



**Nova Scotia Provincial
Housing Agency**

Accountability Report 2022/2023



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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency for the period of December 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines.

These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Business Plan. The reporting of the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to goals and priorities with respect to public housing set out in the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2022/2023 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

The Honourable John Lohr
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Paul LaFleche
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Message from the Interim CEO

We are pleased to present the first Accountability Report for the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA).

In 2022/23, the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing (DMAH) acted on the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission to establish a new governance structure for public housing. On December 1, 2022, the NSPHA was created as a Crown corporation to strategically manage public housing assets and achieve efficiencies so those in need are better able to access public housing now and into the future.

The five former regional housing authorities across the province were amalgamated and staff became employees of the NSPHA. A senior leadership team was put in place and processes and technology were improved. The team has been working on a strategic framework for the organization which will guide investments and activities of the NSPHA going forward. An assessment of public housing properties was completed to inform how the NSPHA will invest to maintain and enhance the quality, accessibility and sustainability of the portfolio over the next five years. Improving client experience is a top priority for the NSPHA. In addition to conducting province-wide client engagement sessions, the team began work on a client engagement strategy that will strengthen communications and overall client service. As always, the safety of our staff and clients is a top priority and through a redesign of our Occupational Health and Safety Program, the NSPHA now has a consistent approach to health and safety that incorporates best practices and safe work procedures that were identified as a result of the pandemic. We also undertook business continuity planning to ensure the appropriate processes and safety measures are in place in the event of an emergency.

The NSPHA is committed to community, partnerships, transparency and accountability. We look forward to continuing to provide deeply affordable housing solutions to Nova Scotians, so they have a safe and suitable place to call home.

Sincerely,

Paul LaFleche
Interim CEO, Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency

Measuring Our Performance

Since the NSPHA was formed on December 1, 2022, a significant amount of time has been invested in strategic planning to deliver on our mandate, support government priorities and respond to the recommendations of the Office of the Auditor General. Work is underway to develop key metrics which the NSPHA will use to measure and report on its performance.

Our Mandate

The NSPHA is dedicated to maintaining, managing and operating safe and suitable subsidized housing for low-income Nova Scotians. We are committed to providing exceptional client service and property management.

This Accountability Report highlights how the NSPHA has acted on the commitments outlined for public housing in the [Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing 2022/2023 Business Plan](#).

Advancing a new governance model for public housing

Priority: Advance a new governance model for public housing.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ In 2022/23, DMAH acted on the recommendations of the Nova Scotia Affordable Housing Commission to establish a new governance structure for public housing. On December 1, 2022, the five regional housing authorities became a new provincial Crown corporation called the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency. The NSPHA is responsible for managing more than 11,200 public housing units so those in need have access to deeply affordable housing solutions. It employs staff across the province within the district offices of Western, Metropolitan, Northern and Cape Breton Island. Under this new structure, the Chief Executive Officer of the NSPHA reports to DMAH's Deputy Minister and is accountable for meeting the Agency's mandate under the [2022 Housing Supply and Services Act](#). The NSPHA also has an Advisory Board that is accountable to the Minister.
- ✓ Appointed an Interim CEO on December 1, 2022, who will remain in the position until the role is filled permanently.

- ✓ Formed NSPHA's senior leadership team to improve operational oversight and accountability, strategic asset management, policy development, client services, employee attraction and retention and stakeholder engagement.

Corporate Governance and Accountability

Priority: Improve operational efficiency and effectiveness, including targets and outcomes.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Completed upgrades to NSPHA's primary business tool, Yardi. This has enhanced data integrity and allowed the NSPHA to enforce existing eligibility and waitlist policies more effectively.
- ✓ Implemented a *Unit Turnaround Process Guide* for NSPHA employees to improve business processes and reduce turnaround times and vacancy rates. Effectively managing unit vacancy and unit turnaround times is a priority of the NSPHA. While several factors influence turnaround times and vacancy rates, such as unit condition and contractor availability, the *Unit Turnaround Process Guide* formalizes coordination and communication among employees involved in this work. Between October 2022 and March 31, 2023, average turnaround times were reduced from 151 days to 98 days and vacancy rates fell from 2.5 percent to 2.1 percent.
- ✓ Continued to better prepare for emergencies, such as severe weather events, by providing key staff with business continuity training led by the provincial government's Business Continuity Office. All district offices now have a designated NSPHA Local Incident Commander who is the liaison with the provincial Business Continuity Management Office during emergencies.

Enhance Client Engagement

Priority: Improve levels of service to public housing clients.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Deepened NSPHA's understanding of client needs and experiences by conducting 13 client engagement sessions across the province.

- ✓ Connected with over 500 public housing clients via telephone and met in person with 80 clients to hear feedback about existing services and to inform the development of an approach for future client engagement efforts.
- ✓ Completed 25 percent of the 20 recommendations made by the Office of the Auditor General in their June 2022 Report and 75 percent of the 4 recommendations made in the January 2023 report.

Ensure Preservation and Renewal of Public Housing

Priority: Improve building efficiency of the public housing portfolio to meet provincial and federal GHG emissions reductions targets. Work with stakeholders to promote and support healthy, sustainable and affordable housing. Investments will align and support the targets set in the *Environmental Goals and Climate Change Reduction Act*.

Accomplishments

- ✓ Executed deep energy retrofits in public housing buildings across the province to reduce the environmental impact of the portfolio.
- ✓ Completed eight additional projects on 85 units in 9 buildings, between December 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023, resulting in 267,600 kWh in energy savings.
- ✓ Enhanced portfolio sustainability, reduced utility costs and improved tenant comfort.

Priority: Develop an accessibility plan by April 2024 in alignment with the *Accessibility Act*.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Formed new partnerships to increase access to more deeply affordable units that are accessible, sustainable and better meet client needs.
- ✓ Created 22 barrier-free public housing units and completed accessibility improvements to 59 additional units between April 1, 2022, and November 30, 2022. Since formation of the NSPHA, two more barrier-free public housing units were completed, and accessibility improvements were made to eight additional units.

COVID-19 Pandemic Safety Protocols

Priority: Continue to encourage safe health practices for housing clients and staff after the Provincial Public Health Order and State of Emergency are lifted on March 21, 2022.

Accomplishments:

- ✓ Launched an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Program that establishes a consistent approach to OHS across the province. The program incorporates best practices and safe work procedures that were implemented during the pandemic to support the continued safety of public housing clients and staff.

2022/2023 Financial Results Summary

For the period from December 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023
(In thousands of dollars)

Statement of Operations and Accumulated Surplus

	Budget	2023	Variance
Revenues			
Rental revenue	\$ 22,938	\$ 22,473	\$ 465
Operating grant - Housing Nova Scotia	33,035	35,092	(2,057)
Provincial revenue	1,331	988	343
Other revenue	331	257	74
Restructuring transaction	-	5,683	(5,683)
Total revenues	\$ 57,635	\$ 64,493	\$ (6,858)
Expenses			
Utilities	\$ 12,932	\$ 13,498	\$ (566)
Municipal taxes	1,301	3,943	(2,642)
Maintenance & operations	32,580	31,315	1,265
Administration	9,069	8,166	903
Amortization of tangible capital assets	343	263	80
Other expenses	1,410	958	452
Total expenses	\$ 57,635	\$ 58,143	\$ (508)
Annual surplus	-	6,350	(6,350)
Accumulated surplus, beginning of period		-	-
Accumulated annual surplus, end of period		\$ 6,350	\$ (6,350)

Revenues variance explanation:

On December 1, 2022, the NSPHA was the recipient of the former Housing Authorities' assets and liabilities from Housing Nova Scotia. This transaction required an accounting entry under public sector accounting standards to record the transferred assets and liabilities. The restructuring transaction revenue of \$5,683K is the net impact of this transfer which was not known at the time estimates were approved. No consideration was paid as a result of the transaction. Removing this unforeseen item would have resulted in a Total Revenues actual versus estimate variance of +2.0% or \$1,175K.

Expenses variance explanation:

Upon creation of NSPHA on December 1, 2022, estimates representing the period from December 1, 2022, to March 31, 2023, were transferred from Housing Nova Scotia. Overall, the Total Expenses actual versus estimate variance was -0.88% or (\$508K). Individual category variances mainly relate to the timing of the estimate transfer on December 1, 2022, and when the expenses were paid. Taken on a full 12-month fiscal year basis, the property taxes actual versus estimate variance was not significant, coming in at .2% or \$21K.

TCA purchase requirements variance explanation:

NSPHA tangible capital asset purchases were \$931K. For the four-month period ending March 31, 2023, there was no TCA budget assigned to NSPHA.

Public Disclosure of Wrongdoing

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith.

The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labor Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

1. a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
2. a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
3. an act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
4. directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following is a summary of disclosures received by the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency.

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2022-2023
The number of disclosures received	None
The number of findings of wrongdoing	None
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing.	N/A

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