



Nova Scotia

NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN

ANNUAL ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT FOR THE FISCAL YEAR

2008-2009

**Final Report
July 28, 2009**



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ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Accountability Report of the Office of the Ombudsman for the year ending March 31, 2009, 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 2008-2009. 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

The number of citizens' concerns investigated by this Office has increased as has our outreach initiatives. There are indications this trend is leveling off and hopefully the number of concerns brought to this Office will decrease as systemic issues are addressed by departments and agencies. A proactive focus exists in the areas of youth, seniors, and corrections. Many of the issues brought to our attention are resolved relatively quickly through the less formal administrative review investigation process. This is encouraging as it allows us to address more citizens' concerns. Acceptance of recommendations remains high. Staff commitment and competency continues to be an integral component of service.

Dwight Bishop
Ombudsman

INTRODUCTION

This report is based on the goals, priorities, and performance measures set out in the Office of the Ombudsman 2008-2009 Business Plan and should be read in concert with that Business Plan.

The Office of the Ombudsman 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).

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 concerning wrongdoing in the workplace.

PROGRESS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Strategic Goals, Priorities, and Accomplishments

The following identify key initiatives undertaken to achieve the priorities established in the 2008-2009 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 2008-2009 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 resolutions obtained using alternate dispute resolution processes and to maintain the 2007-2008 number of systemic/policy reviews conducted.

Accomplishments

Our complaint resolution process is continually monitored through individual file reviews, team meetings, management updates and reviews. Our quality assurance program involves regular management review of files. All administrative review investigations and formal investigations in excess of three months are discussed at monthly management meetings with input from the Ombudsman Representatives. These measures allow us to determine priorities, define issues, and monitor time frames to ensure all complaints and inquiries are processed efficiently. The percentage of administrative review investigations that exceeded four weeks to complete was 21%, as it was in 2007-2008.

There was a 4.6 % increase in jurisdictional complaints and inquiries this year as compared to 2007-2008. Jurisdictional issues comprised 78% and non-jurisdictional complaints and inquiries comprised 22% of the total received in this fiscal year. The reduction in non-jurisdictional issues

resulted in a slight decrease in the total number of inquiries and complaints addressed in this fiscal year, and reflects positively on our outreach initiatives. The number of Disclosure of Wrongdoing inquiries/disclosures was comparable to the previous two years (20). No investigations under the Regulations were initiated this fiscal year, however out of the disclosures received, 2 resulted in investigations under the Ombudsman Act.

We continue to maintain a high ratio of administrative review investigations (98%) compared to formal investigations and system/policy reviews (2%).

We maintained the number of own-motion investigations conducted (5), and conducted 4 policy reviews. An additional 15 formal investigations were opened in this fiscal year (total 24).

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 2008-2009 were:

- maintain awareness of citizens, officials, and employees of the Public Service of the role of the Ombudsman.
- increase awareness of the availability of our independent, transparent, 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 3700 people through our outreach initiatives (community and site visits, meetings, presentations, information sessions, and booths). This exceeds the number reached last year by 37%.

The number of administrative review investigations conducted increased approximately 4.6% (from 1623 in 2007-2008 to 1698 in 2008-2009). Sixty-one youth evaluation surveys are included in this number.

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 2008-2009 was:

- build on the successes of previous years regarding the development of mutual relationships by building bridges of understanding and respect with government authorities and among individuals within our communities through meaningful and inclusive consultations.

Accomplishments

Improved relationships with government authorities resulted in more timely and effective resolution of concerns raised by citizens through the administrative review investigation process.

We opened 24 formal investigations under the Ombudsman Act in 2008-2009. Five own motion reviews - 2 public, 1 youth, 1 adult offender and 1 offender health. Four were policy/systems reviews - 2 public, 1 adult offender. Of the 15 formal investigations, 12 focused on public issues, 2 on youth and 1 on seniors.

Own motion reviews involved issues regarding:

- the administration of a lease program,
- asbestos and proper recording of testing,
- placement of adult offenders in a youth facility,
- responses to health concerns of offenders.

The policy/system reviews addressed:

- segregation,
- establishing a formal complaint process regarding special constables,
- administration of Crown land,
- timeliness in providing an appeal decision.

The Ombudsman made 27 formal recommendations under the Ombudsman Act in 2008-2009. Eighteen involved changes to policy and procedures. Twelve have been implemented, and 10 are being monitored to ensure implementation, 2 have been accepted in principal, their implementation is dependent upon development of regulations, and 2 are still being considered by the responding departments, and one was rejected.

These recommendations included:

- improvements to client service and internal complaint and appeal mechanisms, including communication material,
- the need to review guidelines for issuing rulings, instructions, and orders dealing with insurance matters,
- a formal appeal process, including a review of records to identify inactive and otherwise un-remediated (contaminated) sites,
- to provide offenders with access to electronic documents to prepare for court appearances,
- review the process for preparing files for collections,
- development of policy and increasing education regarding violation of departmental legislation by employees,
- a municipality address private road maintenance, compliance, and related issues by way of an agreement.

Formal investigations also resulted in resolutions such as:

- amending the practice of verbal delegation relating to close confinement,
- interpretation of legislation,
- providing staff training to improve communication with students with learning disabilities and developing a brochure outlining grants, services, and options available to students with disabilities.

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

A systems review with Community Services is ongoing. This year, the data collection process was further refined and the assessment of two years of data began.

Administrative review/ investigations of both the provincial and municipal governments also resulted in numerous policy and procedure changes (see table on page 20 of this report).

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

Disclosure of Wrongdoing received 5 general inquiries and 15 disclosures. A breakdown of these disclosures follows:

- four disclosures were from individuals who did not meet the definition under the Regulations or policy of an employee. Of these disclosures, 1 was investigated under the Ombudsman Act, and the remaining 3 were provided with information on other avenues to address their concerns,
- five disclosures, while received from civil servants, did not meet the definition of a potential wrongdoing. Of these disclosures, 1 was investigated under the Ombudsman Act, and the remaining 4 were provided with information on other avenues to address their concerns,
- two disclosures were determined under Section 11 of the Regulations to be more appropriately dealt with by the deputy head of the departments,
- two disclosures were discontinued by the employees,
- two disclosures were not able to be pursued. One was anonymous and in the second case the individual did not feel comfortable providing specific contact information.

We continue to offer presentations to various departments and agencies. This fiscal year we provided presentations to 4 government entities and hosted a workshop with our national counterparts, examining the area of public interest disclosure.

Initiatives with the Public Service Commission (PSC) are ongoing. At the PSC's request, we helped provide a framework for an investigative course. This introductory investigative course is now available through the Corporate Training Calendar.

We have put forward a number of recommendations related to potential amendments to the Regulations for the PSC to consider. The PSC is conducting a comprehensive review of the Regulations and policy, and our recommendations have been incorporated in this review.

Information packages are provided to employees 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.

Disclosure recommendations made in 2007-2008 continue to be monitored to ensure 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 2008-2009 was:

- to expand our capacity to receive requests from government officials to review proposed and existing legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures

Accomplishments

We made 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 provided assistance in the following areas:

- IWK complaint resolution policy/practices for staff and the public
- Halifax Regional Municipality Youth Navigator
- Human Rights Commission fact sheet
- Spanish to English translation of a childrens' rights book on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)
- Canada and Nova Scotia's implementation of the UNCRC
- Transitional Care Advisory Council
- Town of Mulgrave hiring practices

- The Personal Health Information Act
- Participated in a stake holders group for the provincial youth court
- Public Safety/Fire Marshall guidelines relating to security watches.

Youth Services Ombudsman Representatives 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 participate in the province's overall goal of recognizing cultural diversity and achieving it in our workplace. The Ombudsman is 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 able to attend ceremonies celebrating International Human Rights Day. The Executive Director is a member of the French Language Services Committee and Partners for Human Rights.

Staff members attended training relating to Immigrant Contributions/Challenges to Workplaces, and arranged a meeting with the Welcome Home to Canada Project Coordinator, Pier 21 to explore possible employment and outreach opportunities.

Human Resource Strategy

1. Office Demographics

As of March 31, 2009, 16 permanent full-time employees, 3 or 19%, are from designated groups. The Office of the Ombudsman employs a number of individuals each fiscal year on a casual basis, including student placements. Two of these placements were filled by individuals from the designated groups, plus one Francophone.

The average age of permanent staff is 49.2 years; with the casual staff included, the average age is 50.5 years. The age of staff ranged from 19-65 (includes students and casual roster). Seventy-five percent of the permanent employees are female and 25% are male. When the casual roster is factored in, the Office is comprised of 59% females and 41% males.

The Office of the Ombudsman is taking 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 process.

This year we participated in the Public Service Commission employee survey and are looking forward to receiving the results.

Self assessment questionnaires and performance targets for 2008-2009 are being reviewed, our target is to complete these in early summer 2009. Work plans are in place for Disclosure of Wrongdoing, as well as for the seniors' and female offender pilot projects. A male offender strategic plan is still under development pending adequate resourcing. Work plans for the remaining sections are being updated.

3. To be a preferred employer

The Office of the Ombudsman has developed a staff training/orientation program for all permanent, contract, 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 regularly hires students through the Career Starts Program (diversity, mentorship and co-op). In 2008-2009, 7 students gained experience through placements with this Office. Three students were from Compu College, 2 from the Nova Scotia Community College, 1 co-op student from Acadia University and 1 pro-bono student from Dalhousie Law School.

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 has reverted to having an Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) Representative on the Legislative Agencies Committee. The Committee focuses on safe work practices and OH&S training requirements for staff.

One of the Ombudsman Representatives provides Prepare training for government entities within the Provincial government. Six staff members participated in this training in 2008-2009.

This Office has a representative on the Healthy Workplace Committee. In August 2008, our representative participated in the Healthy Workplace Internal Environmental Scan. The overview is reported in the document entitled "Gathering Ripples, An Internal Environment Scan on Healthy Workplace Initiatives in the Nova Scotia Government" dated March 2009.

We will continue working with EMO to update our Business Continuity Plan. Staff also attended meetings and workshops hosted by EMO relating to Business Continuity Planning.

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. One individual from the diversity pool was employed on a casual basis for the early part of the fiscal year 2008. 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

Staff participate in regular reviews and annual performance appraisals. Staff are 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. Mentorship in the office is also encouraged.

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 to develop skills to improve service to the public.

We provided the opportunity for French Language training to four employees.

We continue to be represented on the GoverNEXT committee.

FINANCIAL RESULTS

Office of the Ombudsman Budget Expenditures 2008-2009		
Core Business	Budget	Actual
	(\$ thousands)	(\$ thousands)
Gross Expenses	1567	1492
Net Program Expenses	1567	1492
Salaries & Benefits	1361	1353
Staff (FTE's)	17	16

The Office of the Ombudsman spent 95% 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 established our benchmark for the time frames for the completion of administrative reviews and investigations. These targets set 55% to be completed in 1-7 days, 15% in 8 days to 4 weeks, and 29% completed in 4 weeks plus. (These time frames include youth meetings but not youth surveys).

Office of the Ombudsman

Administrative Reviews Time Frames:

	2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009	
1-7 days	901	61%	921	59%	1139	57%
8 days - 4 weeks	252	17%	318	20%	257	22%
4 weeks plus	334	22%	334	21%	241	21%
Total	1228	100%	1573	100%	1637	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.

We opened 24 formal investigations, 5 of which were own motion investigations and 4 policy reviews.

Formal Investigations, System/policy Reviews Time Frames

Investigations, system/policy reviews carried over into 2008-2009	15 - average age on April 1, 2008 2.6 months
Investigations opened in 2008-2009 with recommendations being monitored	4 - average age when completed 4.25 months
Investigations opened and closed in 2008-2009	11 - average age when completed 3 months
Investigations opened in 2008-2009, and carried over into 2009-2010	9 - average age on March 31, 2009 2.2 months

Two investigations were carried from 2008-2007 into 2008-2009. One was 16 months at the beginning of 2008-2009. The delay was in large part due to challenges of our authority to review information under the respondent legislation. A solution on release of information was reached in September 2008 with Ministerial Authorization to review confidential information being granted to the Ombudsman or delegates.

The other investigation was 14 months at the beginning of the fiscal year. The delay was also in part due to lack of cooperation from the respondent. We anticipate both investigations will be completed in fiscal 2009-2010.

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. We will also continue our education initiatives to ensure all government officials are aware of the role and mandate of this Office as well as their reporting obligations during investigations.

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 1164 administrative reviews, had 473 meetings with youth in care or custody of the provincial government, and undertook 61 youth evaluation surveys, for a total of 1698 jurisdictional issues. We addressed 472 non-jurisdictional inquiries and opened 15 Ombudsman formal investigations, 5 own motion investigations and 4 policy/system reviews. We received 20 inquiries relating to the Civil Service Disclosure of Wrongdoing Regulations.

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 8% in 2008-2009.

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

Office of the Ombudsman

Administrative Reviews

TOTAL with Positive Outcomes*		1035
Assistance Rendered to Complainant	729	
Resolved for the Complainant	231	
Resolved for the Public Body/Properly Implemented	61	
Settled between the Parties	14	
Discontinued/Withdrawn		9 8
Administrative Review investigations carried into 2009-2010		31
TOTAL Administrative Reviews		1164

*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 473 youth meetings and 61 youth evaluation surveys (1698).

Formal Investigations and Reviews

Investigations opened in 2008-2009	15
Own Motion Investigations	5
System/Policy Reviews	4
TOTAL Investigations/System/Policy Reviews	24

Other

Meetings -Youth in Care and Custody	473
Youth Evaluation Surveys	61
Disclosure of Wrongdoing inquiries	20
Non-jurisdictional inquiries	472
TOTAL - Other	1026
TOTAL - all inquiries, contacts, investigations, and reviews.	2214

Where Do We Want to Be?

We want to maintain the ratio of less than 8 % investigations as compared to administrative reviews. We also want to continue to increase the number, scope, and complexity 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 650 presentations, information sessions, community and site visits, meetings, and staffed 4 information booths, such as 50 Plus Expo. Community outreach sessions were hosted in Amherst, Cole Harbour, Digby, Sydney, and Yarmouth. We reached approximately 3700 people through these outreach initiatives which exceeds our goal of reaching 2900 by 2010-2011.

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 in custody at the Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Youth Detention Facilities. Our female offender pilot project and our heightened presence in the adult male correctional facilities has resulted in a significant increase (148%) in complaints from offenders about Correctional Services over the past 4 years. Offender health care complaints have also increased significantly (77%) in the same time span.

We targeted youth and seniors in many of the education initiatives listed above. We conducted 155 site visits to youth in residential, secure care, and custody and issued 27 reports regarding youth issues. Eighteen site visits were made to seniors' residential care facilities reaching 56 people and 2 presentations reached an additional 90 individuals. Approximately 500 people visited seniors' booths. Ombudsman Representatives also participate on a variety of committees focusing 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.

Over 6000 pieces of communication material were distributed in this fiscal year. These were a combination of brochures and posters in English, French and Mi'kmaq, lapel pins, the Ombudsman Act, annual reports, magnets, as well as Disclosure Regulations and information packages, in addition to the annual GroupWise communication e-mail sent to members of the Public Service regarding the Office of the Ombudsman's 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 27 formal recommendations under the Ombudsman Act in 2008-2009. Eighteen involved changes to policy procedures. Twelve have been implemented, and ten are being monitored to ensure they are implemented. Two have been accepted in principal, their implementation is dependent upon development of regulations, two are still being considered. Many changes also occurred as a result of our less formal administrative review investigations.

We continue to monitor the implementation of recommendations made in previous fiscal years in nine Ombudsman investigations and in three Disclosure of Wrongdoing investigations

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 2008-2009, in addition to the policy input associated with the complaint resolution process, our input was sought in ten separate areas (please see pages 11-12 of this report).

We continue to work 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.

Where Do We Want to Be?

We would like to continue 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 2008-2009, 155 visits were made to youth in care and custody facilities, an increase of 47 % in 2007-2008.

Location	Site Visits	Total Present	Reports Issued
Residential Child-Care Facilities	69	199	0*
Wood Street Centre (Secure Residential Facility)	40	103	12
Nova Scotia Youth Facility (includes 12 visits to conduct youth evaluation surveys)	30	174	12
Halifax Youth Attendance Centre	6	29	N/A
Cape Breton Youth Detention Facility	10	25	3
Total	155	530	27

* A report of the complaints addressed in 2008-2009 will be provided in 2009-2010.

Seniors Site Visits

Location	Site Visits	Total Present	Reports Issued
Senior Residential Facilities	18	56	1

Where Do We Want to Be?

We exceeded the number of youth site visits in this fiscal year and anticipate returning to 2007-2008 levels. The number of site visits to seniors facilities decreased, in part because of adjustments to our approach flowing from the pilot conducted in Cape Breton, however we anticipate an increase in 2009-2010. We are revising our strategy for seniors to ensure we maximize the impact of our efforts in this area.

We will also continue to increase awareness of our role and mandate among various cultural communities, and will increase the number of publications available in French.