

Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer 2020-2021



**Annual Report
of the Chief
Electoral Officer
2020-2021**

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 and by-elections
- 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

October 8, 2021

The Honourable Keith Bain
Speaker of the 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 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

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

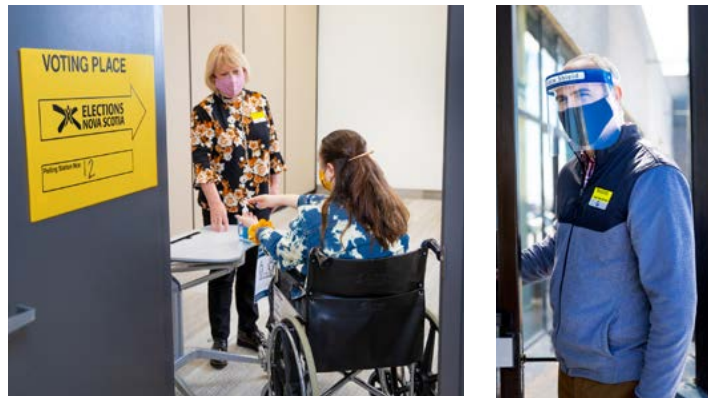


Richard Temporale
Chief Electoral Officer

**Preparing for
a Pandemic Election**

Our staff worked hard to meet our April 1, 2021 election readiness date and incorporated COVID precautions into every aspect of our work.

Photo Credit: kelly clark photography and Naomi Shelton



Message of the Chief Electoral Officer

The fiscal year 2020-2021 marked the third year of Elections Nova Scotia's (ENS) five-year strategic plan. In alignment with our vision, ENS continued to explore ways to improve electoral processes, voter access, and *Elections Act* (the *Act*) compliance. This annual report provides an update on the progress of our strategic initiatives.

This was another challenging year with the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts continued to focus on incorporating public health precautions into every aspect of our work. I am pleased to report that as dedicated professionals, my team rose to the challenge and met our election readiness deadline successfully. As of April 1, 2021, returning office staff training was complete, equipment and technology was ready and tested, supplies were packed and waiting in the warehouse, and we were ready to deliver the 41st Provincial General Election (PGE) whenever the call came. While meeting this readiness target marked the completion of a significant amount of work, it also marked the starting point for the next phase of our activities.

The development of this annual report began in the spring of 2021, but its completion was postponed because the 41st PGE was called. Writs of election were issued on Saturday, July 17th with election day set as Tuesday, August 17th. Despite the general election happening after the close of the 2020-2021 fiscal year, I feel I would be remiss if I did not include some preliminary discussion on the event in this report. To that end, I am including high-level results with the commitment to provide in-depth statistics and analysis in my post-election reports to be released over the next several months.

In 2020-2021, we published two Election Readiness Update Reports on our continued efforts to plan for the 41st PGE. The election planning section in this annual report provides a brief overview of that planning as well as some relevant discussion points of general interest on the implementation of the amendments to the *Elections Act* made by Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2020, proclaimed on May 6, 2021.

Although there were no by-elections held during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, ENS published a report in July 2020 on the four by-elections held during the 2019 calendar year. Another report was published in January 2021 on the two by-elections held on March 10, 2020 that included costs incurred in 2020-2021.

As mentioned above, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted all areas of our work again this year. Our staff have worked remotely and, when necessary and safe to do so, in the office following all health protocols. We sought the advice of Dr. Strang and the Public Health team to determine what precautions and protocols were needed to ensure safe in-person voting and to assist in the procurement of necessary protective supplies. I would like to thank Dr. Strang and Public Health for their guidance and support throughout our planning phase.

We also learned from the experiences of other Canadian election management bodies that conducted elections during the pandemic. Although most elections were facilitated safely and efficiently with COVID-19 precautions, the experience in Newfoundland and Labrador was quite different as the timing of their election coincided with a significant COVID-19 outbreak. We incorporated lessons learned from these jurisdictions into our own planning for the 41st PGE.

Lastly, I want to take this opportunity to thank my staff for their amazing efforts this year. Everyone pulled together and adapted to each new challenge as they arose. Not only did they meet our stated goals, they did so on time repeatedly to high professional standards of which I am very proud of.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard P. Temporale". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "R" and "T".

RICHARD P. TEMPORALE

Chief Electoral Officer

October 8, 2021

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Election Readiness - Our warehouse was packed and ready as of April 1, 2021



Election Planning

Without a fixed date election cycle in Nova Scotia, ENS must always be ready to deliver the next PGE. The planning cycle for the 41st PGE was challenging as ENS faced a year delay in funding, a global pandemic, and legislative uncertainty.

The unique challenges ENS faced planning for the 41st PGE were first identified in our 2018-2019 annual report and reported on again in our 2019-2020 annual report. We also published three separate election readiness update reports on November 6, 2019, January 7 and April 29, 2021. These reports are all available on our website. Following the release of our final election readiness report, the legislative amendments to the *Elections Act* made by Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2020 were proclaimed on May 6, 2021. The legislative change section of this report provides more details on the implementation of these amendments.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was prudent for us to include public health measures in all aspects of our planning for the 41st PGE to ensure the safety of voters, election staff, candidates and their campaign teams. We provided and promoted several voting options to build voters' confidence to show they could vote safely either in-person or by mail using a write-in ballot during the 41st PGE. We also learned from our Atlantic neighbours in Newfoundland and Labrador who struggled to deliver an election efficiently because of a pandemic outbreak late in their writ period. We examined the potential for a similar situation closely and determined strategies and proposed risk mitigations within the context afforded in our *Elections Act*.

What remained paramount throughout our planning in 2020-2021 was to ensure that we could deliver a safe, fair, inclusive and balanced election, which we were pleased to achieve during the 41st PGE.



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.

Voters 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.

OVERVIEW

Strategic Plan 2018-2023

ENS's five-year strategic plan applied lessons learned from the 40th PGE held on May 30, 2017. The plan also outlines the challenges and risks anticipated over the five-year period.

Fiscal year 2020-2021 was the third year of our strategic plan and this annual report shows how we are progressing with our goals and measured performance.

Our staff remains dedicated to continuous improvement of 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. The scope of the work completed by ENS is broad. It covers all aspects of the electoral process. Projects include: hiring and training returning officers (ROs) and their core office staff; developing election materials; updating systems and supporting technology; revisiting polling divisions and location catchment areas to match the increase from 51 to 55 electoral districts, working to identify and secure accessible voting locations for voters with physical disabilities; outreach work with stakeholders and vulnerable elector groups; and ensuring continued compliance with the *Elections Act*.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary for ENS to reconsider every aspect of the delivery and content of our election readiness plans in the 2020-2021 fiscal year to meet public health guidelines and ensure voter confidence so they could vote safely in the 41st PGE.



GOAL 1

Conducting quality, cost-effective, accessible elections

Our primary goal is to conduct elections. This means election readiness is the focus of our day-to-day work. Nova Scotia does not have a fixed provincial election date, so we are in a constant state of readiness planning to deliver a PGE or a by-election.

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

Offering people, a variety of secure and innovative opportunities to vote early anywhere in the province throughout the writ period has positioned Nova Scotia as a leader in accessibility and modernization among Canada's fourteen electoral jurisdictions.

Although there were no electoral events in the 2020-2021 fiscal year cover by this annual report, this section includes a high-level overview of the 41st PGE held in Nova Scotia on August 17, 2021.



Photo Credit: kelly clark photography

Strategic Goal 1 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Measure quality through a post-election (or post-by-election) audit/observation program.	<p>Post-event analysis of the 40th PGE was used to develop and define benchmarks for future electoral events.</p> <p>This analysis helped inform the CEO's recommendations for legislative change which led to legislative amendments to the <i>Elections Act</i> made by Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2020 proclaimed on May 6, 2021.</p>
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.	<p>The cost per elector was \$13.07 in the 40th PGE, compared to \$12.89 in the 39th PGE, a cost increase of 1.4% while CPI rose by 4.9% over that same period.</p> <p>In 2019-2020 the cost estimates for the 41st PGE were adjusted to include an increase in the number of electoral districts.</p> <p>In 2020-2021 the cost estimates were updated based on projections due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and legislative changes.</p> <p>Prior to the 41st PGE, we estimated the total cost at \$13 million or \$17.20 per elector, an estimated increase of \$4.13 per elector from what was recorded for the 40th PGE. Approximately \$2.00 of this increase was directly attributable to changes required because of COVID-19 and an estimated further \$1.00 for the increase from 51 to 55 electoral districts.</p> <p>The final cost for the 41st PGE will not be available until late spring 2022 because legislated deadlines for reporting candidate, party and Third party costs extend into late December. Financial audits and reimbursements normally take 3-5 months to complete.</p> <p>The audited financial report included with this annual report details all expenditures in 2020-21.</p>



Meet accessibility objectives by:

- ensuring that 98% of registered voters are within a 15-minute drive of their election day voting place
- ensuring that registered voters are within a 25-minute drive of their early voting location
- ensuring that election day voting locations meet our accessibility criteria for voters with physical disabilities

In the 40th PGE 99% of all voters could reach a voting place on election day within 15 minutes.

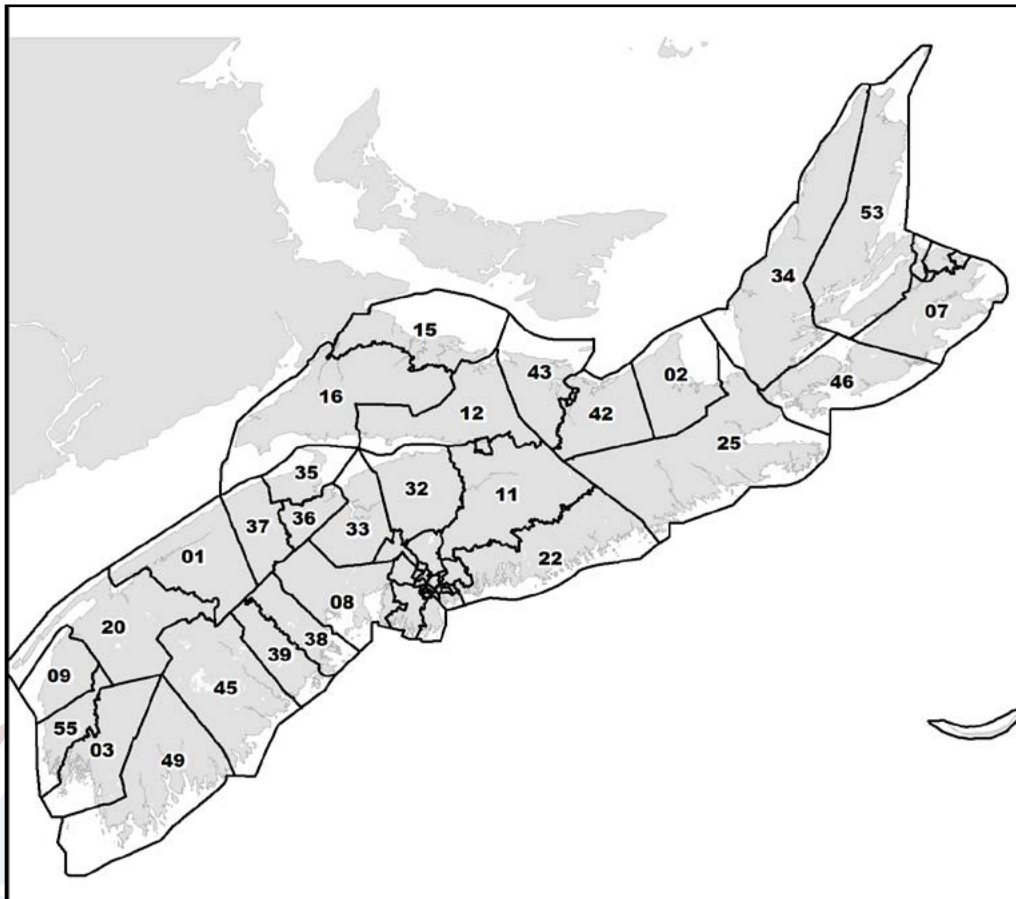
Planning in 2020-2021 focused on maintaining this standard for the 41st PGE.

In the 40th PGE 98% of all voters could reach their early voting locations within 25 minutes.

Planning in 2020-2021 focused on maintaining this standard for the 41st PGE.

Our accessibility standards were met in 89% of the election day voting locations in the 2017 PGE.

Planning in 2020-2021 focused on maintaining and improving upon this standard for the 41st PGE.



- expanding voting and employment opportunities for voters with disabilities at returning offices and where practical, in voting locations

In the 40th PGE, 10 of 17 individuals who put their names forward through reachAbility*, were hired during the election.

Planning in 2020-2021 included expanding voting and employment opportunities for voters with disabilities and ENS worked with reachAbility in the 41st PGE.
- working with disability communities to maximize our voting location levels of accessibility

89% of polls were wheelchair accessible in the 40th PGE.

Planning in 2020-2021 focused on maintaining and improving upon this standard for the 41st PGE.

* reachAbility is an organization that provides supportive and accessible programs that build capacity for inclusion.

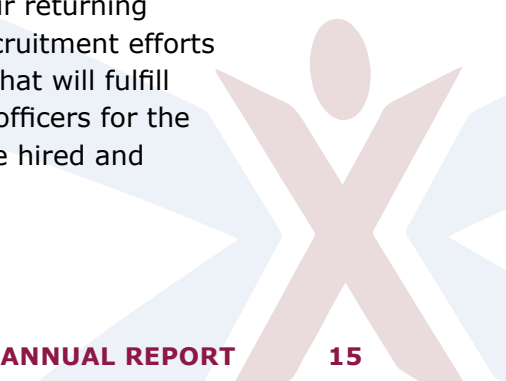
41st Provincial General Election

On July 17, 2021, pursuant to an Order of the Lieutenant Governor in Council, writs of election were issued under the Elections Act by the CEO, for the 55 electoral districts in Nova Scotia ordering that a provincial general election be held on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. On August 19, at the Official Addition, the Progressive Conservative Party (PC) was determined to have the most electoral districts. One recount was held for the electoral district of Glace Bay-Dominion at the Sydney Justice Centre on Monday, August 30, 2021, by presiding Supreme Court Justice Jamie S. Campbell. The results of the recount confirmed Mr. John White, PC Party as the winning candidate for Glace Bay-Dominion. The official results by registered party are provided below.

Atlantica: 0 electoral districts
 Green Party: 0 electoral districts
 Liberal: 17 electoral districts
 NDP: 6 electoral districts
 PC Party: 31 electoral districts
 Independent: 1 electoral district

Returning Office Core Staff Recruitment

In the summer of 2020, our appointed returning officers conducted their returning office core staff assignment. This assignment is a critical step in our recruitment efforts to be election ready as it requires returning officers to hire individuals that will fulfill the roles of assistant returning officer, revision assistant and presiding officers for the returning office continuous poll. Across the province 220 core staff were hired and registered to work with Elections Nova Scotia.



Returning Office Core Staff Pre-Event Training

As part of Elections Nova Scotia's 'layered learning' approach to training field staff, returning office core staff were required to take pre-event training. This training was delivered via e-modules, with core staff reviewing them from home.

The goal of this training was to ready staff for their eventual event training, which is typically delivered as close to the defined election readiness date. As the e-module based pre-event training was new, a core staff survey was conducted to collect feedback to enable enhancements to the program.

Returning Office Core Staff Event Training

Event training of over 275 returning office core staff took place the month of March 2021. Typically, event training is conducted in-person, requiring all field staff to come to Halifax and attend scheduled training sessions to ready them for their roles during an election. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic in-person training was not conducted and virtual training programs were developed and delivered from our office.

There were 10 election topics delivered and over 30 virtual sessions conducted by Elections Nova Scotia's staff. Following the event training, there were sessions scheduled each month for any new core staff that were onboarded.

Legislative Changes

In the spring 2020 legislative session, government introduced Bill 225, that introduced legislative changes that included most of the CEO recommendations in his reports following the 40th PGE. These amendments represent the next steps in electoral reform and will modernize and improve the administration of provincial elections in Nova Scotia.

Bill 225 passed and received Royal Assent in March 2020. Amendments to the *Elections Act* made by Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2020 were proclaimed in effect on May 6, 2021. Although the proclamation happened after the 2020-2021 fiscal year covered by this report it is included here because it was a significant development and meant that ENS could proceed to implement the legislative provisions. Many of the provisions were included in the 41st PGE. Others require more planning and will be implemented for future electoral events.

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, accurate, complete, and most importantly, secure.

ENS is committed to continuous quality improvement. To this end, we frequently evaluate and evolve the goals and measures related to our strategic plan. Quality electoral information includes transparent reporting of election spending, public funding provided by law to registered political parties bi-annually, and to candidates contesting elections and personal political contributions to parties, candidates, electoral district associations and third parties.

The annual report provides information on how we spend our annual budget. It illustrates what it costs our organization to fulfill our mandate including administration, costs for election events, service delivery and public funding paid directly to registered parties. This report includes an audited financial report for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, the second year that the audit was performed. This practice aligns with the independence of ENS and supports our goal to improve our transparency and accountability for all Nova Scotians.

Are you registered to vote?



**ELECTIONS
NOVA SCOTIA**

Find how to get on the list of electors by clicking here

1-800-565-1504  elections@novascotia.ca

Strategic Goal 2 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Determine the Register of Electors coverage. "Coverage" is defined as the percentage of eligible voters (18 years of age, Canadian citizen, and resident of the province for 6 months) whose name is on the Register.	Register of Electors coverage of 95.5% was reported following the 40 th PGE elections in Volume I and updated in Volume II. This reporting will continue following each PGE.
Conduct qualitative research on the reading grade level of our publicly shared information and the effectiveness of information materials	ENS uses the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level tool to help determine readability.
Report on the reading grade level of reports such as the CEO's annual report and the Political Contributions Regime annual report	In 2020-2021 all reports issued by ENS met the readability measure and were within the acceptable range of high school level of 12.0, which we strive for.

Elections Canada Data Sharing Partnership

The Register of Electors currently contains the names and addresses of more than 759,000 eligible voters in the province. The information contained in the Register is gathered and updated directly from voters; through driver's license information updates, vital statistics, health record monthly updates; and through Elections Canada's National Register of Electors regular updates.

Since September 2018, ENS has used an online registration channel to allow Nova Scotians to add and update their information on the Nova Scotia List of Electors. ENS leveraged the Online Voter Registration Service of Elections Canada to provide eligible



Nova Scotians a convenient one-step registration process to add their names or update their address information on both the National Register of Electors and the Nova Scotia Register of Electors at the same time. The collaboration between Elections Canada and ENS synchronizes efforts to gather timely, accurate, and secure voter data for both electoral agencies especially during electoral events in the province. It also capitalizes on investments of time and money already spent on implementing the national online registration system.

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 voters, 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, and social networks). Engaging these groups in two-way communication is key to attaining strategic success.

Engaging and educating stakeholders encompasses a variety of projects at ENS. These projects include developing a comprehensive communications plan to guide external communications and developing and providing election-ready materials. Election-ready materials include handbooks, brochures, videos, and in-person and online training to the prospective election officials, registered parties, and candidate teams regarding vital election messages. During the COVID-19 pandemic, ENS successfully moved to delivering all its scheduled field personnel training on-line. Group on-line team consultations were also provided for official agents to ask questions and receive guidance on various financial topics.

Efforts in 2020-2021 focused on COVID-19 planning and the development of a vote safely campaign to engage voters, build up their confidence to vote during the pandemic, and educate them on the voting options available in the 41st PGE.



Outreach Strategies – *Miranda Cain, African Nova Scotian Liaison Officer, developed and led the initial African Nova Scotian Outreach Strategy*

Photo Credit: kelly clark photography



Strategic Goal 3 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
Participation of educators and other stakeholders in ENS programs.	<p>Measures for this goal were achieved over time with participation from educators in the 2019-2020 fiscal year through the education advisory council and on-going consultation through outreach strategies for the 41st PGE. Outreach work for the 41st PGE focused on First Nations, African Nova Scotians, and Acadian Francophones.</p> <p>The progress and impact of outreach strategies on special voter groups will also be assessed following the 41st PGE.</p>

Outreach Strategies

Some voter populations have traditionally had lower voter participation due to barriers such as language and cultural considerations. ENS engages in outreach efforts with voter groups to help them exercise their democratic rights. The goal of ENS's outreach strategies is to build ongoing relationships with voter communities to ensure their needs are understood and met.

Three outreach initiatives were included in election readiness planning for the 41st PGE. These strategies focused on improving accessibility and inclusivity for First Nation, African Nova Scotian, and Acadian Francophone Nova Scotian voters. To facilitate this work, ENS hired Liaison Officers to work directly with the First Nations and African Nova Scotian communities and to lead the engagement.

The goal of ENS's Acadian and Francophone Outreach strategy was to provide more election material in French. To achieve this goal, ENS established a French Language Policy to enhance the delivery of election material in French for the 41st PGE and over time.

This outreach work helps ENS fulfill its mandate to provide fair and inclusive elections to all voters throughout Nova Scotia.

ENS also has focused outreach efforts on inclusion by working to eliminate barriers for voters and candidates with disabilities and candidates who incur incremental costs for eldercare, childcare and spousal care. This change was an initiative introduced by the current government. As part of the implementation of Bill 225 provisions for financial support to candidates with disabilities, ENS worked with the disabled community through the Disability Advisory Board and the executive director responsible for persons with disabilities. Candidate information was developed including forms, brochures, and modifications to training materials and handbooks to help prospective candidates understand the financial assistance available to them and how to access it.

Quality–Service–Value Awards

Annually the CEO has the discretion to award those who have excelled in the delivery of quality, service or value to the electoral processes. Recipients for the Quality-Service-Value Awards (QSV) are nominated by ENS staff or as the result of a letter of commendation from a stakeholder.

This year, Ellen Burke was a recipient of a QSV Award for her dedicated service through the Election Commission. She represented the Nova Scotia Liberal Party on the Election Commission since 2016. We thank Ellen for her four years of thoughtful advice and congratulate her on this award.

Ellen Burke

Ellen is a member of Patterson Law’s Litigation group, where her practice focuses on criminal litigation and family court matters. She was appointed to the Bar Council, Nova Scotia Barristers’ Society, Central District, in 2016. Her enthusiasm and dedication extend to her community work. She acted as a proud “Big Sister” with Big Brothers Big Sisters Canada and was a member of the Board of Directors.



Quality-Service-Value Award -
*Ellen Burke, Quality-Service-Value
Award winner for 2021*



GOAL 4

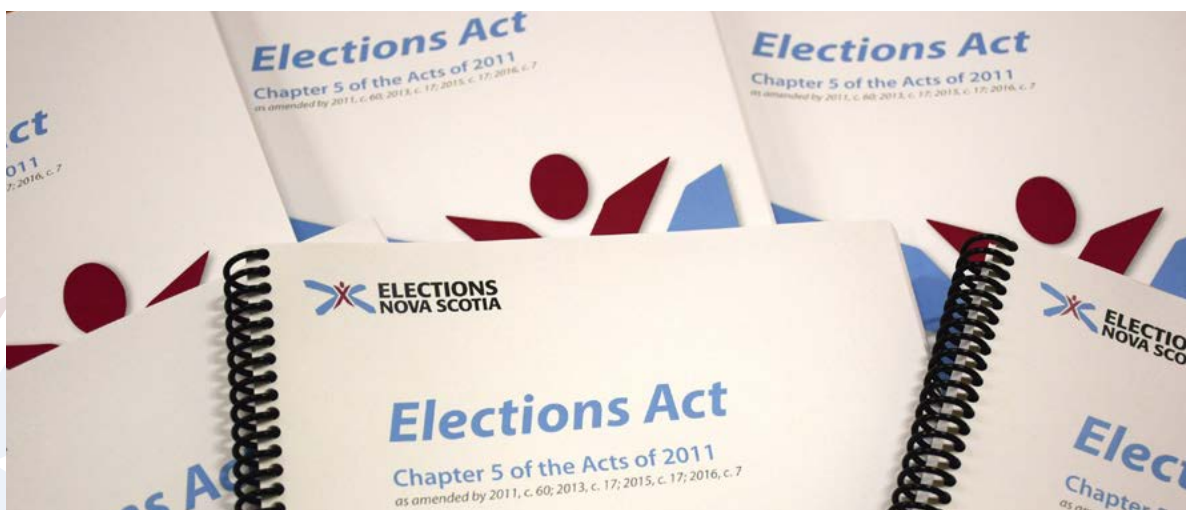
Elections Act Compliance

Compliance with the 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 guidance and 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 Act. ENS offers a variety of training opportunities including on-line training, topical brochures, and handbooks outlining financial processes and procedures in to ensure compliance with the Act. ENS strives to do its utmost to provide clear interpretations to various stakeholders to ensure their compliance with the Act.

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.	There were no investigations necessary in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. There were also no compliance agreements in the period.
Measure the compliance of electoral finance stakeholders in meeting filing deadlines.	ENS reports on the compliance to filing deadlines through the annual political donations report and election related reports.



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 are also mindful of having structures in place to allow for 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 the continued growth and development of all our employees.

Strategic Goal 5 Measures

Activity to be measured	Measure
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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

In 2020-2021, ENS continued to encourage all staff to complete mandatory training requirements as outlined by the Public Service Commission (PSC). Individual professional development has also taken place in 2020-2021 that is related to staff members' roles at ENS. ENS staff also participated in virtual election training through the Canadian Society for Election Official Training (CSEOT).

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.

ENS has adopted the Public Service Commission's (PSC) model of conducting a regular census and workplace satisfaction survey. This aligns with the PSC's practice of conducting the 'Count Yourself In!' survey and 'How's Work Going?' survey.

ENS first implemented a census in 2016 and collected data from ROs, contract consultants, and head-office staff. Data from that year is used as a baseline measure of diversity within the organization. Census results for Nova Scotia Government employees is also included to compare ENS's workforce diversity to the Province overall.

In the first two years of the ENS census, the sample size was larger, 127 potential respondents in 2016 and 160 potential respondents in 2017. In 2018 the sample size was smaller, 59, because it followed the general election. For 2019 the sample size was only 54 due to RO vacancies. In 2020 ENS did not conduct a census due to on-going RO recruitment. Instead, the 2019-2020 annual report included ENS's results from the 2019 PSC "How's Work Going?" survey.

2021 is the fifth year for ENS's census data. The survey was sent to the new RO, contract consultants, and head-office staff. The sample size was 79 and the rate of response to the voluntary census was 81%.

Question Category	Nova Scotia Government Employees (PSC census results)		Elections Nova Scotia Employees				
	2016	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Education							
Less than High School Diploma	2%	1%	*	*	*	*	*
High School Diploma/ General Education Diploma (GED) or equivalent	68%	7%	9%	13%	6%	2%	11%
Some trade school	1%	1%	*	3%	4%	2%	*
Graduated trade school	6%	7%	5%	5%	*	*	*
Some postsecondary (college or university)	11%	11%	22%	16%	20%	17%	13%
Graduated postsecondary (college or university)	72%	73%	66%	64%	70%	78%	75%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	*	*	*	*		

Question Category	Nova Scotia Government Employees (PSC census results)		Elections Nova Scotia Employees				
	2016	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Age							
Under 18	1%	*	*	*	*	*	*
18 - 24	7%	*	*	3%	*	*	*
25 - 34	12%	14%	1%	8%	2%	2%	*
35 - 44	26%	26%	11%	10%	8%	17%	11%
45 - 54	34%	33%	13%	14%	12%	11%	14%
55 - 64	23%	22%	43%	35%	32%	35%	37%
65 +	2%	10%	31%	30%	46%	33%	33%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	*	*	*	*	4%	3%
Heritage Group							
Acadian	7%	8%	6%	9%	12%	7%	5%
African Nova	4%	3%	*	*	*	*	
Gael/Gaelic	6%	6%	4%	1%	10%	11%	3%
Mi'kmaq	2%	2%	1%	8%	2%	*	
None	76%	79%	82%	81%	74%	74%	87%
Prefer Not to Say	5%	*	2%	1%	2%	7%	5%
Culture/Ethnicity							
Caucasian	81%	84%	84%	84%	82%	85%	87%
Aboriginal	2%	3%	1%	10%	*	*	
Asian	2%	3%	3%	1%	*	4%	5%
Black	3%	5%	*	*	2%	*	
Latin/Hispanic	2%		*	*	*	*	
Middle Eastern	7%	*	1%	1%	2%	2%	*
Multi-racial	2%	*	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Other	4%	4%	*	*	2%	*	
Prefer Not to Say	5%	*	10%	2%	10%	4%	3%

Question Category	Nova Scotia Government Employees (PSC census results)		Elections Nova Scotia Employees				
	2016	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Gender							
Male	35%	38%	*	41%	62%	52%	41%
Female	60%	58%	*	57%	38%	45%	59%
Other	2%	4%	*	*	*	*	
Prefer Not to Say	3%	*	*	2%	*	2%	
Language							
English	87%	96%	100%	100%	94%	98%	100%
French	7%	10%	9%	8%	8%	4%	6%
Gaelic	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Mi'kmaq	*	*	*	3%	*	*	
Physical Languages	*		*	*	*	*	
Other Languages	2%	6%	5%	5%	8%	9%	8%
Immigrant Status							
Yes	6%	10%	7%	7%	10%	15%	16%
No	92%	88%	92%	92%	90%	83%	47%
Prefer Not to Say	2%	*	1%	1%	*	2%	37%

Question Category	Nova Scotia Government Employees (PSC census results)		Elections Nova Scotia Employees				
	2016	2020	2016	2017	2018	2019	2021
Disability							
Yes	9%	11%	6%	8%	6%	11%	84%
No	87%	87%	93%	91%	94%	87%	14%
Prefer Not to Say	3%	*	1%	1%	*	2%	*
Do you require a workplace accommodation?							
Yes	28%	3%	29%	8%	2%	7%	*
No	59%	6%	71%	83%	98%	4%	26%
Prefer Not to Say	13%	2%	*	8%	*		72%
How many years in total (non-consecutive) have you worked with government of NS / ENS in any capacity?							
Less than 5 years	22%	28%	62%	65%	38%	35%	48%
5-10 years	27%	17%	19%	20%	36%	24%	30%
11-15 years	15%	20%	9%	6%	4%	13%	11%
16-20 years	12%	11%	2%	3%	12%	7%	6%
21+ years	22%	20%	4%	4%	10%	9%	5%
Prefer Not to Say	1%	*	*	*	*	2%	
Sample Size***	11048	6,909	127	160	59	54	79
	~50%	51%	85%	99%	85%	85%	81%

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

* Less than one percent

*** Sample size is the number of people the survey was sent to. This includes ENS core staff, returning officers, and support staff.

Increasing Transparency for the Elections Nova Scotia Management Team

The CEO is committed to 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 observe innovative practices in other Canadian jurisdictions to ensure democratic principles are upheld for the citizens of Nova Scotia. Interprovincial travel takes place for professional development and interprovincial joint projects.

COVID-19 prevented most travel during the 2020-2021 fiscal year. However, our CEO was able to take advantage of the Atlantic bubble to observe lessons learned from New Brunswick's pandemic election firsthand.

Elections Nova Scotia Executive Expenses April 1, 2020 - March 31, 2021				
Name	Title	Travel Dates	Description	Total (\$)
Richard Temporale	Chief Electoral Officer	September 12-15, 2020	Observation of the delivery of the New Brunswick Provincial General Election during the pandemic	1,202

Advertising Costs Reporting

ENS reports advertising expenses annually. Advertising costs are mainly associated with electoral events. Reporting this data provides accountability and transparency on how taxpayer's dollars are spent on advertising.

In 2020-2021, ENS did not incur any advertising expense because there were no electoral events during the fiscal year. Therefore, no advertising costs are included in this annual report.

Advertising costs for the 41st PGE will be included in the post-election report Volume III to be published in the coming months.

FOIPOP Requests

We respond to requests for information as fast as possible because we value accountability and transparency. Most requests for information are informally resolved; for example, requests about the *Act*, or for data from past elections or electoral finance reports. Most information requested is readily available online at electionsnovascotia.ca or contained within our published reports. We also receive broader requests for information through the process defined in the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPOP).

In 2020-2021, we did not receive any requests for information through FOIPOP.

Election Commission

Established under the *Act*, the members of the Election Commission may make recommendations and may provide advice to the CEO on the administration of elections, the electoral finance regime, on piloting a procedure or technology, or studies on electoral matters. The Election 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.

Between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, the Election Commission met virtually to advise the CEO on current and emerging electoral issues five times on the following dates: February 11, May 7, June 18, August 27 and December 3.

The Progressive Conservative representatives, George White, and Stephen Taylor were both re-appointed on October 21, 2020, for a two-year term.

The appointment of Liberal representative Ellen Burke expired on December 1, 2020. On April 6, 2021, Colin Fraser was appointed as a Liberal representative for a two-year term.

The chart below provides the current membership for the Elections Commission

CHAIRPERSON: Vince MacLean

Nova Scotia Liberal Party	Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia
Jane O'Neill	Don Fraser	George White
Colin Fraser	Jill Houlihan	Stephen Taylor

Readability

ENS is committed to making our reports easy to read and understand. To achieve this, we measure readability through the Flesch-Kincaid grade level tool and work to improve the readability of our public facing materials. The Flesch-Kincaid tool measures the years of schooling that is estimated to be needed to understand a document. We strive for our reports to be high school level 12.0 range.

This report is grade 11.9 which is within our acceptable range.



Elections Nova Scotia Financial Report

2020-2021 is the second year that ENS has included an independent audited financial statement in our annual report. An independent audit provides greater accountability for financial reporting. Integrating an independent audit into our annual reporting process helps increase transparency regarding the use of public funds.

Independent Auditors' Report

To the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Nova Scotia:

Opinion

We have audited the expenditures of Elections Nova Scotia (the "Organization") for the year ended March 31, 2021 and notes to the financial report, including a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information (together "the financial report").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report presents fairly, in all material respects, the expenditures of the Organization for the year ended March 31, 2021 in accordance with Canadian public sector accounting standards and other explanatory information.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial report section of our report. We are independent of the Organization in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Canada, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Emphasis of Matter – Basis of Accounting

We draw attention to Note 1 to the financial report, which describes the basis of accounting. The financial report is prepared to provide transparency to electors on its expenditures. As a result, the financial report may not be suitable for another purpose. Our opinion is not modified in respect of this matter.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer.

Our opinion on the financial report does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial report, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial report or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. We obtained the Annual Report of the Chief Electoral Officer prior to the date of this auditor's report. Based on the work we have performed on the other information obtained prior to the date of this auditor's report, if we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Report

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial report in accordance with Public Sector Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

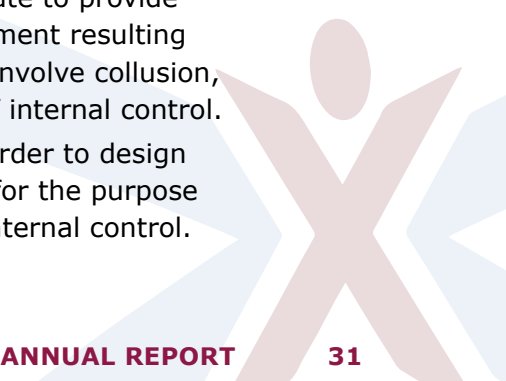
In preparing the financial report, management is responsible for assessing the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Organization or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control.



- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates, if any, and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Organization's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Organization to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia
September 2, 2021

MNP LLP

Chartered Professional Accountants

Elections Nova Scotia Financial Report

For the year ended March 31, 2021

1 Elections Nova Scotia

Summary of 2020-2021 current year costs by category (\$)

Cost Centre Description	2020-21 Budget	YTD Budget	Actual	Variance (deficit)	
Cost Centre – Covid Segregated	Budget	Forecast	YTD	Variance Vs Budget	Variance Vs Forecast
300021 - Administration	2,594,000	2,594,000	2,577,948	16,052	16,052
300022 – By-Election	-	175,000	168,271	(168,271)	6,729
300437 - Service Delivery	3,044,000	3,044,000	2,198,400	845,600	845,600
300443 - Public Funding	725,000	725,000	723,811	1,189	1,189
COVID-19 - Administration	-	-	4,897	(4,897)	(4,897)
COVID-19 - Service Delivery	-	800,000	656,935	(656,935)	143,065
Total (Note 2)	6,363,000	7,338,000	6,330,262	32,738	1,007,738

2019-2020 Comparison (\$)

Cost Centre Description	2019-20 Budget	YTD Budget	Actual	Variance (deficit)
300021 – Administration (Incl. relocation)	2,716,000	2,716,000	2,609,635	106,365
300022 – By-Election	820,000	820,000	1,013,326	(193,326)
300437 – Service Delivery	344,000	344,000	382,765	(38,765)
300443 – Party/EDA Funding	725,000	725,000	709,106	15,894
Total (Note 2)	4,605,000	4,605,000	4,714,833	(109,833)

2 By-Election Activities

Reported in 2020-2021 for elections that took place on March 10, 2020

Description	Cape Breton Centre	Truro-Bible Hill-Millbrook-Salmon River
Candidate Elections Expense Reimbursement	\$61,209	\$78,803
Candidate Audit Fee Subsidy	2,539	3,139
Returning Office Cost	100,520	122,930
Total By-Election Cost	\$164,268	\$204,872
Number of Electors on List (unaudited)	12,484	15,819
Total Cost per Elector	\$13.16	\$12.95
Operation Cost per elector	\$8.05	\$7.77

3 Annual registered party reporting including renewal of registration, audited financial statements, ENS financial reporting including the Contribution Report are due on or before April 30, 2021

Name of Party	Filing Date
Nova Scotia Liberal Party	April 30
The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia	April 30
Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	April 24
Green Party of Nova Scotia*	May 4
The Atlantica Party Association of Nova Scotia*	May 26

* *deadline extended to May 26, 2021*

4 Financial Statement Summary – Registered Parties
 Audited Financial Statement Summary for Calendar 2020:

	The Atlantica Party Association of Nova Scotia	Green Party of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Liberal Party	Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia
Income					
Contributions	7,916	11,949	874,834	346,885	479,849
ENS Public Funding	2,382	19,545	278,202	120,070	251,801
Transfers	-	-	(465,026)	(266,372)	(116,583)
Other	1,117	-	170,668	286,817	191,629
	11,415	31,494	858,678	487,400	806,696
Expenses					
	4,570	22,129	674,370	378,319	718,089
Surplus (deficit)	6,845	9,365	184,308	109,081	88,607
Assets					
	4,935	51,078	973,581	644,991	916,160
Liabilities					
	7,564	8,352	253,989	149,527	256,185
Net Worth	(2,629)	42,726	719,592	495,464	659,975
	4,935	51,078	973,581	644,991	916,160



2019 Comparative:

	The Atlantica Party Association of Green Party of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Liberal Party	Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia
Income					
Contributions	10,091	10,104	401,964	281,645	295,560
ENS Public Funding	2,990	19,126	272,618	146,063	245,748
Transfers	121	-	(116,120)	(179,807)	(61,584)
Other	1,173	1,819	221,745	153,970	134,740
	14,375	31,049	780,207	401,871	614,464
Expenses	11,912	17,856	699,445	546,507	495,348
Surplus (deficit)	2,463	13,193	80,762	(144,636)	119,116
Assets					
	1,353	41,618	1,045,934	585,074	827,686
Liabilities					
	10,807	8,257	510,650	198,691	256,318
Net Worth					
	(9,454)	33,361	535,284	386,383	571,368
	1,353	41,618	1,045,934	585,074	827,686

Note: These balances were audited by other firms of Chartered Professional Accountants.

5 Annual Public Funding by year

Fiscal Year	Green Party of Nova Scotia	Nova Scotia Liberal Party	Nova Scotia New Democratic Party	The Atlantica Party Association of Nova Scotia	The Progressive Conservative Association of Nova Scotia	Total
2011-2012*	14,771.99	171,941.28	285,990.35		155,144.20	627,847.82
2012-2013*	15,155.90	176,409.73	293,422.74		159,176.13	644,164.50
2013-2014*	15,428.70	239,083.06	298,704.34		168,337.47	721,553.57
2014-2015*	5,722.42	308,361.66	181,050.88		177,531.14	672,666.10
2015-2016*	5,757.70	310,262.78	182,167.10		178,625.66	676,813.24
2016-2017*	5,828.26	314,065.02	184,399.54		180,814.70	685,107.52
2017-2018*	16,525.64	318,057.38	186,743.60	2,281.51	230,507.13	754,115.26
2018-2019*	18,927.02	269,411.18	146,794.60	2,776.04	243,845.16	681,754.00
2019-2020	19,227.46	273,687.56	147,458.88	2,820.10	247,715.72	690,909.71
2020-2021	19,650.28	279,706.14	150,701.62	2,882.12	252,163.16	705,103.32

*Unaudited

6 Tax Credits by year 2009-2021*

Fiscal Year	Political Contributions Tax Credit (Personal Income Tax)
2009-2010 (Unaudited)	\$1,066,700
2010-2011 (Unaudited)	\$636,800
2011-2012 (Unaudited)	\$695,700
2012-2013 (Unaudited)	\$995,300
2013-2014 (Unaudited)	\$1,501,900
2014-2015 (Unaudited)	\$736,100
2015-2016 (Unaudited)	\$764,800
2016-2017 (Unaudited)	\$841,900
2017-2018 (Unaudited)	\$1,131,600
2018-2019 (Unaudited)	\$891,109
2019-2020 (Unaudited)	\$807,881
2020-2021 Estimate	\$1,034,000

*Source: Nova Scotia Department of Finance and Treasury Board



Notes to the Financial Report

For the year ended March 31, 2021

1 Basis of accounting

Elections Nova Scotia has prepared this financial report to provide transparency to electors on its expenditures. The organization has prepared the financial report under Public Sector Accounting Standards using the cash basis of accounting for all expenditures except payroll, which has been accrued. The financial report may not be suitable for any other use.

2 Expenses by segment

Elections Nova Scotia applies professional judgement when determining activities that should be grouped as segments. Management identifies segmentation based on major functional classifications of activities undertaken which include administration, by-elections, service delivery and party/EDA funding. The nature of each segment is described below:

Administration: This encompasses the administration costs of Elections Nova Scotia.

By-Elections: This encompasses the costs to administer elections in Nova Scotia.

Service Delivery: This encompasses costs to perform projects and enhancements to be prepared for up-coming elections.

Party/EDA Funding: This encompasses the funding provided by the Province of Nova Scotia annually to each party directly through annual payments.

Administration (including COVID-19)	2021	2020
Miscellaneous	-	31,460
Salaries and benefits	1,924,738	1,811,765
Travel	3,398	28,120
Professional/special services	24,686	37,176
Supplies and services	74,917	83,389
Other	555,106	618,237
Chargeable to other departments	-	(511)
Total	2,582,845	2,609,635

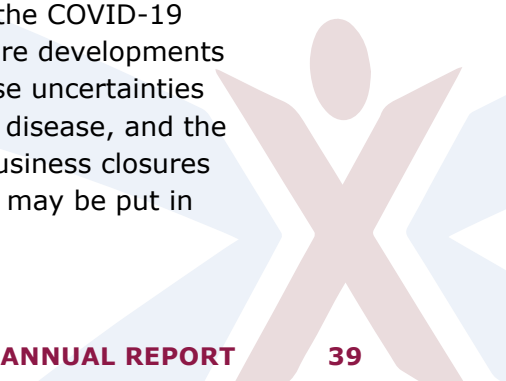
By-Elections	2021	2020
Salaries and benefits	103	526,359
Travel	-	-
Candidate expenses	148,573	269,496
Professional/special services	16,247	83,570
Occupancy	-	46,896
Other	3,348	87,005
Total	168,271	1,013,326

Service Delivery (including COVID-19)	2021	2020
Salaries and benefits	563,630	63,168
IT Hardware	1,291,247	156,857
Professional/special services	153,565	68,779
Other	846,893	93,961
Total	2,855,335	382,765

Party / EDA Funding	2021	2020
Professional services	714,881	690,910
Other	8,930	18,196
Total	723,811	709,106

3 COVID-19

In March 2020, there was a global outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus), which has had a significant impact on all entities through the restrictions put in place by the Canadian, provincial and municipal governments regarding travel, operations and isolation/quarantine orders. At this time, it is unknown the extent of the impact the COVID-19 outbreak may have on Elections Nova Scotia as this will depend on future developments that are highly uncertain and cannot be predicted with confidence. These uncertainties arise from the inability to predict the ultimate geographic spread of the disease, and the duration of the outbreak, including the duration of travel restrictions, business closures or disruptions, and quarantine/isolation measures that are currently, or may be put in place by Canada and other countries to fight the virus.



Elections Nova Scotia Organizational Chart

