



Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

2007-2008

**Final Report
October 29, 2008**



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ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Accountability Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ending March 31, 2008, is prepared pursuant to the Provincial Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Office of the Ombudsman Business Plan information for the fiscal year 2007-2008. The reporting of the Office of the Ombudsman outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments, and opinions by Office of the Ombudsman management.

I acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Office of the Ombudsman 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 Office of the Ombudsman Business Plan for the year.



Dwight Bishop
Ombudsman

MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSMAN

This has been a busy year. The number of citizens utilizing our services has increased significantly as has the resolution of complaints, both formally and informally. Our service level has increased, particularly in the areas of seniors, offenders, youth, and disclosure of wrongdoing. The Office has a greater presence, meaningfulness. Our outreach programs are working. Employee commitment and skill sets, resourcing, and organizational changes are the driving forces behind our achievements. We continue to examine ways of improving our service, accountability.

Dwight Bishop
Ombudsman

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the goals, priorities, and performance measures set out in the Office of the Ombudsman 2007-2008 Business Plan.

This report is organized around our strategic goals and outlines the progress and accomplishments made towards achieving these goals and priorities. The final sections set out financial information and performance measures.

The Office is comprised of four sections: Investigation & Complaint Services, Youth & Seniors' Services, Disclosure of Wrongdoing, and Administration. All permanent staff are appointed by the Ombudsman and approved by the Governor in Council (Section 7(1) of the Ombudsman Act).

Benchmarks were established using 2005-2006 time frames for the completion of administrative review /investigations and formal investigations, and to set targets for our education and outreach initiatives.

Mission

Fostering confidence in the public service by promoting the principles of fairness, integrity, and good governance.

Mandate

The primary mandate of the Office of the Ombudsman is to review and respond to citizens' concerns arising from the administration of provincial and municipal laws in Nova Scotia. In recent years, the mandate has expanded to include a proactive role in relation to the province's programs and services for youth, senior citizens, and adult correctional facilities. In 2004, under the province's Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations, the Ombudsman was given the authority to investigate claims brought forward by provincial civil servants about wrongdoing in the workplace.

PROGRESS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Goals, Priorities, and Accomplishments

The following identify key initiatives undertaken to achieve the priorities established in the 2007-2008 Business Plan:

Strategic Goal 1: Quality complaint resolution process

Priority 1: Complaint Processing

Ensure citizen complaints are addressed in a timely, comprehensive, objective, and independent manner through:

- investigation, assessment, and referrals
- utilization of alternate dispute resolution (ADR) processes
- formal investigations
- recommendations to improve the delivery of government services

Our priorities for 2007-2008 were:

- continue to improve complaint resolution processes to identify methods to provide more timely and effective administrative reviews and formal investigations
- increase the number of settlements obtained using alternative dispute resolution processes and to increase the number of systemic reviews

Accomplishments

Our complaint resolution process is continually monitored through individual file reviews, team meetings, and management updates and reviews. We improved our quality assurance program by increasing the number of files forwarded for management review. All administrative reviews/investigations and formal investigations in excess of three months are discussed at monthly management meetings. This has resulted in a decrease in the percentage of administrative reviews/investigation that exceeded four weeks to complete (29% in 2005-2006, to 22% in 2006-2007, and 21 % in 2007-2008). These measures allow us to determine priorities, define issues, and monitor time frames to ensure all complaints and inquiries are processed efficiently.

Jurisdictional complaints and inquiries increased this year by 8% (1623 from 1487). Non-jurisdictional issues (those matters outside our authority) also increased (628 from 314). Jurisdictional issues comprised 72% and non-jurisdictional complaints and inquiries comprised 28%

of the total received in this fiscal year. We had an 20% increase in the total number of inquiries, complaints, youth contacts, and youth evaluation surveys (2251). Last year's total was 1801. Disclosure of Wrongdoing inquiries (16) and 2 investigations increased the Office total to 2269.

We continue to maintain a high ratio of administrative reviews/investigations (98%) compared to formal investigations and system/policy reviews (2%). We increased our number of system/policy reviews (5) and own-motion investigations (5). In addition, 21 formal investigations were opened in this fiscal year (total 31). We also opened two Disclosure of Wrongdoing investigations for an Office total of 33. Eleven of these formal investigations and system/policy reviews were closed in this fiscal year with an average length of 2.6 months. An additional 5 are being monitored to ensure recommendations are implemented. These averaged 6.4 months. (Combined average length of 4 months). Fifteen investigations/ systems/policy reviews were carried into 2008-2009. The average length as of March 31, 2008 was 2.5 months.

Strategic Goal 2: Awareness, access, and understanding of the Office of the Ombudsman.

Priority 2: Education

Advise citizens of their right to access internal departmental, and external complaint mechanisms; their right to access the Office of the Ombudsman; and to advise civil servants of their right to access the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing complaint mechanism.

Our priorities for 2007-2008 were:

- increase awareness of citizens, officials, and employees of the Public Service of the role of the Ombudsman.
- increase awareness of the availability of our independent, objective review/complaint resolution mechanisms, including the Regulations respecting Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing, both of which are based on the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.

Accomplishments

We reached approximately 2700 people through our outreach initiatives (community and site visits, meetings, presentations, information sessions, and booths). This is similar to last year and continues to exceed our goal of reaching 2500 individuals by 2010-2011.

The number of administrative reviews conducted increased approximately 9% (from 1487 in 2006-2007 to 1623 in 2007-2008 (50 youth evaluation surveys are included in this fiscal year). We received 628 non-jurisdictional inquiries; general referral assistance was provided in 596 instances, while 32 involved a greater level of assistance.

In 2007-2008, we received 21 inquiries through the Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations. One disclosure of wrongdoing investigation was initiated, and an issue flowing from a disclosure investigation resulted in an own motion investigation under the Ombudsman Act, resulting in an Office total of 33 investigations initiated this fiscal year. Of the remaining 19 inquiries received through Disclosure of Wrongdoing, 3 were reviewed under the Ombudsman Act, but were determined to be non-jurisdictional.

Strategic Goal 3: Fairness and accountability in public sector administration.

Priority 3. Public Service Administration and Good Governance

Recommend and monitor amendments to policies, procedures, and legislation arising from investigations and reviews. Through the recommending and monitoring component, the Office of the Ombudsman advises and educates citizens, elected officials, and government employees about the principles of administrative fairness and good governance.

A priority in 2007-2008 was:

- build on the successes of previous years regarding the development of mutual relationships of trust and respect with government authorities to ensure implementation of recommendations.

Accomplishments

Improved relationships with government authorities resulted in more timely and effective resolution of concerns raised by citizens through the administrative review/investigation process. The ratio of administrative reviews to formal investigations in this fiscal year is 98% to 2%.

We opened 31 investigations under the Ombudsman Act in 2007-2008 and 2 were initiated through our disclosure process (total 33). Five were policy/systems reviews (3 public, 1 adult offender, 1 seniors). Five own motion reviews (1 senior, 4 public). Of the 21 investigations 3 focused on youth, 1 on seniors, and 17 on public issues.

The policy/ system reviews addressed such areas as: the legislative process for the public to address concerns about civil constables, monitoring of contractors involved in the cleanup of unsightly premises, offenders' ability to view court documents received in electronic format, gaming issues, and the condition of a seniors' transitional care facility.

Own motion reviews addressed issues regarding residential oil spills, programs for immigrants, service gaps in long term care, timeliness of reports, and information provided to individuals when appealing residential property assessments.

The Ombudsman made 37 formal recommendations under the Ombudsman Act in 2007-2008.

Thirteen were accepted and implemented, five involved changes to policy or procedures. Twenty-three of the remaining recommendations were accepted and are being monitored for implementation, nine include changes to policy and procedures. One was rejected.

These recommendations included: providing reasons for rejecting an application, revisions to the practice of re-calculating a senior's annual income when one or more spouse reaches the age of 65 rather than at the annual re-assessment period, revisions to complaints processes, updating terms and conditions and transfer of permits, and a more comprehensive approach to governance and regulatory schemes among the Atlantic Provinces.

Two of the accepted and monitored recommendations were made to the Department of Education and the Chignecto Central Regional School Board, however a third recommendation was rejected.

We continue to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in previous fiscal years in 6 investigations.

A systems review with Community Services is ongoing and will be evaluated in 2008-2009 to determine whether to continue (the number of inquiries and complaints received returned to the 2005-2006 tally of 229).

Administrative review/ investigations (informal) of both the provincial and municipal governments also resulted in numerous policy and procedure changes (see table on page 19 of this report).

Our role with the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations further enhances our ability to promote fairness, accountability, and good governance.

The area of disclosure of wrongdoing has grown this last fiscal year. The primary focus has been on investigations and assessing inquiries, as well as enhancing internal Office policies and practices in conducting investigations.

Investigations examining allegations of wrongdoing are complex and sensitive. Time to complete investigations have been lengthy (overall average is 13 months, two initiated this year averaged 9 months) and we have dedicated more resources to assist with caseload demands. Our priority continues to focus on in-depth and thorough examination of the disclosures brought to our attention.

We continue to build relationships with other provinces that have been tasked with public interest disclosure investigations. Sharing our experiences has been beneficial. This year we also saw more departments requesting information and presentations on disclosure of wrongdoing. As well, we have had one department request our guidance in addressing a disclosure that was brought to the deputy head's attention.

Information packages are provided to employees who are considering making a disclosure. Our toll

free inquiry line and email address provide a confidential avenue for civil servants to obtain information. Due to the increase in requests for information and advice, this Office has adopted a greater role in this area.

We continue to work with the Public Service Commission (PSC) in establishing a course for managers and supervisors in the area of interviewing/investigative skills. We also participated in the PSC's review of disclosure policy and continue to work towards enhancing the process for civil servants.

We made 2 recommendations to the (PSC) in the 2006 - 2007 Disclosure Annual Report. These were accepted and we are monitoring their implementation. We made another 2 recommendations in the 2007 - 2008 Disclosure Annual report. Discussions regarding acceptance of these are continuing.

Disclosure of Wrongdoing investigations have resulted in total of 23 recommendations. While findings of wrongdoing were not made in 2 investigations, 1 resulted in 4 recommendations being accepted and implemented. The second resulted in 9 recommendations; all have been accepted and continue to be monitored.

A third investigation resulted in a finding of wrongdoing. Ten recommendations were made and all have been accepted and are being monitored for implementation.

Strategic Goal 4: Promote initiatives such as government policy development and review, as well as initiatives focusing on youth, seniors, and cultural diversity

Priority 4. Complaint Prevention/Reduction

Provide a service that promotes early intervention while maintaining independence from government.

Our priority in 2007-2008 was:

- to increase requests from government officials to review proposed and existing legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures

Accomplishments

We continued to make recommendations to improve and clarify existing legislation, regulations, policies and procedures, both as a result of investigations and reviews and from requests received outside of the investigation process.

We also provided input on policies and procedures outside of the investigation process. These included:

- Provided input on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Case Study by Senator Landon Pearson (retired), Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights.
- Complaint process to provide the public with an avenue to address complaints relating to the actions of Special Constables, By-Law Enforcement Officers, and Auxiliary Constables.
- A youth detention facility sought our input during their review of policy and standard operation procedures. In addition, our complaint form was added to their policy documents.

We also brought together various stakeholders on issues of youth in care/custody with communicable diseases engaging in potentially risky behaviour. The goal is to discuss developing guidelines for the respective departments. We continue to be involved in these discussions.

Youth Services Ombudsman Representatives continue to work closely with youth, residents, and staff of provincial care and custody facilities to establish and maintain a positive rapport that provides individuals with an opportunity to come forward with concerns. This allows us to seek solutions to potential problem areas before they become the focus of a complaint.

With respect to cultural diversity, we continue to participate in the province's overall goal of recognizing cultural diversity and achieving it in our workplace. The Ombudsman continues to be a member of the Diversity Roundtable (Interdepartmental Forum). The committee's purpose is to support and promote the corporate human resources goal to be a public service that is representative of the diverse community it serves, and to be a respectful and inclusive organization that recognizes diversity as its strength. The Ombudsman and staff were also able to attend ceremonies celebrating International Human Rights Day and attended presentations hosted by the Metropolitan Immigrant Settlement Associations. The Executive Director participated in French Language Awareness training as part of her duties on the French Language Services Committee and is a member of Partners for Human Rights.

Human Resource Strategy

1. Office Demographics

As of March 31, 2008, our workforce profile data indicates that of the 16 permanent full-time employees (FTE's), 4 or 25% are from designated groups. In addition, the Office of the Ombudsman employs a number of individuals each fiscal year on a casual basis, including student placements. Five of these placements were filled by individuals from the designated groups.

The average age of permanent staff is 45.4 years; with the casual staff and students included, the average age is 45 years. The age of staff ranged from 23-64 (includes casual roster). Of the

permanent employees, 12 or 75%, are female and four (4) or 25% are male. When the casual roster and students are factored in, the Office is comprised of 55% females and 45% males.

The Office of the Ombudsman has taken, or will take, the following steps to reach the goals contained in Nova Scotia's Corporate Human Resources Plan.

2. To make a difference through a skilled, committed, and accountable public service

The Corporate Plan's objectives include:

- fairness and access
- service excellence
- public opinion
- consistent policy application

The Office of the Ombudsman strives to promote these objectives. Our role is to promote accountability and fairness in the way municipal and provincial government services are delivered to the public. These objectives are evident in our logo which represents the arms of the public, the government, and the Office of the Ombudsman raised for fairness, integrity, and good governance. Given that our role includes critiquing government entities in these areas, we strive to ensure our internal policies, procedures, and practices incorporate these objectives, and are reviewed through our quality assurance review process.

The annual internal employee survey was conducted. Eighteen surveys were distributed and twelve were returned. The majority of the comments were positive. The survey enables the Office of the Ombudsman to identify and celebrate our strengths as well as identify and address any areas requiring improvement.

Self assessment questionnaires and performance targets for 2007-2008 were completed within the first three months of this fiscal year. Work plans are in place for the disclosure of wrongdoing responsibilities, as well as for the seniors' and female offender pilot projects. A male offender strategic plan is still under development pending adequate resourcing.

3. To be a preferred employer

The Office of the Ombudsman has developed a staff training/orientation program for all permanent and casual staff. Each new placement receives an orientation program which includes an introduction to the Office of the Ombudsman outlining our services, role, and mandate, as well as presentations and job shadowing with Ombudsman staff. A staff training/orientation manual is also provided to all staff and policies are updated on a regular basis.

The Office hires students on a regular basis through the Career Starts Program (diversity,

mentorship and co-op), and provides students with experience through work placements. In 2007-2008, 4 students had placements with this Office.

4. To be a safe and supportive workplace

The Office had no occupational health and safety incidents in the past fiscal year.

The Office of the Ombudsman maintained an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Committee this year to review current requirements, with a view to enhancing the current practices within the Office. The Committee focused on safe work practices and OH&S training requirements for staff. This Committee is also responsible for encouraging and implementing healthy workplace initiatives. One of the OH&S representatives is a member of the Healthy Workplace Committee. Staff participated in Prepare Training, one of the presenters was an Ombudsman Representative. This staff person also provides Office representation for the House of Assembly OH&S committee and provides Prepare training as required within the Provincial government.

We will be working with the Business Continuity Office (EMO) to update our plan. Staff also attended meetings and workshops hosted by the Business Continuity Office.

5. To be a diverse workforce

In addition to the demographics noted earlier, all advertisements for vacant positions include a statement with our commitment to Diversity and Affirmative Action, and job postings on the Nova Scotia Employment Opportunities website are sent to Affirmative Action/Diversity organizations in the Province.

The Office of the Ombudsman contacts the Public Service Commission to determine if any eligible individuals from the diversity pool are available for positions. During 2007-2008 we hired 1 individual on a casual basis from the diversity pool. We are working towards having an Ombudsman Representative position designated as an Affirmative Action position.

We will continue to provide new staff the opportunity to attend Diversity and Employment Equity and Aboriginal Perceptions training as course availability permits. All staff, including permanent, term, casual, and student placements are encouraged to participate in events/training which will increase awareness of diverse cultures.

6. To be a learning organization

All staff participated in regular reviews and annual performance appraisals. Staff were encouraged to discuss career development and any concerns they may have. Management strives to provide development opportunities to all staff based on budget allocations and individual and Office requirements.

Employees of the Office of the Ombudsman are encouraged to take advantage of training and professional development opportunities. For permanent staff members, education plans are incorporated into their yearly employment evaluations, and options are selected with the goals of both the individual and the Office in mind.

As a small Office with a broad mandate, employees are encouraged to develop skills that will provide them with an understanding of the various roles and responsibilities of Ombudsman staff. These varied training plans provide opportunities for advancement within our Office, and develop skills to improve service to the public. We agreed to a 6 week secondment for an Ombudsman Representative to the Department of Health, Continuing Care. This was a positive learning opportunity for our Office as well as for the host Department.

We provided the opportunity for French Language training to one permanent and one contract employee. All staff participated in an Advanced Decision Writing Course. The Office participated in a basic investigation course and several staff members took advanced investigative training.

We continue to be represented on the GoverNEXT committee.

Office of the Ombudsman

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Office of the Ombudsman Budget Expenditures 2007-2008		
Core Business	Budget	Actual
	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Gross Expenses	1445	1392
Net Program Expenses	1445	1445
Salaries & Benefits	1190	1190
Staff (FTE's)	16	16

The Office of the Ombudsman spent 96.34% percent of the allotted budget. The variance is due to savings in operational expenses.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

We continue to realize benefits from our reorganized structure and permanent placements. We expanded our outreach initiatives and made or exceeded the majority of the identified performance targets.

Core Business Area 1: Complaint Processing

Ensure citizen complaints are addressed in a timely, comprehensive, objective, and independent manner through:

- investigations, reviews, assessments, and referrals
- utilization of alternate dispute resolution (ADR) processes
- formal investigations
- recommendations to improve the delivery of government services

Outcome 1: An efficient and effective (quality) complaint resolution process.

Measure - the timely completion of administrative reviews and investigations.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

The time frame required to complete administrative reviews and investigations is one of the components which assists to determine our effectiveness.

Where Are We Now?

As 2005-2006 was the first year we operated under the revised office structure, it has established our benchmark for the time frames for the completion of administrative reviews and investigations. (These time frames include youth contacts but not youth surveys).

Administrative Reviews Time Frames:

	2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008	
1-7 days	687	55%	901	61.0%	921	59%
8 days - 4 weeks	182	15%	252	17%	318	20%
4 weeks plus	359	29%	334	22.0%	334	21%
Total	1228	100%	1487	100%	1573	100%

A comparison of these time frames indicates that despite an increase in the number of administrative reviews undertaken this fiscal year, the time frames for completing these reviews is consistent with previous years.

The number of jurisdictional complaint and inquiries increased in this fiscal year(1623 from 1487 in 2006-2007. Jurisdictional matters comprised 72% (1623) of the total received, while 628 (28%) were non-jurisdictional inquiries (an increase from 17.4% non-jurisdictional in 2006-2007), resulting in an increase in the total number of inquiries, complaints, youth contacts and youth evaluation surveys to 2251 (20% increase over last year’s total of 1801).

An increase in the number of complaints and inquiries indicated that more Nova Scotians are aware of, have confidence in, and are accessing the services of the Office of the Ombudsman.

We opened 31 formal investigations, 5 of which were policy reviews and 5 were Own Motion investigations. An additional 2 investigations were initiated through disclosure of wrongdoing.

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS, SYSTEM/POLICY REVIEWS

Investigations, system/policy reviews carried over into 2007-2008	2 both were closed in this fiscal year - recommendations are being monitored)
Investigations, system/policy reviews and own motion reviews opened in 2007-2008	31 - 5 system/policy reviews and 5 own motion reviews
Disclosure of Wrongdoing Investigations	2 (Average 9 months)
Investigations closed with recommendations being monitored	5 (Average time span 6.4 months)
Investigations opened and closed in 2007-2008	11 (Average time span 2.6 months)
Investigations opened in 2007-2008, and carried over into 2008-2009	15 (Average time span as of March 31, 2008 2.5 months)

Where Do We Want to be?

Our goal is to complete all administrative reviews/ investigations, formal investigations, and system/policy reviews within a one year period. We believe our enhanced quality assurance process and management reviews are working to ensure we meet this goal.

Outcome 2: Increased awareness of the role and mandate of the Office and an increase in public confidence and accountability of government.

The measures of this outcome are:

- reduction in the number of formal investigations
- increased usage of ADR

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Our focus over the last number of years has been to encourage the resolution of complaints informally. We continue to strive to ensure these resolutions are meaningful and address potential long term or systemic issues. This approach provides staff with an opportunity to identify and address systemic issues through policy and program reviews. The ratio of administrative reviews as compared to formal investigations and policy reviews indicates that staff of the Office of the Ombudsman are successfully addressing issues and that government officials are working cooperatively to improve service delivery.

Where are We Now?

This year, the Office processed 1267 administrative reviews, 306 contacts with youth in care or custody of the provincial government, and 50 youth evaluation surveys, for a total of 1623 jurisdictional issues and addressed 628 non-jurisdictional inquiries. We opened 21 Ombudsman formal investigations, 5 policy/system reviews and 5 own motion investigations. We received 21 inquiries relating to the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations. This resulted in 2 disclosure of wrongdoing investigations and 3 reviews under the Ombudsman Act.

A significant number of administrative reviews resulted in changes in government policies, procedures, and actions which contributed to improvements in the delivery of government services. We made a positive impact in the vast majority of cases.

Administrative reviews comprised 98% of our focus and formal investigations /reviews comprised 2%, thereby surpassing our goal of maintaining the ratio of investigations, policy/system reviews to less than 5% in 2007-2008.

Office of the Ombudsman

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS

TOTAL with Positive Outcomes*		1012
Assistance Rendered to Complainant	730	
Resolved for the Complainant	160	
Resolved for the Public Body/Properly Implemented	98	
Settled between the Parties	24	
Discontinued/Withdrawn		160
Moved to Formal investigations/Reviews		31
Administrative Reviews/Investigations carried into 2008-2009		64
TOTAL Administrative Reviews		1267

*A positive outcome occurs when the Office has been able to resolve a matter, facilitate a settlement, or assist a complainant with their dispute. In the case of youth residing in provincial facilities, administrative reviews are resolved for the complainant in situations where the issue(s) brought forward have been addressed. Results total does not include 306 youth contacts and 50 youth evaluation surveys (1623).

FORMAL INVESTIGATIONS and REVIEWS

Investigations opened in 2007-2008	21
System/Policy Reviews opened in 2006-2007	5
Own Motion Investigations	5
Disclosure of Wrongdoing Investigations	2
TOTAL Investigations/System/Policy Reviews	33

OTHER

Meetings -Youth in Care and Custody	306
Youth Evaluation Surveys	50

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Disclosure of Wrongdoing inquiries (an additional 3 were reviewed under the Ombudsman Act -21)	18
Non-jurisdictional inquiries (33 involved in-depth assistance)	628
TOTAL - Other	1002
TOTAL - all inquiries, contacts, investigations, and reviews.	2302

Where Do We Want to Be?

We want to maintain the ratio of less than five to seven percent investigations as compared to administrative reviews. We also want to continue to increase the number and scope of system and policy reviews.

Core Business Area 2: Education

Promote citizen and government awareness and understanding of the Office of the Ombudsman. Our communications strategy clarifies our role and mandate, and increases citizens' accessibility through:

- presentations/meetings
- pamphlets/brochures
- group targeting (i.e., youth and seniors)
- increased media contact and coverage

The outcome is increased awareness of the role of the Office, including administrative fairness.

The measure is an increase in the number of individuals receiving information on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Increasing the number of individuals receiving information on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman ensures more Nova Scotians are aware of, and have a more accurate understanding of our Office.

Where Are We Now?

We conducted over 500 presentations, information sessions, community and site visits, meetings, and staffed 2 information booths (Seniors' Expo and the Gerontology Association of Nova

Scotia). We reached approximately 2700 people through our outreach initiatives (community and site visits, meetings, presentations, information sessions and booths. This number continues to be higher than our goal of 2500 by 2010-2011.

These outreach initiatives included information sessions for seniors and staff in long term care facilities, meetings with youth in secure and residential care facilities, as well as those incarcerated at the Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Youth Facilities. Our female offender pilot project and our heightened presence in the adult male correctional facilities has resulted in a 146 % increase in complaints from offenders about Correctional Services over the past 3 years. Offender medical complaints have also increased significantly (increased 143% in the same time span).

Community clinics were hosted in New Glasgow, Shelburne, Annapolis Royal, Tatamagouche, Port Hawkesbury, Parrsboro, and Petit- de- Gras. We also participated in 2 radio interviews, 1 focusing on youth issues and 1 on seniors.

We targeted youth and seniors in many of the education initiatives listed above. We conducted 105 site visits to youth in secure care and in custody and issued 29 reports regarding youth issues. Three presentations reached 47 seniors. Seventy-one site visits were made to seniors' residential care facilities reached 198 people. Approximately 579 people visited our booth at the Seniors' Expo, and approximately 115 people visited our information booth at the GANS conference. Ombudsman Representatives also participate on a variety of committees focussing on youth and seniors in order to increase our awareness of youth and seniors' issues; to provide input on program and policy development; and to increase awareness of our Office and mandate.

Nearly 6000 pieces of communication material were distributed in this fiscal year. These were comprised of a combination of brochures and posters in English, French and Mi'kmaq, our lapel pins, the Ombudsman Act, annual reports, refrigerator magnets, as well as Disclosure regulations and information packages. Annual Groupwise emails are sent to members of the Public Service regarding the Office of the Ombudsman role in the disclosure area.

Where Do We Want to Be?

In addition to the increased activity in the youth, seniors, and adult offenders areas, we want to increase our capacity to conduct more outreach initiatives in all areas covered under the Ombudsman Act. This will allow Ombudsman Representatives to meet with individuals in their communities thus increasing the accessibility of the Office to Nova Scotians.

Core Business Area 3: Public Service Administration and Good Governance

Promote fairness and accountability in public sector administration through:

- identification of specific and systemic issues

- research and investigation of systemic issues
- issuance of recommendations and monitoring compliance
- education/training

The outcome is accountability in the delivery of government programs and services.

The measure is the number of recommendations accepted.

What Does this Measure Tell Us?

Acceptance of recommendations indicates that the Office of the Ombudsman is conducting effective investigations and reviews, properly identifying the issues, and offering meaningful recommendations and resolutions.

Where Are We Now?

The Ombudsman made 37 recommendations under the Ombudsman Act in 2007-2008. Thirteen were accepted and implemented, four involved changes to policy or procedures. Twenty - three of the remaining recommendations were accepted and are being monitored for implementation, fifteen include changes to policy and procedures. One was rejected. An additional five formal investigations were resolved at the investigation stage, in three of which resulted in amended policies or procedures.

We continue to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in previous fiscal years in 6 investigations.

Disclosure of wrongdoing investigations resulted in 23 recommendations for an Office total of 60.

Where Do We Want to Be?

Our goal is to continue to strive to obtain 100% acceptance of recommendations, as well as to increase the number of positive outcomes of administrative reviews. In order to achieve this, we will continue to enhance our working relationship with government and to increase awareness of our role. We will also continue to conduct thorough investigations and develop recommendations to resolve outstanding issues.

Core Business Area 4: Complaint Prevention/Reduction

Promote a problem-solving model that embraces prevention, early identification, consultation, and resolution of issues through:

- increasing Office of the Ombudsman presence, particularly with respect to target groups
- building relationships within government and segments of the community
- participating in policy development and review committees/processes
- utilizing ADR processes

Outcome 1: Increase the number of reviews of legislation, regulations, and policies.

The measure is the number of requests received by this Office from provincial and municipal government entities to review proposed amendments to legislation, regulations, and policies.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

Requests initiated by government bodies outside the complaint resolution process indicates that these entities consider our input to be meaningful. It also demonstrates that our efforts to increase collaborative working relationships are obtaining positive results.

Where Are We Now?

In 2007-2008, in addition to the policy input associated with the complaint resolution process, our input was sought and/or continued in the following areas:

- Provided input on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Implementation Case Study by Sen. Landon Pearson (ret'd), Landon Pearson Resource Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights.
- Continued collaboration on an internal complaints mechanism.

We also are working with the Public Service Commission (PSC) to identify what resources and supports are needed to ensure that employees are aware of the Regulations respecting Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing process .

Where Do We Want to Be?

We would like to increase the number of requests from government officials for our advice and input as this demonstrates an increasing awareness and confidence on the role of the Office of the Ombudsman. We would also like to increase our capacity to expand these proactive initiatives

through increased resourcing.

Outcome 2 : An increased presence in the areas relating to youth, seniors, and cultural diversity.

The measure is the number of site visits conducted.

What Does This Measure Tell Us?

Site visits to youth and seniors’ facilities allow us to provide our services directly to many youth and seniors in care and custody of the province.

Where Are We Now?

In 2007-2008, 105 site visits were made to youth in care and custody facilities, a decrease of five (5) from 2006-2007.

Location	Site Visits	Reports Issued	Total Present
Residential Child-Care Facilities	45	1	151
Wood Street Centre (Secure Residential Facility)	26	12	52
Nova Scotia Youth Facility (includes 12 visits to conduct youth evaluation surveys)	24	13 ((includes one youth evaluation survey report)	135 (includes 50 surveys)
Halifax Youth Attendance Centre	7	n/a	35
Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility	3	3	7
Total	105	29	380

Other Site Visits

Location	Site Visits	Reports Issued	Total Present
Senior residential facilities	71	n/a	198
Adult Correctional Facility, Female Unit	12	2	55
Adult Correctional Facilities, Male	4	1	67
Public	5	n/a	8
Other Total	92	3	266

Where Do We Want to Be?

We want to maintain the number of youth site visits. We exceeded our goal of increasing the number of site visits and educational activities aimed at seniors by 75%. We will continue to increase awareness of our role and mandate among the various cultural communities, and will increase the number of publications available in French.