



Nova Scotia Provincial
Housing Agency

2024-25 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA) for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the NSPHA 2024-25 Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of NSPHA's outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by NSPHA management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of NSPHA management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the NSPHA 2024-25 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

The Honourable Colton LeBlanc
Minister, Department of Growth and Development

Vicki Elliott-Lopez
Interim Chief Executive Officer, Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency
Associate Deputy Minister, Department of Growth and Development

About the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency

On December 1, 2022, the Nova Scotia Provincial Housing Agency (NSPHA) was created under the [Housing Supply and Services Act](#), amalgamating five regional housing authorities into a Crown corporation solely dedicated to delivering the Province's public housing program.

NSPHA's mandate is to maintain, manage and operate safe and suitable subsidized housing for low-income Nova Scotians and provide exceptional client service and property management. Our goal is to modernize the delivery of public housing to provide as many Nova Scotians as possible with a home, while ensuring consistency and fairness in how we administer our policies and processes across the province.

Serving over 20,000 tenants, NSPHA maintains and operates more than 12,200 public housing units, including high-rise and low-rise apartment buildings, duplexes and single-family homes. NSPHA employs over 500 people at our corporate offices in Halifax and across four district teams (Metro, Cape Breton, Western and Northern). Our corporate team is responsible for financial administration, strategic asset management, policy development, client services, employee attraction and retention, stakeholder communication and engagement and human resources. Our district teams manage NSPHA's day-to-day operations which include administering tenant applications and placements, collecting rent, resolving tenant issues and maintaining and repairing properties.

NSPHA collaborates with our clients, the Department of Growth and Development, other departments and orders of government and community and external partners to deliver our mandate and support the diverse needs of our tenants.

This annual accountability report highlights the achievements made in the second year of our 2023 – 2028 Strategic Plan, [A New Path Forward](#) under four strategic priority areas: client service, asset management and operations, corporate governance and accountability and talent management.

Measuring Performance

Since its creation on December 1, 2022, NSPHA has been dedicated to transforming the delivery of public housing across the province – ensuring more Nova Scotians have a safe, affordable place to call home.

This accountability report highlights progress made against goals outlined in NSPHA's 2024-25 Business Plan, which are aligned with NSPHA's four strategic priorities:

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

CLIENT SERVICE

We will deepen our client focus and improve client experience.

- ✓ Implemented a case tracking tool to capture tenant concerns in a more consistent and systematic way. Over time, NSPHA will be able to track trends and look for ways to address broader tenant issues.
- ✓ Launched NSPHA's inaugural website, designed to provide information to tenants, applicants and stakeholders in an easy-to-read and accessible format. The site provides information about Nova Scotia's public housing program, including eligibility criteria, and allows individuals to apply for public housing online.
- ✓ Published a new [Tenant Handbook](#) that outlines the rights and responsibilities of tenants and what they can expect from NSPHA as their landlord. The Tenant Handbook serves as a guide for tenants and provides practical information to support their tenancy, such as landlord rules and rent calculation.
- ✓ Provided 20 customer service training sessions for approximately 350 employees, to enhance service delivery.
- ✓ Developed a plan to collect feedback from tenants, staff and stakeholders. The information gathered will serve as the foundation for NSPHA's Client Engagement Strategy.

Asset Management and Operations

We will invest strategically in our housing assets so that Nova Scotians we serve have a place to call home now and into the future.

Public Housing Infrastructure Investments

- ✓ Invested \$48.1M to undertake 924 projects in 733 public housing buildings towards preservation and maintenance projects to ensure the long-term stability of the public housing portfolio.

New Public Housing and Accessibility Improvements

- ✓ Created 16 barrier free units to support seniors to age in place and promote social equity by ensuring Nova Scotia's public housing stock meets diverse accessibility and mobility needs.
- ✓ Delivered 25 new modular public housing units in eight communities across the province, providing safe and affordable housing to 88 more Nova Scotians. All units include accessibility features with six designed to be fully barrier free.
- ✓ Invested \$11.8M to install an additional 26 new modular public housing units in Western Nova Scotia for approximately 82 low-income Nova Scotians. Of these, 14 ground-floor units will be completely barrier free, supporting inclusive housing needs.
- ✓ Initiated construction on the 222 new public housing units announced in September 2023. The first three buildings underway in Glace Bay, Lower Sackville and Kentville will result in 53 new units, including 16 barrier free units, to provide housing for approximately 123 Nova Scotians.
- ✓ Announced a further investment of \$136.4M to build 242 new public housing units – the largest single investment in new public housing in the Province's history.

Energy and Sustainability Investments

- ✓ Developed a long-term Energy and Emissions Management Plan to set out NSPHA's commitment to a more energy efficient, affordable and sustainable future.
- ✓ Completed 134 deep energy retrofits, enhancing the affordability and sustainability for the public housing portfolio. These upgrades provide tenants with modern, energy-efficient and comfortable homes while reducing NSPHA's carbon footprint and operating costs.

Operations

- ✓ Launched a review of the preventative maintenance program to improve asset management practices, enhance operational efficiency, strengthen organizational capacity to assess and evaluate risk and ensure the long-term sustainability of the public housing portfolio.
- ✓ Implemented standardized processes for field-level hazard assessments, near miss reporting and incident investigations to proactively identify and address workplace hazards. This work reduces the likelihood of workplace incidents, simplifies reporting for staff and improves the accuracy of safety data for trend analysis and decision making.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

We will deliver improved oversight and management of public housing.

Policy and Strategy

- ✓ Advanced work on the NSPHA Policy and Operational Framework by implementing new policies and procedures, such as:
 - ✓ Introduced a standard rent-geared-to-income (RGI) rent model so every household pays rent based on their total household income, ensuring that rents are calculated fairly and consistently.
 - ✓ Standardized NSPHA's lease agreement to ensure the same rules and conditions apply to all public housing tenants across the province. The new rules include to the requirement for all households to annually report this total household income to ensure their continued eligibility for the public housing program.
 - ✓ Established an Information Sharing Agreement with the Department of Opportunities and Social Development to improve operational efficiency, reduce administrative burden on shared clients, and ensure the secure handling and protection of personal information in compliance with privacy legislation.
 - ✓ Removed municipal residency requirements from public housing eligibility criteria, providing eligible applicants a wider range of housing options that best meet their needs. Removing municipal residency requirements helps maximize the use of public housing stock, reducing wait times and moving applicants off the waitlist and into available units as quickly as possible.
- ✓ Collaborated with the Department of Growth and Development on the More Homes: Growing Communities for Nova Scotians pilot project.
- ✓ Continued work to develop NSPHA's first Accessibility Plan under a new prescription date of April 1, 2025. NSPHA will deliver the three-year Accessibility Plan (2026 – 2029) by March 31, 2026.
- ✓ Advanced work on a corporate Fraud Policy and conducted fraud risk assessments for each key business area.
- ✓ Reviewed current unit turnaround practices and identified areas for improved efficiency. Ongoing work includes establishing key performance indicators and procedural guidelines to optimize resources and maximize availability of public housing units.

Business Solutions and Accountability

- ✓ Enhanced accountability and performance oversight through regular data analysis of operational metrics to determine trends, inform decision-making and improve operational efficiency.

- ✓ Continued upgrades to NSPHA's IT infrastructure, prioritizing the property database restructure. The tenant portal has been deferred to the next phase of upgrades.
- ✓ Launched the inaugural Annual Skills Academy to equip staff with essential training ahead of IT upgrades, ensuring operational readiness, minimizing service disruptions and enhancing the quality and consistency of client service delivery.
- ✓ Began work on a new Human Resources Information System that will modernize current human resources processes and improve tracking and reporting of key metrics.

Finance

- ✓ Introduced a strategic budget planning process to streamline annual budget submissions.
- ✓ Began work on a new digital procurement platform to modernize procurement processes.
- ✓ Initiated the development of a reporting process on capital funding and fleet management.

TALENT MANAGEMENT

We will attract and retain top talent.

- ✓ Achieved a 69% response rate to the inaugural NSPHA *How's Work Going?* Survey, designed to assess organizational strength, identify areas for improvement and monitor progress on employee-raised issues. The results showed 63% Employee Engagement Index, highlighting a strong base for ongoing engagement initiatives.
- ✓ Implemented an action plan in response to the *How's Work Going?* Survey results to support talent acquisition and retention. This work included:
 - ✓ Designed and launched a Leadership Development program to accelerate employee career growth and support employee retention across the Agency.
 - ✓ Implemented an annual employee recognition program to reward outstanding performance, promoting a culture of appreciation and excellence at all levels.
 - ✓ Created the NSPHA Long Service Award Program to recognize and celebrate employee's dedication, commitment and years of service to NSPHA.
- ✓ Announced the creation of the NSPHA Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee to strengthen NSPHA's commitment to address systemic racism, hate, and inequity. This committee will play a central role in guiding and advancing EDIA-related initiatives across the Agency.
- ✓ Provided customer service training for all employees to enhance service delivery.

Financial Results

For the year ended March 31, 2025

(In thousands of dollars)

	2024 Estimate	2024 Actuals	Variance
Revenue			
Tenant rent revenue	\$ 68,551	\$ 72,723	4,172
Other	5,887	6,710	823
Provincial (DGD)	81,685	103,145	21,460
Provincial (TCA Grant)	2,700	981	(1,719)
	<u>\$ 158,823</u>	<u>\$ 183,559</u>	<u>\$ 24,736</u>
Expenses			
Utilities	27,554	27,989	(435)
Maintenance	83,740	111,607	(27,867)
Administration & Other	33,384	33,299	85
Property tax	13,036	13,764	(728)
	<u>\$ 157,714</u>	<u>\$ 186,659</u>	<u>\$ (28,945)</u>
Annual surplus	<u>\$ 1,109</u>	<u>\$ (3,100)</u>	<u>\$ (4,209)</u>

Revenues variance explanation:

Tenant rent revenues are higher primarily due to higher tenants' income \$4.2M

Provincial revenue is higher due to expense pressures (see details below)

Expenses variance explanation:

The main drivers of the variance are:

- Increased focus on renovation vacant units for a quicker turnaround \$3.2M
- Higher market rates in awarded core service contracts \$4.5M
- Work needed to maintain properties \$20M

Public Interest and Wrongdoing Act

Annual Report under Section 18 of the *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act*

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:

- a) a contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) a misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) 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
- d) 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 2024-25
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