



**Nova Scotia Provincial  
Housing Agency**

# **Business Plan 2023/24**

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## Message From the Interim Board Chair

We are pleased to present the 2023/2024 Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA) Business Plan, a first for the Province's new crown corporation for public housing.

On December 1, 2022, when the NSPHA was established under the *Housing Services and Supply Act*, the Province brought five housing authorities, their staff and operations together under one roof. In doing so, it achieved the chief recommendation of the Housing Commission and ministerial mandate commitment to create a new governance structure for public housing. Governance improvements provide a solid foundation for enhancing operations and accountability, ensuring consistency in policy and procedures and improving client services across the Province.

In 2023/2024 our key areas of focus are:

- Client Service,
- Asset Management and Operations, and
- Corporate Governance and Accountability.

This approach will help advance the NSPHA's legislated mandate, provide a framework for communicating our successes and clarify our strategic objectives now and into the future.

We owe it to Nova Scotians to make meaningful changes for those in need of public housing. We are optimistic about our future as a new organization and are ready for the work ahead.

Sincerely,



Paul LaFleche,  
Interim Board Chair, NSPHA  
Deputy Minister, Municipal Affairs and Housing

## About Us

The Housing Commission Report, *Charting a new course for affordable housing in Nova Scotia* and the Auditor General's Report, *Oversight and Management of Government Owned Public Housing*, identified a need for Nova Scotia to focus on standardizing and streamlining public housing operations across the province.

The NSPHA is a new crown corporation solely dedicated to, and responsible for, public housing. We support Nova Scotians and the priorities of the Government of Nova Scotia by working together to ensure seniors, families and individuals with lower incomes have a safe, suitable and affordable place to call home. Under the *Housing Supply and Services Act*, the NSPHA is mandated to:

- Maintain, manage, and operate safe and suitable subsidized housing accommodations for low-income households in the Province,
- Attain acceptable levels of tenant service, and
- Manage applications and tenancies for public housing.

Changes in governance and the establishment of the NSPHA bring public housing under one roof. This was done to help ensure policies and processes are uniformly applied for any Nova Scotian already living in or waiting for access to our housing.

The NSPHA operates and manages more than 11,200 safe, affordable homes for eligible Nova Scotians in communities across the province. This includes undertaking repair and renewal work needed to preserve our portfolio and ensure it is sustainable now and into the future.

Our four district offices manage the day-to-day operations of the Province's housing stock. Their responsibilities include administering tenant applications and placements, collecting rent, resolving tenant issues and maintaining and repairing properties.

In addition to the above mandated goals, the NSPHA will work with the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing and our partners at the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes as set out in the 9-year National Housing Strategy Bilateral Agreement.

## Key Areas of Focus for 2023/2024

**With a new governance structure in place, and in accordance with the Auditor General's recommendations, our organization is positioned to achieve the high standards that Nova Scotians expect.**

In 2023/2024, the NSPHA's three key areas of focus are:

1. Client Service,
2. Asset Management and Operations, and
3. Corporate Governance and Accountability.

### CLIENT SERVICE

We will deepen our client focus by gathering feedback from the people and communities we serve and developing new client service standards.

#### **Tenant Engagement Strategy**

The NSPHA will collaborate with key stakeholders, including Provincial departments with shared clients, community partners and our clients, to design and implement a new Tenant Engagement Strategy for delivery in 2024/25. This work will include:

- Documenting and addressing client-related issues within public housing buildings, and
- Reporting on ongoing trends and unique client-related issues to district and head office management.

#### **Client Service Standards**

Beginning in winter 2023/2024 we will launch the development of a new Policy & Operational Framework and new client service standards that reflect our deeper client-focus. This starts at the service delivery level, where we will collaborate with departments with whom we share clients and community partners to establish a more integrated approach to client service and establish routine information sharing agreements.

### ASSET MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

We will improve performance measurement and monitoring to ensure we are sustainable and can support Nova Scotians in need.

#### **5-Year Capital Asset Management Plan**

We will continue our focus on preserving and stabilizing existing social housing stock, as required under the National Housing Strategy Bilateral Agreement, to ensure the long-term sustainability of the portfolio. This includes building on our

ten-year Capital Asset Management Plan by identifying new, strategic, medium- and long- term options for renewal of the Province’s housing portfolio. Innovative technologies will be considered, and new targets and outcomes will be established to improve building systems, reduce energy consumption and enhance operations and maintenance.

## **Accessibility Improvements**

This year, we will continue supporting the achievement of the three-year accessibility targets and outcomes that will be included in Nova Scotia’s 2022/2023 - 2024/2025 National Housing Strategy Action Plan with the objective of creating 30 barrier-free units and completing accessibility upgrades to at least 90 units by 2024/25.

## **Greening & Sustainability**

To improve the efficiency of our public housing portfolio and help meet Provincial and Federal Greenhouse Gas emission reduction targets, we will continue to implement Deep Energy Retrofits identified in a five-year Energy Management Strategy. Reporting on targets and outcomes achieved through the Strategy, and against broader targets established under the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act* will begin in 2023/2024.

## **Preventative Maintenance Strategy & Operational Standards**

This year, we will develop and implement new Preventative Maintenance & Operational Standards to meet our legislated mandate and maximize use of public housing. The Standards will include policy and processes and renewed targets to reduce unit turnaround times and implement regular monitoring and public reporting against the targets.

## **CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

We will deliver improved oversight and management of public housing while balancing our legislative responsibilities.

## **Policy and Operational Framework**

In 2023/2024, we will build on progress already made toward implementing the Auditor General’s recommendations and begin developing a new Policy and Operational Framework and Client Service Standards. Through this work, we will:

- Establish goals and performance metrics for public housing,
- Define roles and responsibilities for reporting and processes for internal monitoring of results, and

- Create mechanisms to support continuous improvement.

This year, we will focus specifically on implementation of new policies and processes for assessing continued eligibility for public housing - including overhousing, managing the waitlist, priority access to public housing and procurement policies and processes.

## **Human Resources Plan**

The NSPHA is striving to be an employer of choice. This year, we will develop a Human Resources Plan that includes consistent and improved business processes, more support for our employees, better employee training, orientation and performance measurement standards that promote accountability. We will also implement new conflict of interest policy and processes and develop new policies on fraud prevention and respectful workplace.

## **Information Technology Management Systems Roadmap**

In 2023/2024, as part of a broad plan to operationalize our new governance structure, the NSPHA will update back-office Information Technology, Human Resources and client and asset management systems, ensuring NSPHA staff have the tools they need to meet our legislated mandate.

## **Operational Health and Safety**

NSPHA employees work together to prevent workplace accidents. In 2022/2023, we implemented updated Operational Health and Safety policies and processes. This year we will introduce a new Operational Health and Safety program, monitor and evaluate its implementation and work to foster a culture of continuous quality improvement across our organization.

## **Business Continuity Management & Plan**

In 2022/23, staff worked together to address lessons learned from Hurricane Fiona and developed an Emergency Preparedness Checklist for district offices. In 2023/2024, we will develop processes to identify potential risk to our clients, staff, infrastructure and business operations. This includes developing a standard Business Continuity Plan that will ensure we can sustain and/or resume the operation of critical business functions impacted by disruptive events.

## **2023/24-2025/25 NSPHA Accessibility Plan**

In 2022/2023, as a prescribed public sector body under the *Accessibility Act*, we developed the NSPHA's first three-year Accessibility Plan. This year, in consultation

with our clients and key stakeholders, we will implement our Accessibility Plan and continue to identify, prevent and eliminate barriers to accessing our services.

## Collaborations and Partnerships

NSPHA is adopting new, integrated approaches to how we serve Nova Scotians in housing need. This includes maintaining and expanding strategic collaboration with government departments, agencies that provide supportive housing services, the community housing sector and other public housing programs delivered across Canada. In 2023/2024, we will consult and/or begin new collaborations with:

- Departments of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Community Services, Seniors and Long-Term Care and Health and Wellness,
- Municipalities,
- Public housing programs offered within and outside Canada, and
- Other agencies and community-based organizations as required.

## Performance Measurement & Accountability

To manage our operations effectively, the NSPHA will monitor a core set of metrics – key performance indicators – to ensure we stay focused on delivering our legislated mandate and recommendations under the Auditor General’s report.

Key performance indicators and stated targets for each Key Area of Focus are shown below. We will include additional measures in support of our legislated mandate in our next Business Plan.

Client Service		
Application processing time	Baseline as of October 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Application processing Speed improved by 44 days</li> <li>• Backlog reduced by 4%</li> <li>• Completion rate improved by 93%</li> </ul>	2023/24 – Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processing speed improved by 39 days</li> <li>• Backlog reduced by 5%</li> <li>• Completion rate improved by 90%</li> </ul>



Asset Management & Operations		
# accessible units	2022/23 Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 10 barrier-free units</li> <li>• 30 near-accessible units</li> </ul>	2023/24 – Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20 barrier-free units</li> <li>• 60 near-accessible units</li> </ul>
# deep energy retrofits	2022/23 Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 57 Home Energy Assessments in support of completing deep energy retrofits</li> </ul>	2023/24 – Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 114 one- and two-unit deep energy retrofits</li> </ul>
Unit turnaround time	Baseline as of October 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial average: 111 days</li> </ul>	2023/24 – Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provincial average: 60 days</li> </ul>
Corporate Governance		
% Office of the Auditor General recommendations implemented: <a href="#">June 2022 Report</a>	2022/23 – Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 25% completed (5 of 20 recommendations)</li> </ul>	2023/24 – Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 40% completed (8 of 20 recommendations)</li> </ul>
% Office of the Auditor General recommendations implemented: <a href="#">Jan. 2023 Report</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75% completed (3 of 4 recommendations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% completed (4 of 4 recommendations)</li> </ul>

## Financial Summary

Statement of Operations (in 000's)

	2023/2024	
	Estimate	
Tenant rent revenue	\$	63,551
Other		5,720
Provincial (MAH)		88,759
Provincial (Tangible Capital Asset Grant)		1,900
<b>Total Revenue</b>		<b>159,930</b>
Utilities		26,991
Maintenance		89,343
Administration & Other		29,660
Property tax		12,710
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>158,704</b>
<b>Annual Surplus</b>	\$	<b>1,226</b>

*\*NSPHA started operations December 1, 2022. Comparative values for the prior year are not available.*

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**Contact us!**

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**NSPHA**