Projects, Targeted Wage Subsidy programs and Work Activity projects, with the goal of linking income assistance recipients to employment opportunities.

In 2009-2010, 23.3 percent of Employment Support Services clients had wage income. This result is below the department's performance target of 28.0.

The current caseload is comprised of individuals that are displaying anywhere from 6 - 12 barriers to employment. These barriers may include literacy issues, changing family circumstances, disabilities and/or educational/training gaps. Overcoming such barriers requires additional time and support to help these individuals make the transition into the labour force.



**Where do we want to be in the future?**

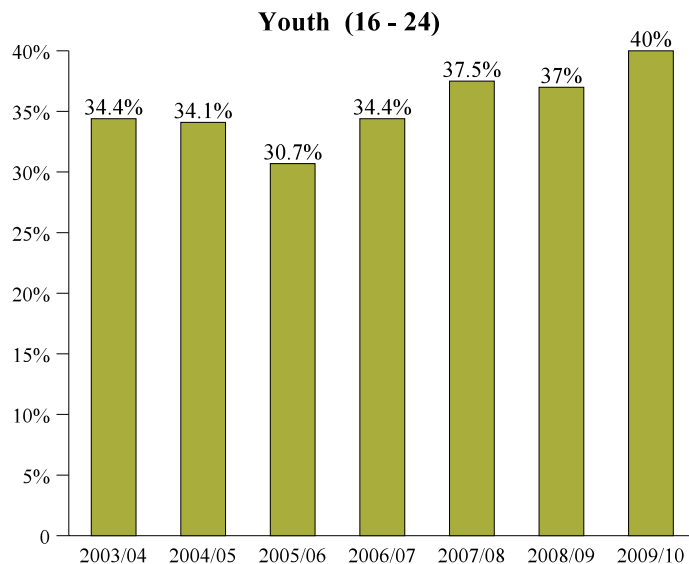
Employment Support Services plans to increase the percentage of income assistance recipients participating in employment support services with wage income. One of the goals of the redesign of the ESIA program is to remove disincentives to employment and assist recipients to attach to labour market. The exploration of pre-employment programming and revised wage incentives and asset levels are key priorities in 2010-2011.

**Measure: Youth Assisted to Enhance Employability**

People who establish dependency patterns early in life often have greater difficulty establishing long-term self-sufficiency. The department is striving to ensure that youth in financial need have opportunities to transition to employment and self-reliance.

**What does this measure tell us?**

Participation in Employment Support Services helps individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become and remain self-reliant. This measure indicates the percentage of income assistance recipients, age 16 to 24, participating in Employment Support Services.



**Where are we now?**

In 2009-2010, there were approximately 5,800 income assistance recipients between the ages of 16 to 24. Of these, 40

percent participated in Employment Support Services. To achieve this result, the department worked with Labour and Workforce Development and others to improve access for youth to skills development and employment opportunities and investigated opportunities to enhance the current youth Development Initiative.

### **Where do we want to be in the future?**

The department aims to increase the percentage of youth participating in Employment Support Services. Participation helps individuals retain and build on the education and skills required to become and remain self-reliant. The 2010-2011 target is 52 percent.

## **6.2 HOUSING**

The following measures track the department's performance in the provision of safe, appropriate, affordable, and sustainable housing for Nova Scotians in need.

### **Measure: Affordable Housing Agreement Funds Committed**

#### **What does the measure tell us?**

Providing affordable housing options to low and moderate income Nova Scotians is essential for their well-being and that of their families, and for the development of sustainable communities. This measure indicates how much of the Canada-Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement funds have been committed to creating or preserving affordable housing units.

#### **Where are we now?**

In April 2009, the federal and provincial governments amended the Canada/Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Program Agreement to provide an additional two years of funding, totaling \$13.3 million. All funds must be invested by March 31, 2011.

Working in partnership with community-based organizations and the private sector, the department committed \$8.2 million in the creation/preservation of 239 units across the province.

The investments included:

- New Rental Housing 124 units
- Rental Preservation 69 units
- Home Preservation 11 units
- Rent Supplement 35 units

Affordable Housing Agreement Funds				2 Year Extension	
Year	2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008 (2 year total)	2008-2009 (3 year total)	2009-2010	2010-2011 Targets
Percent	8.5%	50%	100%	65%	100%
Investment \$	\$1.6 M	\$9.45 M	\$18.9 M	\$8.2 M	\$5.1M
# Units	35	180	333	239	TBD

### Where do we want to be in the future?

The department will continue to strategically invest the remainder of the funds, approximately \$5.1 million, in affordable housing for low-income Nova Scotians.

### Measure: Cooperative Housing Ranking

There are 79 cooperative housing organizations in Nova Scotia providing approximately 1,750 self-contained dwelling units.

### What does the measure tell us?

The Cooperative Ranking Model assesses and monitors the health of the Cooperative Housing Portfolio. The Ranking Model provides an overview of the Cooperative Housing Portfolio and as an ongoing monitoring tool, assists the corporation in its management of cooperative housing. Cooperatives are ranked as a Level I, II or III; with Level I being the healthiest, and Level III being considered a project “in difficulty”.

This measure indicates how many cooperatives achieve a ranking of Level I or a High Level II based on an annual assessment of their financial, democratic and physical condition.

### Where are we now?

In 2009-2010, there were 79 subsidized cooperatives in the Cooperative Housing Portfolio of which 70 percent were deemed to be healthy and do not pose a risk. This result falls short of the target set by the department of 72 percent. As well, the percentage of projects “in difficulty”, Level III, has increased 5 percentage points compared to the previous year.

In 2009-2010, \$11.4 million in economic stimulus funding was invested to retro-fit 15 non profit and cooperative housing projects that provide 525 homes. This injection of funds has made the housing more energy efficient, safer and more physically and financially sustainable. Typically repairs included new roofs, windows and doors and bathroom renovations.



Cooperative Ranking	2005/06 (Base Year)	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
Level I	35%	31%	30%	30%	30%
High Level II	28%	31%	38%	40%	40%
Low Level II	13%	18%	15%	15%	10%
Level III	24%	20%	17%	15%	20%

### Where do we want to be in the future?

The department is striving to increase the percentage of cooperatives that achieve a Level I or a High Level II (considered healthy). The 2010-2011 target is 75 percent of the cooperatives to be deemed healthy. To achieve this target, the department will invest \$9.2 million in cooperative and non profit housing in 2010-2011.

### Measure: Households Assisted with Health and Safety Repairs

The Province offers a suite of housing repair programs to enable lower income households to make emergency, health, and safety-related repairs to their homes.

### What does the measure tell us?

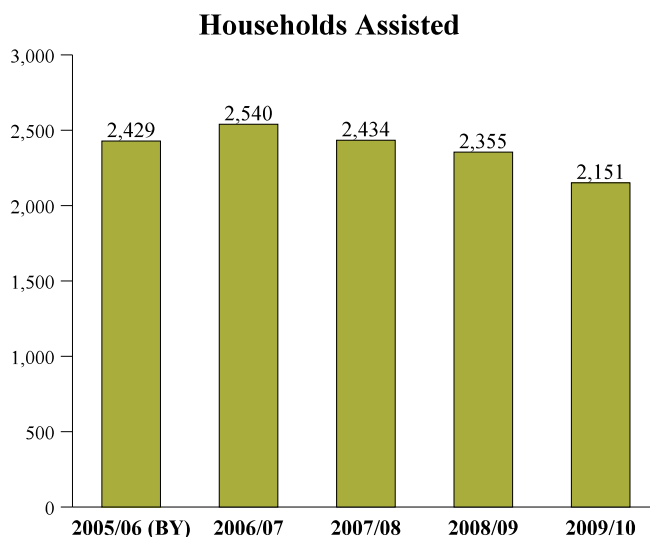
Preserving, in good condition, existing affordable housing occupied by low-income households and modifying and adapting homes so that low-income seniors and persons with disabilities can live independently is essential for their well being, the well being of their families, and for the development of sustainable communities.

This measure indicates the number of households the department assists each year with health and safety related home repairs.

### Where are we now?

In 2009-2010, the department assisted 2,151 homes with repairs/adaptations; a total investment of \$15.3 million. This included an investment of approximately \$4.6 million in repairs/adaptations for approximately 902 seniors.

The target for 2009-2010 was set at 2,400 households. The shortfall in the number of homes assisted is reflective of inflationary



pressures on the cost of material and labour and the department's priority to help clients with more extensive repairs.

### Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2010-2011, the department aims to assist 2,300 household with repairs/adaptations through a range of grants and forgivable loans for low income Nova Scotians.

## 6.3 FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTS

Under the Family and Community Supports program area, several inter-related performance measures are used to track the progress towards achieving two key objectives:

- children, youth and families have a safe, secure and stable environment in which to grow and prosper
- persons with disabilities have access to the most appropriate supports to enhance their quality of life

### Measure: Number of Children in Care Placed for Adoption

The department is responsible for Nova Scotian children when they cannot be safely and securely cared for by their own families. Where a child is in the department's permanent care and custody and legally free for adoption, it is in the child's best interest to be placed for adoption as quickly as possible. Research has shown that a secure stable family environment is an important factor in healthy child development.

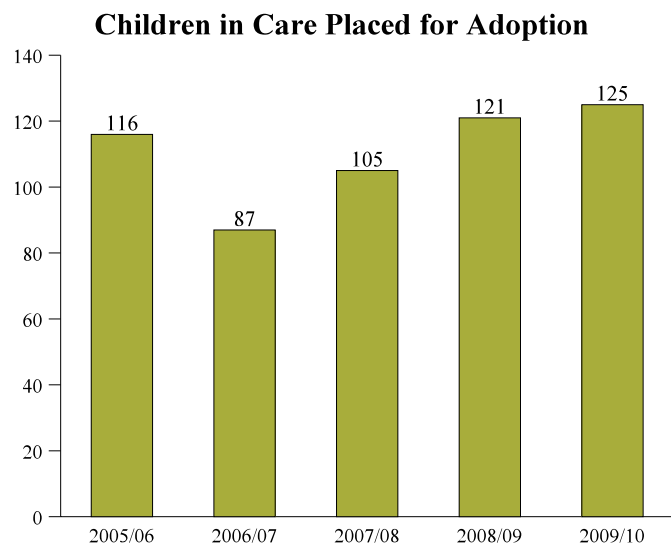
#### What does this measure tell us?

This measure reports on the number of children in the department's care that are placed for agency adoption. The number includes adoptions that have not yet been finalized.

#### Where are we now?

In 2009-2010, 125 children were placed for adoption. This represents a slight increase compared to the previous year's results of 121 and surpasses the target of 100 adoptions.

To improve and increase awareness concerning the department's adoption program, in November 2009, the department launched a new online video



series about adoption. The video is a compilation of interviews that tell the story of the adoption process. The story is told by families talking about their experiences, concerns, challenges and ultimately rewards in adopting a child in need.

### Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2010-2011, our target remains the same, 100 or more children placed for adoption. It is the goal of the department to place all children who come into permanent care in adoption homes. Our greatest need is for African Nova Scotian families and families who would like to adopt school-aged children and sibling groups.

### Measure: Number of Spaces in Full-Time Licensed Care Centres

Access to child care is a necessary resource for parents of young children, who are either employed, seeking employment, or pursuing training.

### What does this measure tell us?

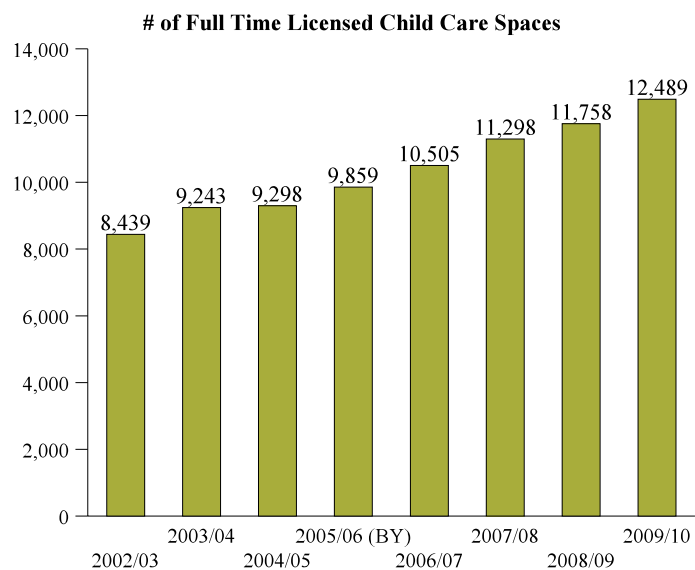
The number of spaces in full-time licensed child care centres is a measure of the department's ability to meet the early childhood development needs of children. Quality child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children's learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child's well-being. The availability of child care is also an important resource for parents to enter and remain in the labour force, or to access employment training.

### Where are we now?

As of March 2010, there were 12,489 full-time licensed child care spaces. This represents 731 more spaces compared to the previous year and 2,630 spaces more than the base year exceeds the 2009-2010 target of 12,295 licensed full-time spaces.

Spaces were created through the Expansion Loan program, by providing operational funding to help offset the operational costs of centres, and through the Repair/Renovation Loan program which allowed centres to upgrade or enhance their premises.

In addition, there are approximately 2,379 part-day and family home day care spaces, which brings the total number of spaces up to 14,868.



**Where do we want to be in the future?**

The department will continue to invest funding in the creation of new licensed child care spaces, through the expansion loan program and operating grants. The 2010-2011 target is 14,785 full and part-time spaces.

**Measure: Number of Child Care Subsidies**

Access to affordable licensed child care offers an ongoing opportunity for children’s learning while providing safe and reliable care that promotes socialization, health, and a child’s well-being. Availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to eligible families who wish to remain in the labour force, seek employment, or access training.

**What does this measure tell us?**

The Child Care Subsidy Program helps eligible families access licensed child care. The number of child care subsidies is a measure of the department’s ability to support eligible families with their child care needs.

**Where are we now?**

In 2009-2010, more than \$13 million was invested in the Child Care Subsidy Program. As of March 2010, there were 3,977 child care subsidies. This represents an increase of approximately 550 subsidies compared to the pervious year and already exceeds the target (3,680) by almost 300 subsidies.

Number of Subsidies			
<b>2006-2007 (Base Year)</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
3045	3063	3425	3977

**Where do we want to be in the future?**

In 2010-2011, the assessed daily parent fee of \$1.00 per day will be eliminated making child care more accessible and affordable for families. As well, government committed to creating an additional 250 subsidies in 2011-2012.

**Measure: Monthly Utilization Rate of Child Care Subsidies**

The availability of affordable child care is a critical resource to low income families. By making child care more affordable and accessible, the department is making it easier for parents to work.

**What does this measure tell us?**

This measure represents the average monthly utilization of portable subsidized child care spaces.

**Where are we now?**

In 2009-2010, all subsidies became portable - all subsidies are attached to the child and can be taken to any licensed full day child care centre or family home day care that accepts subsidies and has an available space.

In 2009-2010, the department surpassed the target of 95 percent, the average monthly utilization of child care subsidies was 100 percent. This means a significant number of more families were able to access a child care subsidy and find child care that suited their individual circumstances.

Utilization Rate of Portable Subsidized Child Care Spaces				
2005-2006 (Base Year)	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
90.84%	93.71%	89.01%	98.5%	100%

**Where do we want to be in the future?**

The department wants to maintain a 100 percent subsidy utilization rate while at the same time ensure all qualifying families can access the subsidy program. In 2010-2011, the assessed daily parent fee of \$1.00 per day will be eliminated making child care more accessible and affordable for families. As well, government committed to creating 250 subsidies in 2011-2012.

**Measure: Number Family Home Day Cares**

The Family Home Day Care program provides another child care option to Nova Scotia families, particularly in rural areas of the province.

**What does this measure tell us?**

The number of family home day cares is another measure of the department’s ability to meet the early childhood development needs of children.

**Where are we now?**

The family home day care program was launched in 2007 and has experienced steady growth. In 2009-2010, the number of family home day cares increased by almost 50 percent compared to the previous year, however, the program continues to have a lower uptake than expected. The target was a 110 family home day cares.

To increase awareness of the program, the department launched a campaign to provide information on the benefits of the program and recruited existing centres to become agencies.

Number of Family Home Day Cares			
2006-2007 (Base Year)	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
31	28	56	83

### Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2010-2011, the department will continue to work on increasing the public’s awareness of the program. In the Fall of 2010, public information sessions will be held across the province to provide information on the program and to recruit potential agencies.

### Measure: Number of Child Care Centres Meeting Inclusion Criteria

Funding is provided to licensed child care centres to support the development of skills and competencies of young children with special needs. The term “child with special needs” can refer to a child with an identified or diagnosed delay in development by six months or more, in two or more areas of development, and/or children who are “at risk” for developmental delay.

### What does this measure tell us?

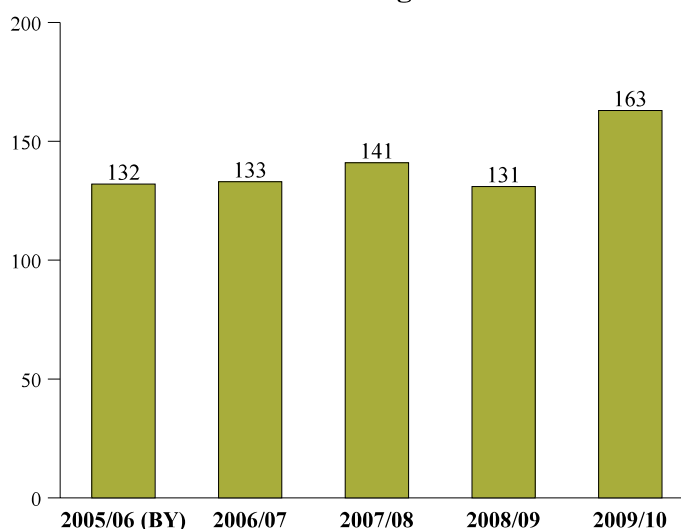
Early intervention and support, within the context of licensed child care, is an enabler in assisting children with special needs to achieve their full potential. Number of licensed child care centres meeting inclusion criteria is a measure of the capacity building effort within the child care sector to provide inclusive programs.

### Where are we now?

The department provides funding to licensed child care centres to support the development of skills and competencies of young children with special needs. This funding is used to build program capacity to include children with special needs. In 2009-2010, 163 licensed child care centres provided some level of inclusive programming. This result surpasses the target of 148 licensed child care centres meeting inclusion criteria.

In 2009-2010, the department invested approximately \$4.1 million in funding to support children with special needs in child care settings.

**Child Care Centres Meeting Inclusion Criteria**



## Where do we want to be in the future?

The department is striving to achieve a level of support that would allow all families of children with special needs to have access to child care in their own communities, regardless of the child's developmental needs. To this end, the department will continue to provide Supported Child Care Grant funding to create and sustain inclusive childcare programs.

## Measure: Number of Clients Receiving Direct Family Support Services

The funding offered through the Direct Family Support program enables families to support family members with a disability at home, preventing the need for an out-of-home placement.

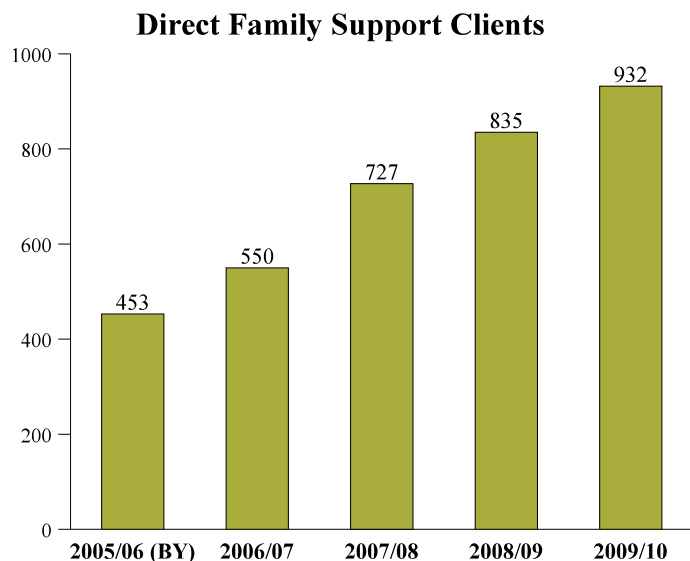
### What does this measure tell us?

This measure, the number of adult clients receiving direct family support funding, demonstrates progress towards improving the continuum of residential support options available to adults with disabilities.

### Where are we now?

Since the implementation of the Direct Family Support program, there has been a steady growth in the number of clients. In 2009-2010, there were 932 clients, 19 years of age and older, throughout the province. This represents an almost 12 percent increase compared to the previous years results and exceeds the department's target of 750 clients.

The target was exceeded by securing an increase in funding and by promoting the Direct Family Support program in communities throughout Nova Scotia as the preferred program option.



### Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2010-2011, the department will maintain the level of service and focus on a review of current policies, processes and procedures to ensure the Services for Persons with Disabilities program is making the best use of resources.

**Measure: Number of Clients Placed in Alternative Family Support Homes**

In April 2006, the department implemented the Alternative Family Support program. This program supports families who welcome a person with a disability into their homes enabling individuals to remain closer to their communities and live in a family like setting.

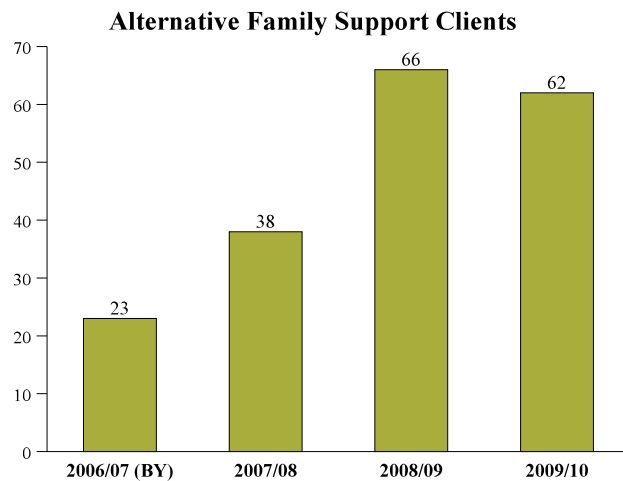
**What does this measure tell us?**

The number of clients in Alternative Family Support homes demonstrates progress towards improving the continuum of residential support options available to adults with disabilities.

**Where are we now?**

The Alternative Family Support program has almost tripled in size since 2006-2007.

In 2009-2010, there were 62 clients in Alternative Family Support homes, which surpassed the target of 55 clients. Participation in the program is down slightly compared to the previous year due to budget restraint.



**Where do we want to be in the future?**

Next year, the department will maintain the current level of service and focus on a review of current policies, processes and procedures to ensure the Services for Persons with Disabilities program is making the best use of resources.

**Measure: Number of Independent Support Clients**

The Independent Living Support program provides a minimal level of support, up to 21 hours a week, to adults with disabilities. Individuals are able to achieve and maintain the highest level of independence possible by enabling them to live independently in their communities and by promoting community participation.

**What does this measure tell us?**

The number of Independent Living support clients is another measure of the department’s ability to provide the appropriate residential support options for adults with disabilities.

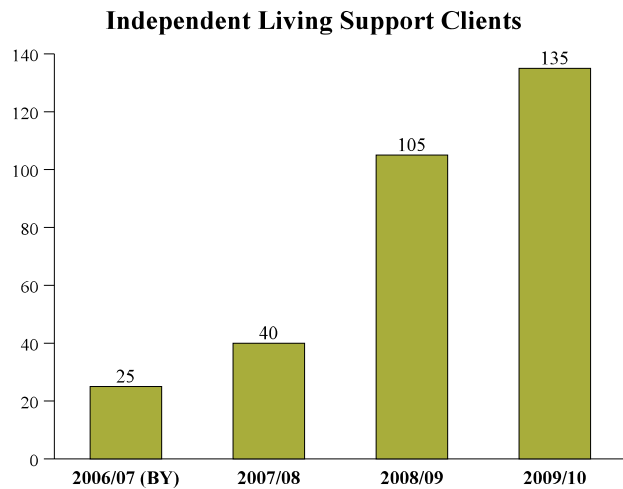


### Where are we now?

In 2009-2009, there was significant growth in this program of almost 30 percent. The department surpassed its 2009-2010 target of 105 clients supported through the Independent Living Support program.

### Where do we want to be in the future?

Having achieved such a high level of growth last year, the department will maintain the current capacity level of the Independent Living Support program in 2010-2011.



### Measure: Number of Clients Served by Adult Service Centres

Adult Service Centres provide employment, skills training and day program opportunities for adults with disabilities in communities across Nova Scotia. Currently, there are 30 Adult Service Centres.

### What does this measure tell us?

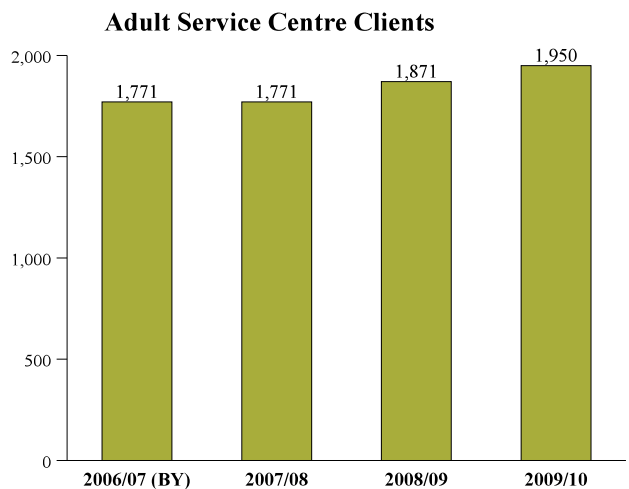
The number of clients served by adult service centres is a measure of the department's ability to provide access to programs that enhance the quality of life and employability of adults with disabilities.

### Where are we now?

As targeted, 1,950 persons with disabilities were provided services and support through 30 adult service centres across the province. This represents an increase of 4 percent compared to the previous year results of 1,871. In 2009-2010, there was expansion in the adult service centre sector to enable an increase in capacity.

### Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2010-2011, the department is planning to maintain the current capacity level while focusing on an Adult Service Centre Redesign Project, where a funding strategy will be developed in collaboration with representatives from the sector.



## 6.5 Human Resources

The following three measures are used to track the department's ability to create a supportive work environment in which employees have opportunities to develop to their full potential

### **Measure: Access to Training Opportunities**

The continuous growth and development of Community Services' staff is required to ensure the department achieves organizational success now and in the future.

#### **What does this measure tell us?**

In the annual employee survey, respondents are asked if they have access to training opportunities. The number of "somewhat agree" and "strongly agree" responses are combined to determine the percentage of Community Services' employees who indicate they have access to training opportunities.

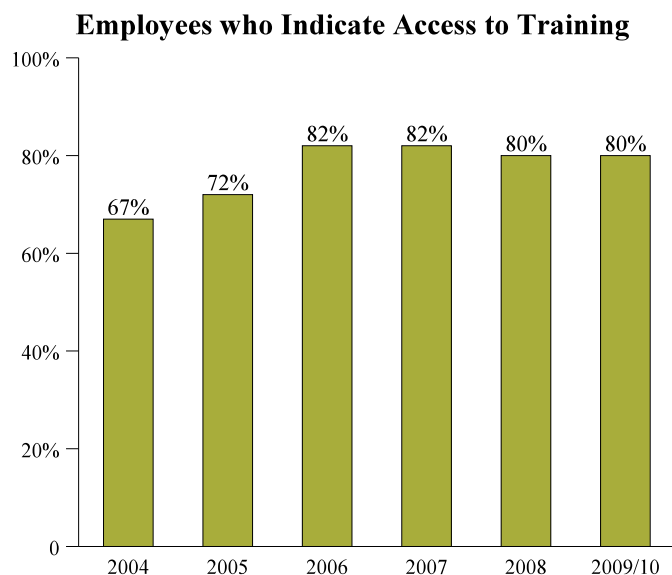
#### **Where are we now?**

Results of the 2009 survey, indicate that 80 percent of Community Services staff who responded to the survey have access to training opportunities. This result falls short of our target of 100 percent.

In 2009-2010, all staff had access to a departmental training calendar and LearnNet - a management system for employees to browse training catalogues and to register for courses online. In addition, Community Services sponsored 65 employees to participate in Leadership Development Training.

#### **Where do we want to be in the future?**

The department will continue to work toward a target of 100 percent by placing an increased emphasis on staff retention and recruitment strategies, career planning, training, and development planning.



**Measure: Management Participate in Annual Performance Reviews**

Performance management is a strategic leadership tool for organizational effectiveness. It helps ensure that efforts are focused on the goals and priorities of the department. Performance management is also a tool for developing competent leadership now and in the future.

**What does this measure tell us?**

The success of employees depends on a clear performance management process, which recognizes the accomplishments and supports the professional development of public service employees. There are two distinct, but similar, performance management processes: one for management employees and one for bargaining unit employees. This measure includes the percentage of management staff who participate in annual performance reviews.

**Where are we now?**

Performance reviews for 2009-2010 are on hold until the Government Executive Compensation Pay Plan is finalized. However, performance reviews for management employees continues to be a mandatory requirement.

Percentage of Management who Participate in Annual Performance Reviews				
2005-2006 (Base Year)	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
85% <sup>1</sup>	71%	80%	100%	TBD

**Where do we want to be in the future?**

The department is striving to maintain a 100 percent participation rate. Performance reviews for management employees will continue to be a mandatory requirement.

**Measure: Number of Diversity Training Participants**

Diversity training is a mandatory course for all employees. This training is provided through the Public Service Commission and is designed to help participants understand typical patterns of behaviour when some people in a workplace are different from the majority. It introduces the language and concepts of diversity, along with strategies for equity and inclusion.

**What does this measure tell us?**

The department recognized that diversity competencies are an essential requirement of the future. The “one-size fits all model” is no longer reasonable in a dynamic and increasingly diverse

labour market. The department encourages all new employees to participate in diversity training within the first year of employment.

**Where are we now?**

In 2009-2010, there was an influx of staff as part of the integration of Children’s Aid Societies, resulting in 27 percent of new employees participated in diversity training within their first year of employment. This represents a significant decrease compared to the previous year’s result of 70 percent and is below the 2009-2010 target of 75 percent. These new employees will be offered diversity training in their second year of employment.

<b>Percentage of Employees who Participate in Diversity Training in Their First Year of Employment</b>			
<b>2006-2007 (Base Year)</b>	<b>2007-2008</b>	<b>2008-2009</b>	<b>2009-2010</b>
25%	35%	70%	27%

**Where do we want to be in the future?**

All new Community Services’ employees will be extended diversity training when it is offered by the Public Service Commission.