

Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer 2017-2018



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OUR VISION

Trusted by all Nova Scotians to excel in the delivery of fair and inclusive elections

OUR MISSION

To serve democracy by delivering provincial elections impartially and professionally.

OUR MANDATE

- Conduct provincial general elections, by-elections and liquor plebiscites
- Ensure compliance with provincial electoral law including the political financing regime
- Establish and maintain election-related information, including the Nova Scotia Register of Electors
- Seek advice and conduct studies related to electoral processes
- Conduct electoral education programs

OUR VALUES

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Inclusivity
- Integrity (includes trustworthiness, professionalism, respect, fairness and objectivity)
- Transparency

OUR GOALS

- 1 To conduct quality, cost effective, accessible elections
- 2 To create and provide quality electoral information
- 3 To engage and educate stakeholders in all aspects of the electoral process
- 4 To assist, seek and enforce compliance with the *Elections Act*
- 5 To continuously develop individual and organizational effectiveness

May 16, 2018

The Honourable Kevin Murphy
Speaker of Legislative Assembly
1st Floor, Province House
PO Box 1617
Halifax, NS
B3J 2Y3

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to present the Annual Report of Elections Nova Scotia, in accordance with the *Elections Act*, c.5, for the period of April 1st, 2017 to March 31st, 2018.

I respectfully request that you forward this report to the members of the House of Assembly at the next sitting.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Temporale
Chief Electoral Officer

Message of the Chief Electoral Officer

The fiscal year 2017-18 was very busy at Elections Nova Scotia (ENS) as our election readiness plans were put to the test with the 40th Provincial General Election held May 30, 2017. In the months since the general election, activity has been focused on gathering, digesting and reporting statistics and finances and reviewing recommendations for legislative change with the Election Commission in advance of presenting them to the members of the Legislative Assembly. In addition, ENS continued with the iterative process of exploring ways to improve electoral processes, voter access and *Elections Act* compliance.

In the absence of a fixed election date, ENS is constantly vigilant about its state of election readiness. ENS had targeted two interim readiness dates for 2017, March and September. These dates were to be used as milestones to achieve a state of readiness by channeling efforts to complete time sensitive election projects in advance of a general election call. Because the writs for the 40th PGE were issued on April 30, 2017 for an election day thirty days later, on May 30, 2017, the September date was moot, and some system enhancements were left on the drawing board for future electoral events. Nonetheless, we were ready, and we delivered.

Through the result of careful planning, ENS was prepared with the structure and processes to grow from 18 head office staff to over 6,700 election workers in all parts of the province. An accurate permanent register of electors, electoral geography and electoral finance systems were maintained and ready. Election processes and materials were in place and returning officers selected, trained and available for activation on short notice.

During the 2017-18 fiscal year, improvements to increase accessibility were implemented for many groups; youth and new voters, First Nations and Muslim communities, people with disabilities, and electors travelling within Nova Scotia and around the world. Early voting opportunities continued to expand, making it more convenient for votes to be cast before election day and on election day. Our self-imposed drivetime standard of 25 minutes to an early voting opportunity and 15 minutes to polls on election day was successful, with almost all electors travelling within those time frames. Citizens were provided with opportunities facilitating more inclusive and accessible choices as to when, where, and how they could vote.

ENS's Strategic Plan identifies five organizational goals and accompanying performance measures to help crystalize our priorities, the actions we need to take, and how we will know when we have achieved success. The plan balances the challenges, opportunities, and risks of the day to ensure strategic success.



This annual report highlights key initiatives by goal for the fiscal period 2017-18. The report offers insight into the breadth of work undertaken by ENS to achieve a more modern, streamlined, cost-effective, and balanced electoral management system for all Nova Scotians. Our staff remains dedicated to continuous improvement processes to help realize and sustain our vision of being trusted by all Nova Scotians to excel in the delivery of fair, inclusive, and accessible elections.

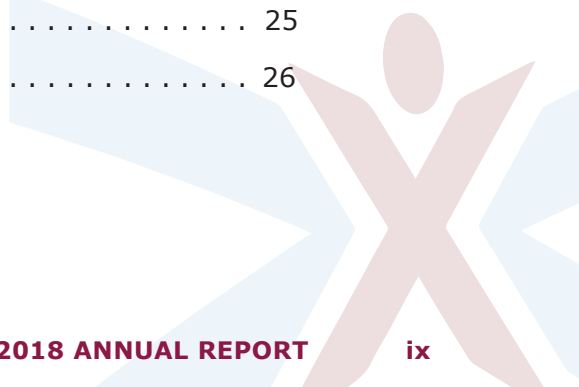
RICHARD P. TEMPORALE

Chief Electoral Officer

May 2018

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OVERVIEW

Delivering on our Goals

The scope of the work done by ENS is broad, as it covers all aspects of the electoral process. Projects include: hiring and training returning officers and their core office staff, working to secure accessible voting locations for electors with physical disabilities; and ensuring compliance with the *Elections Act*.



Our efforts to offer electors a wide variety of early voting opportunities anywhere in the province throughout the writ period has positioned ENS among the leaders in Canada at providing the voting public convenient access to the vote. The development of individual and organizational effectiveness is a continual process. This document reports on the activities undertaken at ENS, broken down by goal in 2017-18. Our modernized Strategic Plan outlines a long list of initiatives for the next five years, from 2018 to 2023, and is published at the same time as this Annual Report. Both of these documents are aligned with our vision, mission, mandate, values, and goals, which are regularly assessed and modified as necessary.

GOAL 1 • CONDUCTING QUALITY, COST-EFFECTIVE, ACCESSIBLE ELECTIONS

This goal includes all activities to ensure every returning office, polling station, and staff member is equipped and ready to deliver and conduct fair and non-partisan elections. This includes developing and disseminating clear and concise materials in a timely way to all staff and political parties and candidates, and providing appropriate training.

GOAL 2 • QUALITY ELECTORAL INFORMATION

One of our key tasks is maintaining and updating election-related data, including the Nova Scotia Register of Electors, which is a list of eligible residents who are registered to vote.

Electors included on this list will be sent voter information by mail during the election telling them where and when they can vote.

GOAL 3 • ENGAGING AND EDUCATING STAKEHOLDERS

We are mandated to conduct voter education and information programs. We want to make sure that the electorate and other stakeholders have what they need to understand when, where, how they can vote and who can vote.

GOAL 4 • ELECTIONS ACT COMPLIANCE

We are also vigilant in our efforts to assist, seek and enforce compliance with the *Elections Act*, including the political financing regime.

We disseminate clear interpretations of the requisite parts of the *Act*, as well as assist various electoral stakeholders prepare their financial statements and returns as required.

Election Nova Scotia calculates and disperses funds to registered parties and candidates pursuant to the *Act*. Elections Nova Scotia works closely with the official agents of the registered parties and has provided training reference material.

GOAL 5 • CONTINUOUS INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

We are mindful of the need to develop individual and organizational effectiveness, and to that end some projects are specifically developed to help us achieve this.



Strategic Plan 2018-2023

After ENS neared completion of the reports of the 40th PGE, work began in the next phase of the election cycle, strategic planning, and planning for the 41st PGE. This plan revisits and modernizes the plan first developed in 2014. In the months and years ahead, ENS will apply lessons learned from the 40th PGE held on May 30, 2017. The updated ENS Strategic Plan outlines the challenges and risks anticipated over the next five years, and the ways we intend to seize the opportunities they may present to mitigate anticipated risks.

The plan incorporates several recommendations for legislative change proposed by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) that offer opportunities to use technology at early voting opportunities to enhance accuracy and to save time; both for the voter's experience when casting their vote and for the poll staff when tallying the results after the polls close. Two of the CEO's recommendations are in direct response to recent superior court decisions in Alberta and Newfoundland and Labrador.

Closer to home, Nova Scotia's Court of Appeal recently ruled the process used to introduce changes to the province's electoral map in 2012 were flawed. In response, the government introduced changes to the *House of Assembly Act* that bring clarity to the terms of reference future boundaries commissions must follow. Bill 99 received Royal Assent on April 18, 2018. It will likely lead to the early launch of a Boundaries Commission review of the electoral districts of Nova Scotia in 2018-19 rather than 2021-22. The acceptance of their report and the implementation of the boundaries by the members of the Legislative Assembly would trigger the release of all 51 returning officers and their replacement through a merit-based process in this five-year election cycle, that is, before rather than after the next provincial general election.

All the work currently envisioned by ENS for the next five years has been incorporated into our Strategic Plan, including a move of our headquarters and warehouse facilities, before our first readiness date set for April 1, 2020. Subsequent readiness dates will be set for each September and April thereafter, until the next general election is called.

GOAL 1

Conducting quality, cost-effective, accessible elections

Our primary goal is to conduct provincial elections; this means election preparedness is the focus of our day to day work. Nova Scotia does not have fixed provincial election dates requiring that we are in a constant state of preparedness to deliver a general election or by-election.

The state of constant readiness at ENS ensures that day to day duties and the development and distribution of resources is carried out in a timely and efficient manner.

Outcomes and operational processes are in constant review to improve overall organizational performance. As written earlier in this report, the updated Strategic Plan for the next five years sets priorities for action.



Strategic Goal 1 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Measure quality through a post-election (or post-by-election) audit/observation program expanding on the audit of the 39 th PGE	Post-event analysis in the 39 th PGE helped in developing a framework for the 40 th PGE audit. The audit will be used to develop and define benchmarks for the 41 st PGE, with quality measures that will compare 40 th and 41 st PGEs.
Budget the 41 st PGE to cost the same as the 40 th PGE in CPI adjusted dollars and measure cost effectiveness against this decision	The cost per elector was \$13.07 in the 40 th PGE, compared to \$12.89 in the 39 th PGE, a cost increase of 1.4% while CPI rose up in the same time by 4.9%
Set specific, measurable objectives for training, communications and other elements of event delivery and assess performance against predetermined criteria	The measure for this result will be developed for 41 st PGE
Meet accessibility objectives by: <ul style="list-style-type: none">ensuring that 98% of registered electors are within a 15-minute drive of their election day voting placeensuring that election day voting locations meet our accessible criteria for electors with physical disabilitiesexpanding voting and employment opportunities for electors with disabilities at returning offices and where practicable, in polling locationsworking with disability communities to maximize our polling location levels of accessibility	<p>In the 40th PGE 99% of all electors could reach a voting place within 15 minutes</p> <p>Our accessibility standards were met in 89% of the election day voting places in the 2017 general election</p> <p>In the 40th PGE, 10 of 17 individuals who put their names forward through reachability, were hired during the election. ENS will report on its effort to expand employment for electors with disabilities in future elections.</p> <p>89% of polls were wheelchair accessible in the 40th PGE. ENS will report on efforts to improve this percentage in subsequent elections</p>

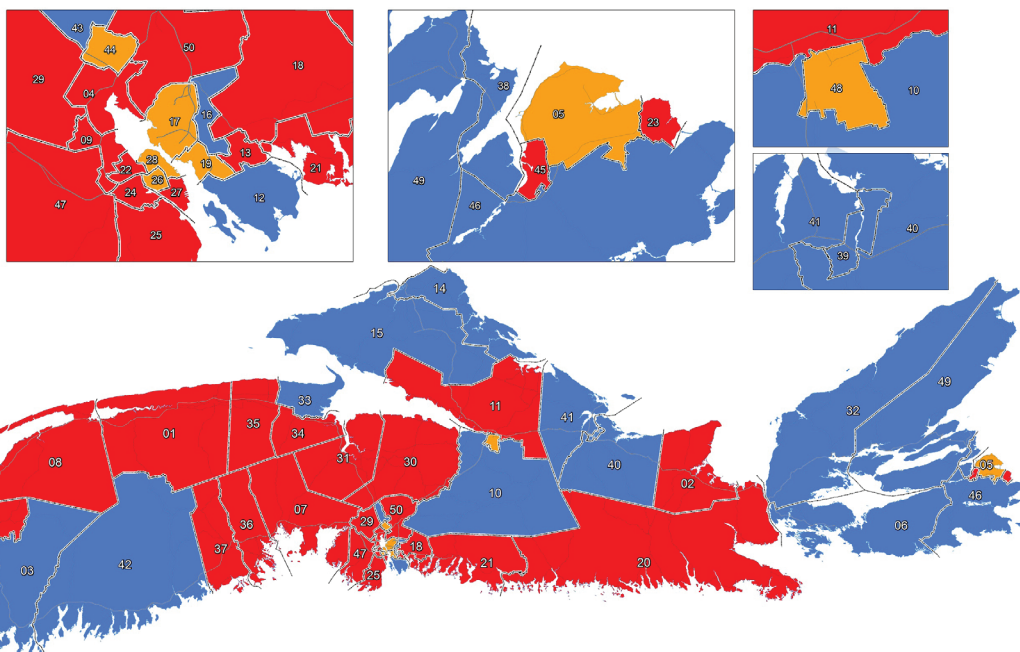
40th Provincial General Election

Generally, majority governments in Canada have served anywhere from 36 to 58 months before calling an election. For the 40th PGE, election day was in the 43rd month of the mandate of the government. At the time of the call on April 30, ENS had successfully prepared for two election readiness deadlines, September 2016 and March 2017. All election processes and materials were in place and ready to be implemented on short notice. Returning officers and their core office staff were selected, trained, and at the ready. Training was conducted through a mix of in-person sessions and online training modules.

The \$10.9 million budget for the 40th Provincial General Election anticipated changes in advance voting opportunities, continuous polls, returning office set up and recommended changes to the *Tariff of Fees and Expenses*. Cost effectiveness measures held actual costs to about \$9.9 million. The cost savings of \$1,022,182 were due to a number of factors including: a reduction in the number of polls offered (2,093) versus those budgeted for (2,298), less than anticipated returning office and head office spending, and lower than expected enumeration activity.

The total cost of \$13.07 per elector, compared favourably to the \$12.89 experienced in 2013.

The 40th Provincial General Election is reported in full through three planned reports: *Volume I: Statement of Votes & Statistics*; *Volume II: Report on the Conduct of the May 30, 2017 Provincial General Election and Recommendations for Legislative Change*; and *Volume III: Financial Information & Statistics*. These reports are available online: www.electionsnovascotia.ca/election-data/past-results/may-2018



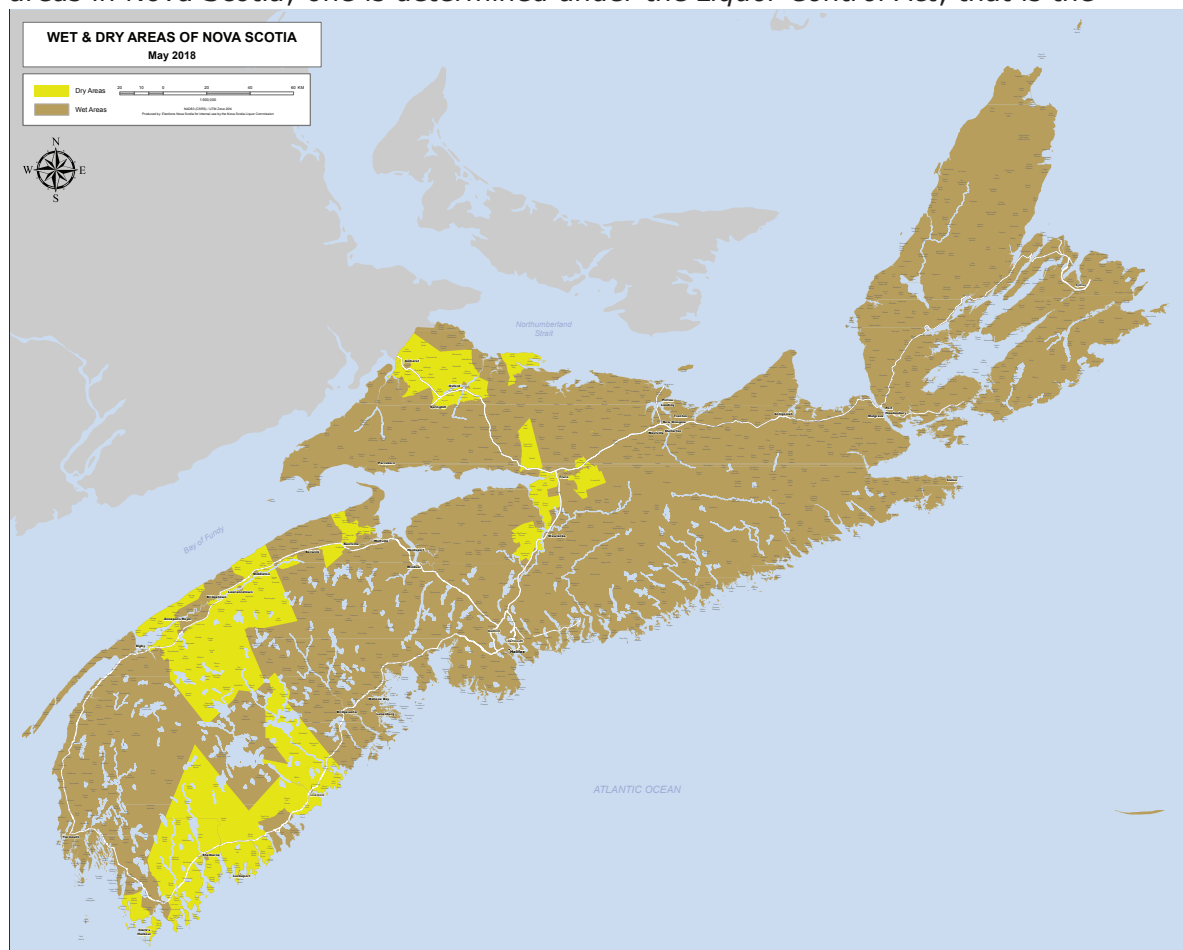
Cumberland South By-election (2018)

A by-election is an election held in a single electoral district between general elections to fill a vacancy in the House of Assembly. The resignation of the Leader of the PC Party and MLA for Cumberland South electoral district, Jamie Baillie, on January 24th, 2018 created a vacancy. At this time, the by-election had not yet been called. The *House*

of Assembly Act requires that a by-election is to be called within six months of the vacancy (July 24th) and the *Elections Act* requires that a by-election be within 30-46 days of the issuance of the writ for the by-election. The cost of administering this by-election is estimated to be \$280,000.

Liquor Plebiscites

A liquor plebiscite is a direct vote on a question by eligible electors in a defined voting area relating to the sale and consumption of liquor. There are two types of wet and dry areas in Nova Scotia; one is determined under the *Liquor Control Act*, that is the



sale of bottled liquor by an NSLC authorized store, and the other, the sale of liquor for consumption on premise at restaurants or bars, is set by the Alcohol and Gaming Division. Plebiscites for both are conducted by ENS.

Most of the province is “wet” but there are about one hundred “dry” areas in pockets that remain. Of 16 Alcohol and Gaming plebiscites in the past two decades, only one voted to keep the area dry. Of 38 *Liquor Control Act* plebiscites in the past 20 years, six resulted in a vote to keep the area dry. No plebiscites were held in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

ENS administered three liquor plebiscites on May 8, 2018, as this report was being written. The liquor plebiscites in two municipal districts in the County of Annapolis and one municipal district in the County of Colchester resulted in the three areas becoming wet areas under the *Liquor Control Act*.

Three Liquor Control Act plebiscites held May 8, 2018

Plebiscite area	# electors	# voted	# Yes	#No	Rejected Ballots	Voter Turnout %
Annapolis County district #3	1,119	99	90	9	0	8.7%
Annapolis County district #4	1,065	163	134	28	1	15.5%
Colchester County district #8	1,263	207	180	26	1	16.3%

Plebiscites are generally conducted for a small number of eligible electors, which in the past two decades has ranged from as small as 24 eligible electors to 4,182. Voter turnout has also been consistently low, with less than 40% those eligible voting in 27 of the 38 plebiscites. Voter turnout has been as low as 4.2%. Low turnout means the average administrative cost per vote cast tends to be higher than that experienced in a by-election or general election. For example, a liquor plebiscite held in early 2017 cost Nova Scotians more than \$65 per vote compared to \$23.22 per vote in four by-elections held in 2015-16 and \$16.14 per vote in the 2017 PGE. Traditionally, we talk about the cost per elector in elections; but that comparison would not capture the points of this discussion, namely the relatively low turnout expected for plebiscites and the diseconomies of scale when delivering a voting event in a relatively small area with few eligible voters to the high standards for integrity and accessibility that electors are accustomed to in provincially administered elections.

Access for People with Disabilities

As the election readiness cycle gets underway for the 41st Provincial General Election, ENS will continue working with accessibility groups to promote innovative ways to make the voting process more accessible. ENS also intends to develop a recruitment plan that engages people with disabilities to work at voting locations and returning offices.



In advance of the May 30, 2017 general election, ENS enhanced our assessment tools and introduced a limited cost per voting location program that would help owners increase wheelchair accessibility to voting locations. Without fixed election dates, voting locations must be identified and leased within a short period of time and consequently, locations which are wheelchair accessible are not always available. Returning officers assessed each location with a checklist and a wheelchair. Many places did require slight modifications to become accessible and some accessed our assistance program. Nonetheless, some places could not be upgraded before voting commenced. The Voter Information Card (VIC) mailed to everyone on the list of electors included information on wheelchair accessibility for each location.

An aging population in Nova Scotia will have an impact on future delivery of election services in many ways, from adjusting the ENS poll staff recruitment and selection model, to ensuring the maximum level practicable of barrier-free access for a person with a disability.

GOAL 2

Quality Electoral Information

Much of the quality of an election, depends on the quality of the electoral information used and distributed.

Maintaining and establishing election-related data, including the Nova Scotia Register of Electors, is an important part of ENS's mandate. It is key that we ensure information is current, free of erroneous data, accurate, complete and most importantly, secure.

Strategic Goal 2 Measures

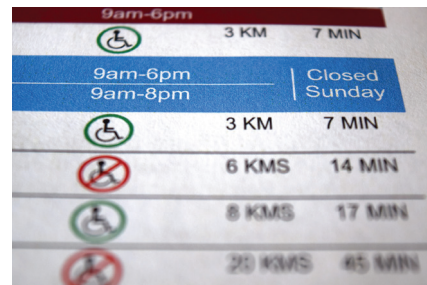
Activity to be measured	Measure
Determine the Register of Electors coverage. "Coverage" is defined as the percentage of eligible electors (18 years of age, Canadian citizen and resident of the province for 6 months) whose name is on the Register.	Register of Electors Coverage was reported following the 40 th PGE elections in Volume I and updated in Volume II. After the 39 th PGE in 2013, ENS reported 92.95% coverage. After the 40 th PGE in 2017, ENS reported 95.50% coverage. This reporting will continue following general elections.
Conduct qualitative research on the reading grade level of our publicly shared information and the effectiveness of information materials	This measure is under development in advance of the 41 st PGE, with the intention of assessing the reading level of Volumes I, II and III reports on the 40 th PGE, this Annual Report, as well as recent communications through the ENS website.
Report on reading grade level annually in reports of the CEO such as the CEO's Annual Report and the Political Contributions Regime Annual Report	This measure is under development. ENS will evaluate and report the reading level of the Political Contributions Regime Annual Report (to be released in June 2018) and in subsequent Annual Reports.

Driving Distances to Early Voting and Election Polls

Extensive mapping of early voting and election day voting locations was conducted in the lead up to the 40th PGE, to ensure electors have reasonable access to voting while containing costs. Travel time data gathered by skilled Geographic Information System (GIS) analysts at ENS was included on VICs, providing electors with the nearest early voting locations. During the 40th PGE more than 98 percent of voters had access to an early voting location within the standard travel time baselines set by ENS:

- Electors should be able to reach an early voting location within 25 minutes of driving. These early voting opportunities include 25 days of voting at any returning office, seven days of advance poll voting at any advance poll and community poll offered throughout the province. These early voting opportunities are planned in central communities where most electors will travel to shop or do banking, etc.
- In areas outside the 25-minute range of an advance poll, two-day community polls will be considered.
- Electors should also be able to reach their assigned election day poll within 15 minutes of driving.

In the lead up to the 40th PGE, returning officers had selected voting locations with these time travel baselines in mind. It is not always possible to secure the preferred locations, as facilities are not always available to be leased, especially given the short notice after the writs are issued. Analysis of the driving distances achieved during the 40th PGE is included in *Volume I: Statement of Votes & Statistics*.



9am-6pm Wheelchair icon	3 KM	7 MIN
9am-6pm 9am-8pm Wheelchair icon		Closed Sunday
Wheelchair icon	3 KM	7 MIN
No wheelchair icon	6 KMS	14 MIN
Wheelchair icon	8 KMS	17 MIN
No wheelchair icon	20 KMS	45 MIN

Piloting Technology in Election Day Polls

Based on a directive by the CEO in 2015-16, a pilot project to use technology to register and strike off electors at election-day polls during the 40th PGE was planned to be implemented as early as fall 2017. As the general election was called before this date, the pilot project could not be initiated. Elections Ontario plans to introduce the use of the same technology in most of its election day polls for the first time in Ontario's 42nd Provincial General Election scheduled for June 7th, 2018. The lessons learned from their experience should benefit ENS's expected pilot project during the 41st PGE. Ideally, the use of computer-based poll books for registration of electors will ensure



the integrity of the process by reducing the incidence of human error and will improve efficiency at the polls. If successful, the CEO would recommend to the members of the Assembly, the use of such technology in all voting opportunities for the 42nd PGE.

At this time, Section 357 of the *Elections Act* states that in order to use an alternative procedure, equipment or technology in a by-election or up to one third of the electoral districts in a general election, a directive (or resolution) supported by majority vote in the House of Assembly is required. The directive may be initiated on the advice of the Election Commission or in the CEO's own initiative and must be passed at least 60 days before the election to which it applies. The directive process can be challenging in getting the item on the agenda of the legislature at the appropriate time. The CEO discussed measures to provide more flexibility in his ability to pilot procedures, equipment or technology with the members of the Election Commission and received their unanimous support for a recommendation for legislative change that would permit piloting an alternative procedure, equipment or technology in a by-election once he has reviewed the pilot with them and received their unanimous support. This recommendation, and others, were published in *Volume II: Report on the Conduct of the May 30, 2017 Provincial General Election and Recommendations for Legislative Change*; and *Volume III: Financial Information & Statistics*. These reports are available online: www.electionsnovascotia.ca/election-data/past-results/may-2017

e-Registration

The Register of Electors contains the list of more than 756,000 eligible electors in the province. The information contained in the Register is gathered directly from electors, through driver's license and health record updates monthly, and through Elections Canada's National Register of Electors regular updates. ENS is working with Elections Canada to enable eligible Nova Scotians to add their names to our register by entering it online leveraging the ENS website, and the Elections Canada e-registration portal. This is a project that is currently in the development stages and may be available to the general public in early 2019.

GOAL 3

Engaging and Educating Stakeholders

Our mandate requires that we ensure Nova Scotians receive information describing how, when, and where to vote during provincial elections. This information is distributed to our internal and external stakeholders – eligible electors, candidates, election workers, parties, electoral district associations, third parties and members of the House of Assembly, using a variety of media (print, local radio, web, social networks and our internal portal). Engaging these groups in two-way communication is key to attaining strategic success.

Engaging and educating stakeholders encompasses a variety of projects at ENS; for instance, developing a comprehensive and strategic communications plan to guide external communications when a general election is called, and developing and providing election-ready materials, including handbooks, brochures, videos and in-person and online training to the prospective poll, party and candidate officials regarding vital election messages.

Strategic Goal 3 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Set targets and measure participation of educators and other stakeholders in ENS programs	Measures for this goal are under development in advance of the 41 st PGE. ENS plans to collaborate with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Education in a youth engagement program which may include youth participation at polls, for example.

Prospective Young Voters

During fiscal 2017-18, several projects were underway leading to the 40th PGE. ENS partnered with CIVIX, a non-partisan, national registered charity that organized parallel elections in which 18,000 elementary and high school students in the province participated. The 40th PGE was the ninth Student Vote youth engagement project conducted by CIVIX in Nova Scotia.

As well, materials and content are specifically created to engage with young Nova Scotians between the ages 16 to 18, including a letter sent to more than 11,000 youth who turned 18 since the 2013 general election. It is a stated ENS goal to add as many of them as possible to the register of electors as they become eligible to vote and to ensure their first opportunity to cast their vote is easy and fast. Research has shown that those who choose to vote when they are young, tend to continue to do so in future as the opportunities arise. This project was, in our view, very successful. More than 20 percent of prospective new electors responded to our letter, and of those respondents, about 70 percent cast a ballot in the 40th PGE.



Assembly of First Nations

Based on its First Nations Strategy, ENS worked closely with the Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations to enhance elections services offered on all Reserves in the province during the 40th Provincial General Election. The initiative commenced with a joint letter to the Chiefs of the 13 bands in Nova Scotia signed by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and the Assembly of First Nations' Regional Chief Morley Googoo urging them to support this initiative. This in turn led to hiring of a Community Relations Officer (CRO) in each of the bands to work with ENS staff and their local returning officer to ensure the list of electors used on their Reserve was up to date and accurate. If a Reserve had more than 100 eligible electors on the list, the CEO would grant them an on-Reserve poll, run by First Nations poll officials, an elder and a youth representative. ENS intends to continue building on the relationships that have been established between this electoral agency and First Nations communities in Nova Scotia, with the goals of enhancing opportunities to engage this group, and through collaboration, to improve service to these electors. A copy of the *First Nations Elector Strategy Report* can be found on the ENS website in Appendix E of *Volume II: Report on the Conduct of the May 30, 2017 Provincial General Election and Recommendations for Legislative Change* which is available online at www.electionsnovascotia.ca/election-data/past-results/may-2017



Women's Suffrage 100th Anniversary in 2018

After years of protesting, engaging, and petitioning the provincial government, most women were finally granted the right to vote one hundred years ago. With the amendments to the *Nova Scotia Franchise Act* passed in the House of Assembly on April 26, 1918, women also gained the right to be a candidate in provincial general elections.

Although there were times when women may have been able to vote as a proxy of their husband while he was away at war, this law was seen as a great victory for women. Women who wished to vote were expected to meet the same criteria as men of the time. They needed to own property, be a Canadian citizen and be at least 21 years of age. The requirement to own property was dropped in 1920. Indigenous people only gained the right to vote under the *Indian Act* in 1960.

April 26, 2018 marked the anniversary of the 100th year since women gained the right to vote.

Quality-Service-Value Awards

This date, April 26, 2018, also celebrated the CEO's Quality-Service-Value Awards ceremony at ENS headquarters (HQ). The CEO awards those who have excelled in the delivery of quality, service or value to the electoral processes, in years between general elections as well as the election year. Recipients are nominated by ENS staff or as the result of a letter of commendation from a stakeholder. The Honourable Kevin Murphy, Speaker of the House of Assembly, attended the event and assisted the CEO in presenting awards to twelve recipients. Although it was coincidence, nine of the twelve people who received QSV awards this year are women.



Chief Electoral Officer Richard Temporale and the Honourable Kevin Murphy with recipients of QSV Awards on April 26, 2018.

Photo (left to right):

Honourable Kevin Murphy, CEO Richard Temporale, with QSV Award recipients Linda Fares, Debbie Kavanaugh, Robert Little (brother of Sandra Little, deceased), Vicky O'Halloran, Hansley Wang, Lindsay Rodenkirchen, and Pierre Gareau. Award recipients not in photo: Chris MacInnes, Eileen Pelham, Cynthia Simpson, JoAnn Shanahan, and Nicole Latour

Other Stakeholders

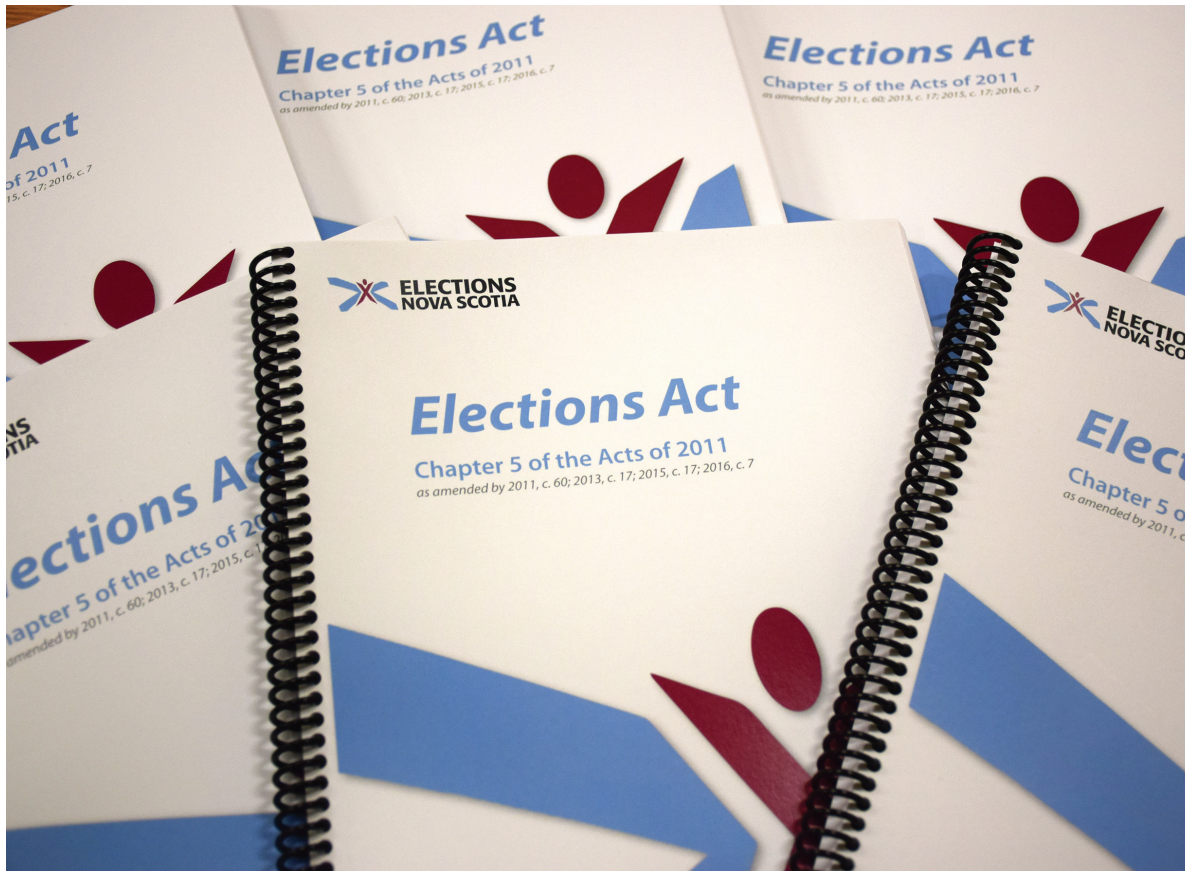
Other projects included development and implementation of a communications plan to inform registered parties, candidates, third parties and the public about electoral processes, and timely information in media releases and online via the website, Facebook and Twitter to assist the elector in finding out how, where and when they may vote.

A variety of communications materials and training sessions were delivered in advance of and during the 40th PGE to registered parties, candidates and official agents.

GOAL 4

Elections Act Compliance

Monitoring compliance with the *Elections Act* is an important function of ENS. This involves measures to educate and inform the public, the executive members responsible for the conduct of registered parties, electoral district associations candidates and third parties, and to investigate potential breaches of the *Act*.



ENS provides training for the official agents of candidates, parties, electoral district associations, and third parties to equip these stakeholders to conduct their finances in accordance with the *Elections Act*. Training opportunities include; in person training, online training videos and handbooks outlining financial processes and procedures in accordance with the *Elections Act*.

ENS strives to do our utmost to provide clear interpretations to various stakeholders to ensure their compliance with the *Elections Act*. During the 40th PGE, the traditional media sources and social networking sites were monitored for instances that the *Act* may have been knowingly and unknowingly breached. ENS social media channels were used to educate the public on relevant and interesting areas of the *Act* as a measure to help avoid violations.

Strategic Goal 4 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Measure the number of breaches that result in Compliance Agreements; ENS will report on failures to comply with annual reporting requirements by registered parties and EDAs. The targets for the 2018-19 and 2019-20 fiscal years and for the 41 st PGE are to have no compliance breaches or failures.	During 2017-18, there were no Compliance Agreements reached, however an investigation into a compliance matter during the year led to a Compliance Agreement in April 2018. Such agreements reached during a fiscal year will be reported in the Annual Report for that year.
Measure the compliance of electoral finance stakeholders in meeting filing deadlines;	During the 40 th PGE, most financial reports were received on time. Of 203 candidates, 53 requested an extension and six who did not meet the deadline paid \$50 daily fines to a total of \$2,850. ENS will report on the meeting of filing deadlines through the annual reports.

Election Finance

E-tax Receipts

In 2016, the *Elections Act* was changed to permit registered parties to issue electronic tax receipts. In 2016, two registered parties, the Liberals and the PCs, were granted permission to issue electronic tax receipts. The remaining three registered parties, the Atlantica, the Green, and the New Democrats continue to follow the process of using paper tax receipts received from ENS.

Resource update

Training for candidates' official agents took place across Nova Scotia in April 2017, in anticipation of the upcoming general election. As well, informational and teaching resources were made available to official agents in various formats including handbooks, videos, brochures, samples of completed finance returns, and short guides. A step-by-step video was also produced to assist candidates' official agents in completing their financial return following the 40th PGE.

GOAL 5

Continuous Individual and Organizational Effectiveness

Enhancing individual and organizational effectiveness is key to helping us achieve our goals and to keeping us on the right path. We cannot afford to lose sight of our vision and mandate. In our dynamic environment, we need to continuously take stock of our initiatives in relation to our goals, and adapt our work processes as needed to overcome the challenges of the day.



Organizational effectiveness and continuous improvement measures are aligned with our five-year Strategic Plan mentioned earlier in this report. ENS is vigilant in instilling a learning culture within the organization and focuses on the use of best practices and staff/professional development. We also are mindful of having structures in place to allow the flexibility we need, while always remaining cost conscious.

At ENS, we focus on attracting and sustaining engaged employees to support the continuous growth and development of our organization. This is done by building strength in the areas of leadership, decision making and structure; people, work processes and systems, and culture. When we do uncover weaknesses, we develop and implement and/or adapt strategies and processes to improve the situation and ensure continued growth and development.

Strategic Goal 4 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Develop a Learning Index and measure performance through the Index as an aggregate measure of organizational participation in internal and external learning opportunities, partnership projects and inter-jurisdictional cooperation	The design and measures for the Learning Index are under development during 2018-19 and progress will be reported on in subsequent annual reports.

Assessment of Topics of Interest to Voters and Assembly Members

Due to stakeholder expectations for convenience and efficiency when voting, electoral agencies are under growing pressure to modernize an approach to voting that has been in use since the country was founded. That model has always depended on a large workforce of temporary election officials being available and willing to work continually for 12 hours a day with breaks limited to lulls in voting. With each passing electoral event, the challenge of recruiting people to staff the polls has become more and more challenging. Although the model must evolve, it must do so at a pace that is acceptable to all stakeholders so their trust in the delivery of fair and inclusive elections is maintained. The risks and opportunities for change in electoral process is continually in flux. The *Act* enables the Chief Electoral Officer to seek the advice of an advisory committee, and a panel of experts to examine developing issues and best practices in other jurisdictions. For example, a panel was established in September 2015 to explore possible issues that arise from communications and/or government advertising that is published or broadcast during an election. Their report, included in the *Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer 2015-2016*, made recommendations to modify Communications Nova Scotia guidelines and policy on advertising during an election and by-election.

Over the course of the next several years, the CEO intends to explore the following topics of general interest and report to the members of the Assembly and the public at large:

- **Cybersecurity Assessment:** Elections Nova Scotia maintains a register of electors that the personal information of more than 750,000 registered electors in Nova Scotia. It is also responsible for the maintaining the secrecy of the vote and ensuring that the results are accurately reported and not tampered with. In recent years there has been growing attention in many jurisdictions, to potential cybersecurity threats, and to assessing potential vulnerabilities in internet-based technologies. A panel of

experts could explore potential risks with current and future technologies used at ENS, and based on their findings, advise the CEO in how to mitigate risks that either do or could exist to the systems used.

- **Electoral Operations:** The need to modernize traditional voting processes has been recognized by election management bodies within Canada for several decades and important modernization initiatives are now underway here and in the majority of the 13 jurisdictions. ENS is continually seeking ways to improve service to Nova Scotia electors by reviewing the trends and standards in electoral operations and what other election management bodies across Canada are doing. Advances in other jurisdictions could be reviewed in an 'environmental scan' to determine which best practices may add to the effectiveness of our organization in the administration of our provincial elections.
- **Electoral Finance:** Jurisdiction across Canada have varying sets of rules governing their electoral finance regime. In recent years, legislators in some of those jurisdictions have embarked on reviews of their finance regimes and in some cases, made significant changes. An 'environmental scan' of what is offered in other jurisdictions compared to the "made in Nova Scotia" experience could provide our stakeholders with the basis for a similar discussion.

SharePoint

Due to election readiness plans for the 40th PGE, the implementation of SharePoint was placed on hold until early 2018. ENS is now in the process of developing a collaborative online environment in SharePoint to be actively used by all staff in each of the program areas at ENS. Implementation is expected to be completed this calendar year.

Elections Nova Scotia Census Data

ENS is supportive of the goal to have a more diverse organization. One that is reflective of the demographics of Nova Scotia.

Building on the model of the Public Service Commission's survey, *Count Yourself In!*, which was released in 2016, we've collected data from returning officers and head-office staff to determine how ENS's staff compares. This is the third consecutive year for ENS's census data. It is used as a baseline measure of diversity within the organization. In the first two years of the census, the sample size was larger, 127 potential respondents in 2016 and 160 potential respondents in 2017. The sample size was smaller in 2018, because it followed the general election. Only 42 returning officers and 17 headquarters staff were provided the survey to complete. The rate of response to the voluntary census varied from 85% in both 2016 and 2018, to 99% in 2017.

**Nova Scotia
Government
Employees**

Elections Nova Scotia

	2016	2016	2017	2018
Education				
Less than High School Diploma	2%	*	*	*
High School Diploma/General Education Diploma (GED) or equivalent	68%	9%	13%	6%
Some trade school	1%	*	3%	4%
Graduated trade school	6%	5%	5%	*
Some postsecondary (college or university)	11%	22%	16%	20%
Graduated postsecondary (college or university)	72%	66%	64%	70%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	*	*	*
Age				
Under 18	1%	*	*	*
18 - 24	7%	*	3%	*
25 - 34	12%	1%	8%	2%
35 - 44	26%	11%	10%	8%
45 - 54	34%	13%	14%	12%
55 - 64	23%	43%	35%	32%
65 +	2%	31%	30%	46%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	*	*	*
Heritage Groups				
Acadian	7%	6%	9%	12%
African Nova Scotian	4%	*	*	*
Gael/Gaelic	6%	4%	1%	10%
Mi'kmaq	2%	1%	8%	2%
None	76%	82%	81%	74%
Prefer Not to Say	5%	2%	1%	2%
Culture / Ethnicity				
Caucasian	81%	84%	84%	82%
Aboriginal**	2%	1%	10%	*
Asian	2%	3%	1%	*
Black**	3%	*	*	2%
Latin/Hispanic	2%	*	*	*
Middle Eastern	7%	1%	1%	2%
Multi-racial	2%	1%	2%	2%
Other	4%	*	*	2%
Prefer Not to Say	5%	10%	2%	10%

**Nova Scotia
Government
Employees**

Elections Nova Scotia

	2016	2016	2017	2018
Gender				
		**		
Male	35%	**	41%	62%
Female	60%	**	57%	38%
Other	2%	**	*	*
Prefer Not to Say	3%	**	2%	*
In what language(s) are you currently fluent? More than one may apply.				
English	87%	100%	100%	94%
French	7%	9%	8%	8%
Gaelic	*	*	*	*
Mi'kmaq	*	*	3%	*
Physical Languages	*	*	*	*
Other Languages	2%	5%	5%	8%
Immigrant Status				
Yes	6%	7%	7%	10%
No	92%	92%	92%	90%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	1%	1%	*
Disability				
Yes**	9%	6%	8%	6%
No	87%	93%	91%	94%
Prefer Not to Say	3%	1%	1%	*
Do you require a workplace accommodation?				
Yes	28%	29%	8%	2%
No	59%	71%	83%	98%
Prefer not to say	13%	*	8%	*
How many years in total (non-consecutive) have you worked with Government of NS / Elections Nova Scotia in any capacity?				
Less than 5 years	22%	62%	65%	38%
5-10 years	27%	19%	20%	36%
11-15 years	15%	9%	6%	4%
16-20 years	12%	2%	3%	12%
21+ years	22%	4%	4%	10%
Prefer not to say	1%	*	*	*
Sample Size				
	11048	127	160	59
	~50%	85%	99%	85%

Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100%

*less than one percent

**NS Labour Force: Aboriginal 3%, Black 2%, Disability 10%

Increasing Transparency for the Election Nova Scotia Management Team

The CEO is committed to increasing transparency relating to ENS travel and expenses claimed for travel that exceeds \$250 for each senior manager. To support the commitment to maintain professional staff who are leading electoral events in Nova Scotia using best practices, travel is undertaken to stay up-to-date on innovative practices in other jurisdictions to ensure democratic principles are upheld for the citizens of Nova Scotia. Interprovincial travel takes place for professional development and interprovincial joint projects. In 2016-2017, the total comparative cost was \$15,692. Election related training and returning office meetings resulted in total costs of \$17,485 in 2017-2018.

Name	Event	Cost
Richard Temporale, CEO	Elections Ontario Simulation Observation	\$647
Peter Gzowski, ACEO	CCEO Conference Regina, SK	\$2,352
Dorothy Rice, Managing Director Electoral Finance	Official Agent Training, Nova Scotia	\$1,952
	CCEO Conference Regina, SK	\$2,595
	COGEL (Council of Government Ethics and Laws) Conference Toronto	\$1,485
Lindsay Rodenkirchen, Director Operations	RO Meetings – Nova Scotia	\$552
	CCEO Conference Regina, SK	\$1,734
	Elections Ontario Simulation Observation	\$1,637
Andy LeBlanc, Director Policy and Communications	COGEL (Council of Government Ethics and Laws) Conference Toronto	\$1,633
	CCEO Conference Regina, SK	\$1,592
Linda Fares, Director IT	Elections Ontario Simulation Observation	\$1,306
Total		\$17,485

Advertising Costs Reporting

ENS has been reporting annual advertising expenses since 2016. The changing nature of the advertising landscape offers alternatives to traditional advertising. Reporting this data provides a baseline for future comparison, ensuring accountability and transparency on how taxpayer's dollars are spent on advertising.

2017-18	TV	Radio	Print	Online	Ad Design and Development	Total
General Election May 30 2017		\$43,194	\$20,560	\$1,840	\$1,595	\$67,188

2016-17	TV	Radio	Print	Social	Internet	Out-of-Home	Ad Design and Development	Total
Halifax Needham By-Election		\$9,327	\$26,787	\$300				\$36,414

As outlined in earlier reports, the Chief Electoral Officer recommends removing the requirement to publish the notice of election and the grant of poll in a newspaper.

FOIPOP and Requests

ENS values include accountability and transparency, and this agency responds to requests for information as expeditiously as possible. The majority of requests for information to this agency are quickly and informally resolved; requests about the Elections Act, or for data from past elections or electoral finance reports, for example. Most information requested is readily available online at electionsnovascotia.ca, or contained within published reports from this agency. We also receive broader requests for information through the process defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP). In the 2017-18 fiscal year, we received and responded to three requests for information.

Role of the Election Commission

Established under the *Elections Act*, the members of the Election Commission advise the CEO on various questions and issues with respect to the administrative conduct and the administration of elections. The Commission is comprised of a Chair, appointed by the Governor in Council for a term of five years; and two persons appointed for terms of two years by the leaders of each registered party with members sitting in the House of Assembly.

CHAIRPERSON: Vince MacLean

Nova Scotia Liberal Party	Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia
Jane O'Neill	Don Fraser	Cameron MacKeen
Ellen Burke	Jill Houlihan	George White

Elections Nova Scotia Organizational Chart

