

Weaving the Threads:

**A Lasting
Social Fabric**



Our Framework for
Social Prosperity



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Executive Summary

Virtually every government department has something to do with social prosperity. We can either let the threads of these individual mandates and business plans dangle—or worse, tangle—or we can weave them together in ways that are practical and line up with the fabric of people’s lives.

That’s what a social prosperity framework is about: co-ordinating related activities and working effectively together—in this case, supporting social prosperity, now and into the future.

The framework defines

- social policy, meaning the values, strategies, and actions that most directly affect people
- social sustainability, meaning we want the same—and hopefully better—quality of life for future generations
- social prosperity, meaning how we live, what we do, and how we do it (our quality of life)

Social prosperity—and how individuals, families, and communities can contribute to it—is the framework’s foundation. In discussing how people can meet their shared responsibilities, we also recognize the need to remove barriers to social inclusion that can limit people’s ability to contribute to and benefit from a prosperous, sustainable society.

Further, this framework demonstrates how social prosperity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability are linked and depend on each other. As such, efforts in these three areas must also weave together in a way that supports sustainable prosperity and self-reliance, within the New Nova Scotia.

The framework sets a vision for 2020, where “every Nova Scotian has the opportunity to live well and contribute in a meaningful way within a province that is caring, safe and creative—now and into the future.”

We will get to that vision through our goals relating to health and well-being, lifelong learning, access and inclusion, citizenship development and engagement, and safety and security. The vision and goals are based on guiding principles, relating to our strengths, our need to be forward looking and adaptable, our shared responsibilities and growing self-reliance, and accountability.





All strategies based on this framework are expected to identify and report on progress, linked to clear, measurable outcomes. Further, accountability for the framework is placed at the highest levels within government. The Minister and Deputy Minister of Community Services, in partnership with all social policy ministers and deputies, will be responsible for monitoring this framework, and its links to related strategies and action plans. This effort will also be integrated with the work of the Deputy Ministers' Forum on Sustainable Prosperity.

We expect Nova Scotians will agree with the importance of having and communicating a vision and goals for the future. We also expect—indeed they have repeatedly told us—that they want us to work together more effectively and co-ordinate our efforts.

But Nova Scotians will also want to know in clear, concrete terms how this vision will have meaning in their everyday lives, and how we plan to make things happen. Priorities for the upcoming year include

- children and youth
- crime prevention and reduction
- health promotion and health care (for example, shorter wait times)
- poverty reduction
- labour force development

As strategies and action plans in these policy areas are laid out, our vision will become increasingly meaningful to Nova Scotians. Further, as we more tightly weave our efforts in economic and social prosperity, Nova Scotians will see, and can measure our success in sustaining prosperity now and into the future.

Introduction

The Purpose of a Social Prosperity Framework

Virtually every government department has something to do with social prosperity. We can either let the threads of these individual mandates and business plans dangle—or worse, tangle—or we can weave or knit them together in ways that are practical and line up with the fabric—the logical and practical progression—of people’s lives.

That’s what a social prosperity framework is about—co-ordinating related activities and plans by working collaboratively together.

Consciously or unconsciously, Nova Scotians see and experience examples of collaboration and co-ordination in their communities every day. Yet they are often frustrated by circumstances where that collaboration is less evident. This is what leads to concerns about the “system failing” or people “falling through the cracks.”

We want Nova Scotians, through the social prosperity framework, to see and have confidence in our commitment to work as a tightly woven system.

Further, we want Nova Scotians to understand that social and economic prosperity are linked and depend on each other. So, efforts within our frameworks for social and economic prosperity must also weave and work together.



Weaving the Threads

Social Prosperity

Health, Well-being
Lifelong Learning
Access, Inclusion
Safety, Security
Citizenship

Economic Prosperity

Workforce Development
Fiscal Responsibility
“Green” Economy
Infrastructure
Energy



Weaving the dangling and tangling threads through effective co-ordination and collaboration will result in a lasting social fabric that supports sustainable prosperity and self-reliance. This defines the New Nova Scotia (see the government business plan, www.gov.ns.ca/businessplan).



Social policy is about the values, strategies, plans, and actions that most directly affect people.

It begins with solid, sound social policy. This, in turn, supports social sustainability and, ultimately, social prosperity. Finally, weaving social and economic planning together—keeping careful management of our environment in mind at every stage—supports sustainable prosperity for our people and our province.

Social prosperity and sustainable prosperity sound like bureaucratic buzzwords at their best. For students off to university, for a painter creating his or her next masterpiece, for the community volunteer, or for the family struggling to make ends meet—how are these words really relevant, and what do they really mean?

Our framework begins by presenting a common understanding of these and related terms, based on their meaning and practicality in Nova Scotians' everyday lives.

Social Policy

Social policy is about the values, strategies, plans, and actions that most directly affect people—individually and in their relationships and networks with their friends, families, and communities. For example, good social policy can enable

- expectant parents to stay healthy
- children and young people to learn and grow into healthy, educated, responsible citizens
- seniors to live in good health and in dignity
- everyone—at all ages, with differing abilities and needs, and from all cultures and ethnicities—to contribute to and participate in society

Logically, then, good social policy supports social sustainability.

Social Sustainability

In reviewing the research, we found that the concept of social sustainability is not only new for most Nova Scotians, it is relatively new within literature. In its social development plan, the City of Vancouver has done what they describe as “pioneering work” in this area.

They define social sustainability this way:

For a community to function and be sustainable, the basic needs of its residents must be met. A socially sustainable community must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future.

In plainer language, we want the same—and hopefully better—quality of life for future generations as we have or want for ourselves.

Social sustainability promotes social prosperity. We have built on some of the thinking around social sustainability, to develop our definition of social prosperity.

Social Prosperity

Social prosperity—and how individuals, families, and communities can contribute to it—is the foundation of this framework.

Understanding social prosperity begins with understanding economic prosperity—because economic prosperity is a relatively familiar term.

While economists relate it to technical terms such as gross domestic product, fiscal capacity, or the business climate index, average Nova Scotians understand economic prosperity as it relates to how many people are working, what businesses are opening or closing, or even the taxes they pay.

As a province, we introduced an economic growth strategy in 2000. That strategy was updated in 2006. The vision for the strategy, called *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity*, is, “a thriving Nova Scotia that is the best place in Canada to live, work, do business, and raise families.” That vision is clear and reflects people’s basic understanding of economic prosperity.

Social prosperity is a less familiar term. Again, economists have measures for social prosperity, but what should it mean to Nova Scotians?

First, social and economic prosperity go hand in hand. Social prosperity touches on the same themes found within the vision for economic prosperity—most specifically, a province that is a great place in which to

We want the same—and hopefully better—quality of life for future generations as we have or want for ourselves.





Social prosperity is about people: how we live, what we value, what we do, and how we do it.

live, work, and raise families. Because social prosperity, in its most basic definition, is about people: how we live, what we value, what we do, and how we do it. It is also about our culture and the quality of life we cherish today and seek to enhance for future generations. This reflects definitions we found in our research, such as that presented by the Dufferin County Social Prosperity Project:

a community's ability to maintain a high quality of life and a good standard of living for its citizens, and provide access to employment opportunities, community services, health care, adequate housing, and education.

Obviously, then, social and economic prosperity depend on each other. For example, high-quality health and education systems and safe, clean, vibrant communities help us attract new businesses, investors, researchers, and others who can drive our economic prosperity. In turn, we need a strong economy to have the money to maintain social services and enhance our social prosperity.

The Caledon Institute of Policy describes this as “a virtuous circle”:

Investments in health and education, in particular, are important in their own right because they help Canada attract the highly qualified talent that drives innovation; workers and their families want to live in safe, clean communities with high quality services. A healthy and educated population also attracts investment. A “virtuous circle” is thereby created. Good economic policy creates the wealth to address social priorities that, in turn, fuel more innovation and economic growth.

With this in mind, we define social prosperity in this way:

Maintaining our quality of life, while having the capacity to create, recognize, and seize opportunities that can improve the quality of life for ourselves and future generations.

This definition recognizes that to have true social prosperity, that prosperity must be sustainable. It means carefully weighing each and every request and realigning our expectations so they are driven by needs, not wants—just as we do in setting priorities and making spending decisions in our everyday lives.

For a government, social prosperity also means making some hard decisions between meeting needs and wants—and between immediate gain and the long-term interests of people and the province.

Understanding and making the link between social and economic prosperity is what leads to sustainable prosperity.

Sustainable Prosperity

Sustainable prosperity is a critical priority in determining the future of our province. For that reason, a Deputy Ministers' Forum on Sustainable Prosperity has been created. They define sustainable prosperity as

*Meeting today's needs without compromising tomorrow,
and working together for a smart, competitive economy
and a healthy, vibrant environment for individuals, families,
and communities.*

Once again, this demonstrates the need to closely link our plans and activities to support both social and economic prosperity. This definition also makes one more critical link, to conservation and environmental sustainability—in other words, putting the old saying “waste not, want not” into practice.

This year, Nova Scotia proclaimed legislation aimed at making the province one of the cleanest and most sustainable environments in the world by 2020. This act recognizes that a healthy environment contributes to a healthy economy and to our long-term social prosperity.

Our Shared Responsibilities

Last, but not least, social policy, sustainability and prosperity will be achieved only if responsibilities are shared.

They are shared

- by individuals who take actions that directly influence their social well-being
- by communities that—through the organizations, networks, and thinking they encourage and support—either promote or inhibit social prosperity
- by government, responsible for leadership in
 - setting policies and priorities based on consultation, research, and proven results
 - allocating funding that supports these policies and priorities
 - being transparent in processes and accountable for results

Waste not,
want not.





We also share responsibility for working more effectively together.

This means

- collaborating effectively within government, among governments and communities, and among individuals within our communities (this includes building bridges of understanding and respect among the diverse communities of Nova Scotia)
- co-ordinating and delivering programs and services (more commonly described by Nova Scotians as “breaking down the silos”) based on how people organize and live their lives, not on how government departments or community organizations limit or write their mandates

We understand that social inclusion is key in enabling Nova Scotians to meet their shared responsibilities. We have reviewed the research on social inclusion and exclusion, including some excellent work by Dennis Raphael in *Poverty and Policy in Canada*. The issue was also highlighted within the Nova Scotia Justice Minister’s Task Force Report on Safer Streets and Communities.

Specifically, the task force cites an article by Janet Guildford, the Public Health Agency of Canada, entitled *Making the Case for Social and Economic Inclusion*. In it, she says:

To be included is to be accepted and to be able to participate fully within our families, our communities and our society. Those who are excluded, whether because of poverty, ill health, gender, race or lack of education, do not have the opportunity for full participation in the economic and social benefits of society.

This includes meaningful, inclusive consultations and partnerships. This ranges from focusing efforts to celebrate the heritage of, strengthen partnerships with, and remove barriers that have challenged our First Nations, African Nova Scotian, and Acadian communities to giving all Nova Scotians a greater voice in the decisions that affect them.

Building on Our Capacities

Certainly, our immediate responsibilities in meeting the basic needs of our residents must never be lost. But that must be paired with an individual and collective willingness to maintain and build on our own capacity and resources, so we have the resiliency to prevent or respond to challenges that face us now and into the future.

Three “types” of resources are available to build social prosperity: individual capacity, family capacity, and community capacity.

Individual Capacity

Individual capacity refers to what individuals—young and old, of varying interests, abilities, and backgrounds—can contribute to their own well-being, to the well-being of their communities, and to our province as a whole. Individual contributions vary and reflect a wide range of factors, including education, skills, health, values, and attitudes (e.g., willingness to contribute). What and how individuals contribute is also influenced by the social and economic barriers they may face on a daily basis, so taking steps to remove those barriers through social inclusion is absolutely critical.

Maintaining and expanding individual capacity can be achieved by

- *developing and upgrading skills; pursuing opportunities for personal development and learning:* Skills and continuous learning can be gained by participating in formal education and training; working; pursuing personal interests; visiting a library, gallery, or museum; volunteering; and in meeting your day-to-day responsibilities (e.g., managing a household, caring for a sick friend or relative).
- *pursuing suitable employment opportunities:* This reflects a fundamental belief that those who are able to work, should work (when the right opportunities exist) before looking to others for assistance. This is becoming increasingly important as our population ages and our economy grows. Beyond the social benefits, these trends demand that government, educational institutions, employers, unions, communities, and individuals work together to remove barriers that prevent traditionally under-represented groups from participating in the workforce.
- *expressing oneself creatively and culturally:* This can provide personal satisfaction and build self-esteem, as well as contribute to the beauty and vibrancy of our communities.
- *taking advantage of appropriate, affordable, accessible recreation, leisure, and cultural facilities:* Such facilities are intended to support our physical, social, and emotional well-being, and we can benefit significantly from taking advantage of them.





- *actively participating in our communities and respecting the rights of others:* This is about citizen development, where people understand
 - the principles of equality, dignity, and justice
 - how what we do today affects tomorrow
 - the purpose of laws
 - our rights and responsibilities within a local, national, and global context

Practical examples include participating in or leading a community organization, coaching little league, obeying the law, and exercising our right to vote.

Family Capacity

Family capacity refers to the characteristics and resources of individual family members—and of family members supporting each other. When individual characteristics and resources are combined, a family is more able to recognize its strengths and work on solutions to its challenges. This helps families move through life transitions successfully as a unit and promotes the well-being of each member at different stages in their lives.

Families can be defined in many different ways, and our definitions continue to expand. For example, more families are headed by a single parent or same-gender parents. More families are challenged by separation and divorce. We have foster families, blended families, and families without children. As well, grandparents, who years ago more often lived with their children and grandchildren, now live elsewhere.

Ways to maintain and enhance family capacity include

- *promoting active and healthy living to the fullest extent possible for all family members:* This ranges from taking babies for immunizations, to going for regular checkups, to taking family walks.
- *fostering a love of learning:* This includes reading to children and reading yourself, promoting regular school attendance, and going to a community play or visiting the local library.
- *role-modelling to promote social responsibility and instilling a sense of values:* You are your child's first and lifelong teacher. This is most critical and most evident in instilling values and ethics, encouraging appropriate behaviour, and supporting the consequences of inappropriate behaviour.
- *reaching out for help when help is needed:* All families need support at times, and some need more help than others. All families should be encouraged to reach out for that help (and should be able to find that help) when help is needed.

- *sharing advice, resources, and experience*: Families always are stronger when they can rely on each other. This is most significant during times of transition or crisis (e.g., a child is off to day care or university, mom or dad are starting a new job, or a family is coping with the loss of a family member).

Community Capacity

Community capacity includes the relationships, networks, infrastructure (e.g., transportation system), and practices that collectively improve quality of life now and into the future. Nova Scotia's community development policy defines community as "a group of people who live and interact in a specific geographic area or people with shared cultures or common interests." Further, our community development policy captures principles that define what we mean by community capacity. Those principles include

- *local leadership*: The community leads its own development, based on its strengths and local values and in partnership with government.
- *partnerships and shared interests*: Community development engages the necessary partners at the community and government levels and defines a common vision.
- *inclusion*: All community members, regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, language, or social or economic status have the opportunity to become engaged in the community development process and are able to access its social and economic benefits.
- *healthy, safe workplaces*: Most people spend as many or more of their "awake" hours at work than at home. Feeling well, valued, and safe—and having an appropriate home–work balance—are critical in attracting workers and supporting quality of life in communities.
- *volunteerism*: Community development values, respects, nurtures, and encourages volunteerism.
- *balance*: Community development builds on a balanced approach that addresses and integrates economic, social, environmental, and cultural considerations.
- *transparency and accountability*: Public confidence and participation in community development are supported by transparency, accountability, and evidence-based decision making.

Further, arts and culture are playing increasingly significant roles in promoting and developing community capacity, particularly as it relates to our economy and how our workplaces are organized. This is documented in Richard Florida's 2002 best seller, *The Rise of the Creative Class*.



The notion of creativity must be broadly used, not just to refer to the production of a new artistic object or form, but to problem-solving in every imaginable field. Far from being germane to the arts alone, creativity is vital to industry and business, to education, and to social and community development.
 –World Commission on Culture and Development, UNESCO

Where We Want to Go

Vision

While progress on specific priorities and action plans can be made and monitored over the short term, significant, meaningful, system-wide change in society and in social prosperity takes time. Our vision is based on where we want to be as we move toward 2020:

Every Nova Scotian has the opportunity to live well and contribute in a meaningful way within a province that is caring, safe, and creative—now and into the future.



Common Threads—Our Goals

To reach this vision, we have identified five connecting threads—essentially, our goals:

Health, Well-Being: All Nova Scotians have access to the information, services, care, and support they need to be as physically and mentally healthy as they can be.

Lifelong Learning: All Nova Scotians have opportunities to gain useful skills, knowledge, and experience that contribute to their personal growth throughout their lives.

Access, Inclusion: The talents and contributions of all Nova Scotians are recognized, valued, and celebrated—and all Nova Scotians have equitable access to opportunities to meet their full potential and contribute to our social prosperity.

Citizenship Development, Engagement: All Nova Scotians have meaningful, relevant opportunities to contribute to their communities and to understand their shared responsibility for their individual and collective well-being.

Safety and Security: All Nova Scotians are and feel safe in their communities and workplaces and feel secure in meeting their own basic needs, either by themselves or with support.

Weaving our goals and common threads successfully—through effective co-ordination and collaboration—will create a lasting social fabric to sustain our province.

But these threads must not be allowed to fray or unravel. Our guiding principles should help keep those threads entwined.

Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles are based on what Nova Scotians value, on today's realities—in Nova Scotia, nationally, and internationally—and on our definition of social prosperity.

Recognizing and relying on our **strengths** is the best way to achieve and sustain social prosperity.

Our decisions and actions must be **forward looking**, with investments based on what we know and can predict about the future.

Our strategies and plans must be **adaptable**, so we can continue to move forward despite inevitable, unpredictable change. We must also be **innovative** and **creative**, so we can draw on our strengths to transform unpredictable challenges into new opportunities.

Everyone **shares responsibility** to contribute to our social prosperity and to grow **self-reliance** for our people and our province.

We have a shared **accountability for results**, beginning with government leadership in reporting progress on our key social priorities.



Connecting the Threads— A Conceptual Framework

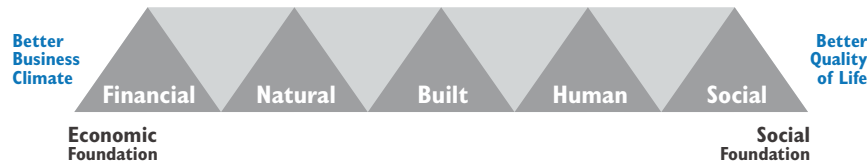
We have already talked about how the threads of our social policy weave together. We have also talked about how our plans for economic and social prosperity must go hand in hand.

But sustainable prosperity won't just happen. Concentrated and co-ordinated effort is needed to weave our vision, goals, and principles together in a way that supports sustainable prosperity. *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* presents a pyramid that can serve as our common pattern.



The Foundation

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity uses five building blocks—known as “capitals of productive capacity”—as the foundation for growth: financial, natural, built, human, and social. Words like “capital” and “productive capacity” are not how we commonly talk about social policy, but when we take a close look at their meaning within the context of social prosperity, their relevance becomes abundantly clear.



The definitions of these capitals within the economic context can be found in *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity*. They all work together to support a **better business climate**.

Definitions of Capitals within a Social Context

Financial: The money available to deliver and sustain social programs and services.

Natural: Our environment, which contributes to our quality of life (from recreation, to peacefulness, to job opportunities, to cultural inspiration) and attracts new people to our province.

Built: Our infrastructure—schools, universities and colleges, Internet connections, community clinics and hospitals, nursing homes, libraries and museums, and child-care centres—which contributes to how we live and enjoy life.

Human: Our family, friends, and neighbours, whom we rely on, socialize with, and care about.

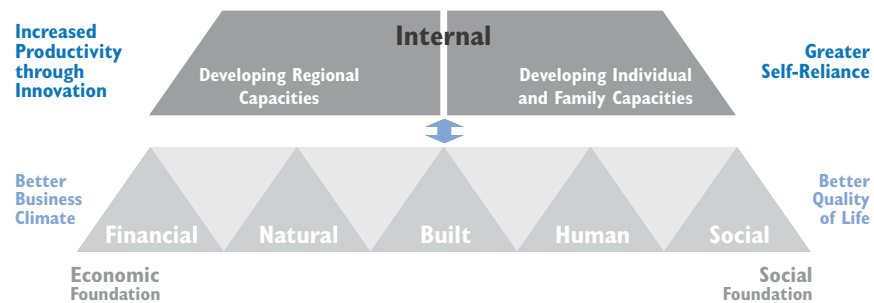
Social: The interrelationships among us—again, as families, friends, neighbours, citizens, government, and agencies—which create networks as we live and work together in ways that support greater self-reliance and social prosperity.

They all weave together to support a **better quality of life**.



Moving Up the Pyramid: Internal

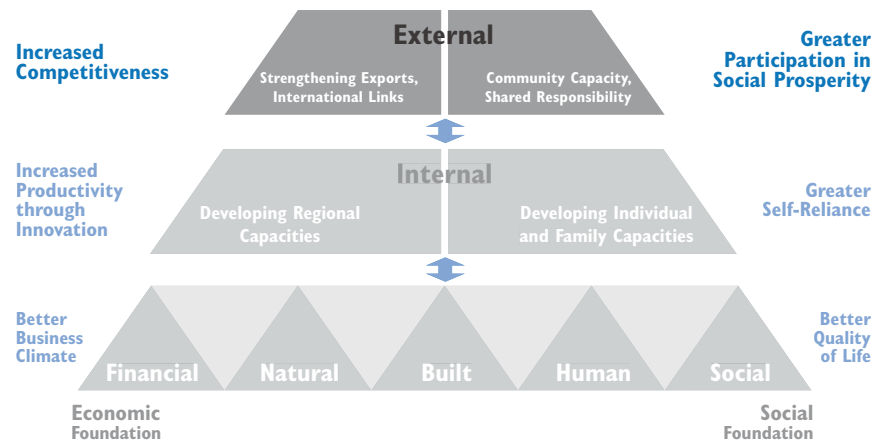
The next tier of the pyramid presents what must happen “internally.”



Within the context of social prosperity, the “internal” tier focuses on individual and family capacity (see pp. 13 to 15)—in other words, on what we can do ourselves and with those closest to us to support our self-reliance and personal development.

Moving Up the Pyramid: External

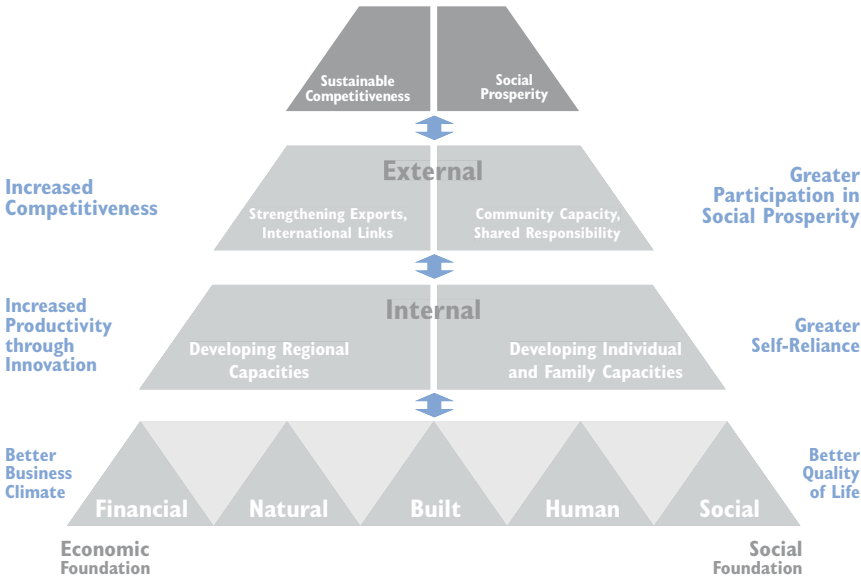
The next tier presents what must happen “externally.”



In the social context, the “external” tier focuses on community capacity, in particular, on how people and communities live and work together—in partnership with governments, employers, and other organizations—sharing responsibility in ways that help all of us participate more fully in a prosperous society.

Moving Up the Pyramid: Social Prosperity

The next tier speaks to quality of life, through sustainable competitiveness and social prosperity.



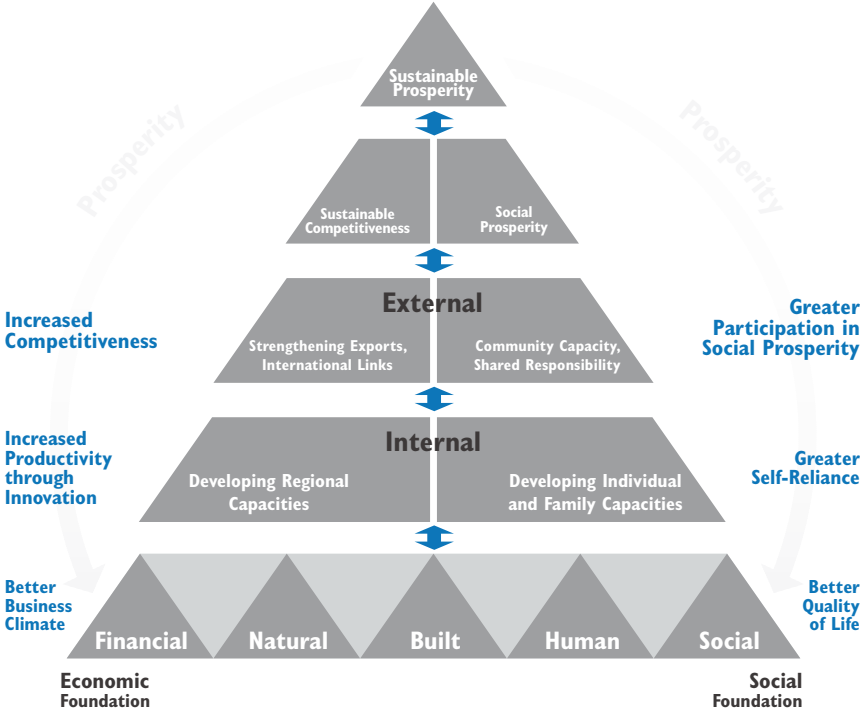
Sustainable competitiveness is defined as “finding a way to ensure that we are competitive and successful for the long term in a way that can be maintained today and into the future.” *Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity* goes on to say that sustainable competitiveness is also about “our health, education, our environment, and our social standards.”

In short, it speaks of quality of life.

Social prosperity means maintaining our quality of life, while having the capacity to create, recognize, and seize opportunities that can improve the quality of life for ourselves and future generations.

Bringing It All Together—Sustainable Prosperity

The goal on reaching the top of the pyramid is sustainable prosperity.



Sustainable prosperity can be truly achieved only through a co-ordinated, collaborative effort to balance economic development, social development, and environmental protection. That’s what we are doing—in principle and in practice—within the New Nova Scotia.

Context

The context for our social prosperity framework is set by what's important to Nova Scotians and by social trends and demographics.

What Nova Scotians Value

We've gathered a lot of information through consultations on a wide range of social policy issues in recent years. Those consultations concerned education, health, seniors, supports for individuals with disabilities, immigration, economic growth, and most recently, safe communities.

One common theme continues to emerge. Nova Scotians place a high value on maintaining and sustaining our **quality of life**. Quality of life means different things to different people. The themes emerging from the consultations help define "quality of life" for Nova Scotians:

- People increasingly understand the importance of and the relationships between the many factors that make people healthy. They want a greater focus on preventing illness and injury and **promoting wellness**. But Nova Scotians also expect the **health care** they need to be there when they are sick.
- They want great **schools** for their children when they are young, and great **colleges and universities** as they mature.
- They want **meaningful opportunities to participate** in their communities—in leadership roles, in community networks, in work, and in culture and recreation.
- **Independence** is key to quality of life, but some—at some times or throughout their lives—need support to maintain that independence.
- Nova Scotians want to feel **safe** and to be safe. That involves sharing responsibility for keeping communities safe, but Nova Scotians also expect tough laws and clear consequences for breaking them.

Three themes were also repeated: **accessibility, equity, and inclusion** for people of all ages and abilities, cultures, and communities. This reflects perhaps the most defining characteristic of Nova Scotians—caring about and respecting our neighbours. In other words, Nova Scotians want the opportunities they expect for themselves to be available to all Nova Scotians.

Finally, Nova Scotians remind us that governments spend their money. They expect us to do so with the same prudence that they use in managing their own budgets. In government terms, this means

- setting priorities for investment based on **research, demonstrated need**, and evidence of what works
- delivering programs and services **cost-effectively** and **collaboratively**
- being **open, transparent, and accountable** for results

Most significantly, Nova Scotians expect us to waste nothing. This is the foundation for sustainable prosperity.



Social Trends and Demographics in Nova Scotia

<i>Social Trends, Demographics</i>	<i>Examples of Social Policy Implications</i>
<p>Who We Are We are increasingly diverse, well educated, and older and face greater health challenges—and we are fewer in number.</p>	
<p>Our population is becoming <i>increasingly diverse</i>.</p>	<p>Immigrants bring new perspectives, talents, and investments to our province. At the same time, we cannot ignore the fact that past social policies have fallen short, in particular, in enabling greater self-reliance and prosperity for African and First Nations Nova Scotians. Social policy must include programs and services that are “culturally competent,” in other words, opportunities developed with and relevant to people from our diverse cultures.</p>
<p>We are <i>generally well educated</i>. In 2006, our high school graduation rate was 85 per cent, up 6 percentage points from 2001. About 61 per cent of Nova Scotians (age 25 and older) had some form of post-secondary education, up from 45 per cent since 1990.</p>	<p>Providing a high-quality education is critical to achieve and maintain sustainable prosperity. For example, education helps prepare people for leadership roles in their communities and supports overall productivity needed for economic growth. In partnership with our high-quality post-secondary institutions, we must continue educating our young people, as well as focus on how our institutions can support the needs of the workforce.</p>





<p><i>Our adult literacy rates are the highest in Atlantic Canada—but lower than we want them to be. About 4 out of 10 Nova Scotians are below the literacy level needed to function effectively in a knowledge-based economy.</i></p>	<p>People who are working—but with a literacy level below what is needed in a knowledge-based economy—may not feel confident or be secure in their jobs. Once again, this requires partnership solutions among government, educational institutions, employers, unions, and individual workers.</p>
<p><i>Our population, generally, is aging. People aged 65 or older now represent 15.1 per cent of the population. The population of seniors is expected to increase by 70 per cent within the next 20 years.</i></p>	<p>Much attention has been paid to the “costs” associated with aging, but there are also significant benefits. For example, seniors are the most generous segment of the population, giving more of their time and money through volunteerism and charities. Forward-thinking social policy must consider how seniors can contribute positively to our prosperity (for example, policies that support seniors who want to work or live at home longer), as well as how to respond to their needs with respect for their lifelong contributions.</p>
<p><i>First Nations and African Nova Scotians are generally “younger”—with 50 and 45 per cent of their population, respectively, being under age 25, compared to 31 per cent of Nova Scotians generally.</i></p>	<p>Given that these communities are also under-represented in the workforce, great potential exists to identify opportunities to ensure that First Nations and African Nova Scotians have access to the workforce now and into the future.</p>
<p><i>Our population faces greater health challenges. For example, Nova Scotia has the highest rate of deaths from most cancers and chronic lower respiratory disease in Canada.</i></p>	<p>This affects the quality of life of Nova Scotians and increases the cost of delivering one of our most expensive services. It also requires us to look at the reasons behind these statistics and to develop policies aimed at preventing disease and caring effectively for those with health conditions.</p>

Our population has a higher rate of people with disabilities: 17.1 per cent in Nova Scotia, compared to 12.4 per cent nationally.

We need to understand the reasons why this rate is higher. We need to also understand the impact of this rate on individuals—and how social policy can remove barriers and support greater independence, self-reliance, and quality of life.

Overall, our population is declining. While our population decline is slight (0.1 per cent this year), our death rate has now surpassed our birth rate. Contrary to this overall trend, our First Nations population is growing quickly—between 1996 and 2001, by 42 per cent.

If we are to effectively respond to the impact of population decline, we must provide opportunities for Nova Scotians—particularly young Nova Scotians—to work and live at home. We have to entice skilled workers who come here, to stay here. And we must recognize that everyone has something to contribute—for example, by tapping into the energy and enthusiasm of our youth and the experience and wisdom of our seniors, by taking advantage of the adaptability, creativity, and innovation of persons with disabilities, and by bringing others who are typically under-represented into our workforce.



What We're Doing

More of us are working, working longer, and earning more. Fewer of us are volunteering (but are doing so for longer hours), and more of us are moving into or closer to metro Halifax.

More of us are working—and working longer. From 1997 to 2006, the number of full-time jobs increased by 18.6 per cent, and part-time jobs by 4.4 per cent. Over that same time frame, our unemployment rate dropped by 4.3 percentage points, from 12.2 per cent to 7.9 per cent.

While this has a positive impact on income and economic performance levels now, we are facing or projecting skills shortages in key areas. This is compounded by demographic projections showing fewer people overall—and therefore, a potentially smaller labour pool to draw from.



Fewer people are volunteering, but doing so for longer hours. Almost half of all Nova Scotians volunteer, and while the number of volunteers is dropping, volunteers are contributing 32 per cent more hours, making Nova Scotia the third-leading province in number of volunteer hours.

While the long hours volunteers give is a positive, we must consider the potential for burnout. As well, if more people stay in the workforce longer, the challenge to recruit volunteers could increase. This could be particularly significant in African Nova Scotian communities, where 75 per cent of local organizations rely on volunteers to build self-reliance.

More of us are living in Halifax Regional Municipality, while many rural communities are experiencing a decline in population. The population in Halifax Regional Municipality grew by 8.7 per cent from 1996 to 2006; counties within 90 minutes of Halifax experienced stable or slight growth; and many rural counties experienced declines (ranging from 3.2 to 18.2 per cent).

While growth in urban areas drives a corresponding growth in services, declining populations do not make the people remaining there any less deserving. We must find innovative, creative ways to deliver high-quality social programs and services in our rural communities. Further, we must consider the impact of this population shift on urban life, for example, the impact on and response to crime.

Where We Need to Do More

Some individuals and communities continue to struggle. We must work with them to support greater self-reliance and quality of life.

More people are earning more, yet low-income families are struggling. Overall, personal income per capita has increased by 4.2 per cent between 2005 and 2006. As well, the percentage of Nova Scotians living in low-income situations is the lowest it has been in 25 years—declining by more than 35 per cent between 1996 and 2005. At the same time, 81,000 Nova Scotians live in low-income situations, down from 91,000 in 2004.

These statistics—and the reasons behind them—influence the priorities and directions of social policy, for example, within Nova Scotia’s poverty reduction strategy, which is being developed.

Overall crime rates are declining, yet violent and youth crimes are on the rise. Crime generally went down by two per cent in 2006, following a 5 per cent drop the year before. The overall rate of youth accused of crime went up by 10.2 per cent between 2003 and 2006, and the rate of youth accused of violent crime went up by 4 per cent.

These statistics influence the priorities and direction within the crime prevention and reduction strategy.



Assets

Our People

Our province is home to more than 930,000 people who are diverse in many ways.

- *In culture and ethnicity:* From our First Nations and from families tracing roots to early European settlers, to African Nova Scotians who have lived here for generations, to our newest residents, coming from countries around the world.
- *In skills, talents, and interests:* From our artists, adventurers, advocates, and artisans, to our labourers, learners, and leaders, to our civil servants and community volunteers—we see innovation, hard work, and creativity.
- *In abilities:* From our children to our seniors, from people who are able-bodied to people with disabilities, we all have strengths to contribute and celebrate and challenges to cope with and conquer.

Amid this diversity, we also share common ethics, values, and bonds:

- *Our ethics:* We are hard working, and we care about and look out for our neighbours.
- *Our values:* We value and respect children and families and have a strong sense of tradition, heritage and faith.
- *Our sense of place:* We feel a strong connection to and within our communities.

Our Communities

We benefit from strong relationships within and among

- *our volunteer agencies:* religious and recreational groups, firefighters, local fundraisers, etc.
- *our community agencies and centres:* both for-profit and not-for-profit
- *our businesses, employers, labour and community economic development groups*
- *our institutions:* our educational, training, and health-care institutions, cultural centres, etc. (e.g., universities, community colleges, hospitals, clinics, libraries, family resource centres, theatre groups)
- *our local government organizations:* at the municipal level (e.g., councils, school boards, and health authorities and boards, etc.) as well as among different levels of government (municipal, provincial, federal, and First Nations)

The relationships—both formal and informal—vary within each community. Where the networks are strongest is generally where we see the strongest communities.



We all have strengths to contribute and celebrate, and challenges to cope with and conquer.

Our Natural Environment

The beauty of our province is obvious, and recognized around the world.

Whether we are climbing Cape Smokey as the autumn leaves paint the Cabot Trail, savouring the scent and scenery during apple blossom season, marvelling as the sun dips over our ocean playground, or simply enjoying the view outside our windows, the beauty of our natural environment contributes significantly to our quality of life.

Our natural environment supports unlimited opportunities for outdoor fun and recreation, winter and summer. It draws first-time and frequent visitors from around the world. And the advantage of “city life” with “country living and opportunities” only a short drive away is one of the major reasons immigrants choose our province as their new home.

Our natural environment is also rich in resources—employing approximately 17,000 Nova Scotians in our traditional and emerging industries.



Our Fiscal Management and Economic Performance

As recognized through improved credit ratings by international bond agencies and confirmed by our own statistics, Nova Scotia’s plan for sound fiscal management and debt reduction is on track and showing results.

- We’ve had six consecutive balanced budgets.
- We are relying less and less on Ottawa, with equalization, as a percentage of total revenue continuing to drop.
- We introduced an aggressive debt-reduction plan and are ahead of schedule.

Similarly, our economic performance remains strong.

- Our unemployment rate remains low, and employment levels continue to increase.
- Nova Scotians’ personal disposable income increased by 4.2 per cent between 2005 and 2006.

Realities and Challenges

Our social prosperity framework is rooted within what we can control and influence—our own strengths and assets. Just as important, we must be flexible and adaptable to those factors outside of our control. That begins with identifying and recognizing realities and challenges—not trying to hide from them.

Our People

While our people and communities—their talents and their resilience—are our greatest strengths, we recognize that some individuals and families struggle at certain times, or throughout their lives. Some communities also face persistent or transitional challenges. If we accept, rather than avoid, this reality, our strengths will help us effectively respond so all Nova Scotians are reflected in our vision and supported through our goals.

National Policies and Issues

We are committed to self-reliance—and we are making progress.

We also believe in prosperity from coast to coast to coast, where Nova Scotia—through its own social and economic prosperity—is positioned to contribute to the well-being of Canada, and indeed the world.

Within the national context, federal budget decisions, legislation, and policy present different challenges and opportunities in different ways, at different times. Part of our leadership role is to pursue a federal-provincial partnership that is respectful and built on a regular exchange of information about Nova Scotia's position on social and economic issues.

Global Trends and Influences

What happens internationally has a significant impact on what happens here in Nova Scotia.

Population Trends

While our population is declining, other countries—particularly developing countries—are bursting at their seams. These countries need help, and as part of a country that prides itself on helping neighbours in the broadest sense, we want to do our part.

This means opening our doors to those who need and are seeking new lives and opportunities for themselves and their families. This is not only the right, the humanitarian, and “neighbourly” thing to do. It is also an opportunity for us to bring new people, new ideas, and new talent into our province. The fact is, if we do not open our doors and say welcome, other provinces will do so and reap the rewards.



International Competition

Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity speaks clearly to issues relating to international markets and competitiveness.

International competitiveness—in this case, for the professionals, leaders, and researchers we need to provide services, make decisions, and drive innovation—also has a direct impact on our ability to deliver high-quality social programs and to reach our goal of sustainable prosperity.

Some examples include our ability to

- recruit and retain professionals to deliver health, education, and social services
- keep our young people here at home
- deliver services affordably

Our universities and community colleges also play a key role in our international competitiveness and are a valuable asset, bringing newcomers, new revenue, and new ideas to our province. Of course, they are also a critical thread in our efforts to train and develop the minds of our young people who will be our workers and leaders of the future.

Through international marketing of our post-secondary education system, we can bring more international students to our campuses, where they become more familiar with all that our province has to offer. This, in turn, could influence them to make Nova Scotia their home. Further, all of our students benefit from studying with more international students by becoming more aware of the world around them and building vital connections within a global economy.

The Stresses on Our Natural Resources

Here in Nova Scotia, we are among international leaders in recycling and in understanding the importance of conserving our resources and “living green.” But as we live our lives day to day, most of us still do not think twice if we want to shower a couple of times on a very hot day, or we’re not likely to walk back a block if we remember we left a light on.

The stresses on our natural world are rapidly changing this. Even on the Australian continent and in developed and advanced nations in Europe, their realities make that second shower a day very rare and the need for the walk back to turn off the light very clear.

We cannot wait until we must take those steps. We should take them because it is the right thing to do—in the interests of our world neighbours and in the realities we will very soon face here at home.



What's Working Now

While the social prosperity framework is a forward-looking document to shape the development of future strategies and action plans, it is informed by related consultations and research already undertaken. As such, it is not surprising that many plans and activities already under way are fully consistent with the social prosperity framework.

The following are some examples of strategies and plans that are already advancing us toward our goals. While other examples exist, these represent efforts where collaboration and co-ordination are most evident.

Goal 1 – Health, Well-Being: All Nova Scotians have access to the information, services, care, and support they need to be as physically and mentally **healthy** as they can be.

- Public Health Renewal
- Primary Health Care Renewal
- Workplace Health Strategy
- Healthy Eating Strategy
- Continuing Care Strategy

Goal 2 – Lifelong Learning: All Nova Scotians have opportunities to gain useful **knowledge, skills, and experience** that contribute to their **personal growth** throughout their lives.

- Early Learning and Child Care Plan
- Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together
- Skills Nova Scotia Framework
- Creative Nova Scotia—How Arts and Culture Can Help Build a Better Nova Scotia

Goal 3 – Citizenship Development, Engagement: All Nova Scotians have **meaningful, relevant opportunities to contribute** to their communities as **responsible citizens** and understand **their shared responsibility** for their individual and collective well-being.

- Community Development Policy
- Voluntary Planning Task Forces
- Action Plan on Volunteerism
- Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum
- Community Action Partnerships with African Nova Scotians
- Immigration Strategy



Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada to be recognized by the National Quality Institute for providing a healthy workplace for our civil servants.

Goal 4 – Safety, Security: All Nova Scotians are and feel **safe** in their communities and feel secure in meeting their own basic needs, either by themselves or with support.

- Helping Kids, Protecting Communities: Government’s Response to the Nunn Commission
- Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities
- Workplace Violence Initiative
- Minimum Wage Review Committee
- Affordable Housing Initiatives

Goal 5 – Access, Inclusion: The talents and contributions of all Nova Scotians are **recognized, valued, and celebrated**—and all Nova Scotians have **equitable access** to opportunities to meet their full potential and contribute to our social prosperity.

- Strategy for Positive Aging
- Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal
- University Tuition Reduction Plan
- Diversity Roundtable



Measuring Our Progress, Accountability

Nova Scotians expect governments to be transparent. That includes being open about delays and accountable for progress. All strategies based on this framework are expected to identify and report on progress, linked to expected, measurable outcomes.

Accountability for this framework is also key. The Minister and Deputy Minister of Community Services, in partnership with all social policy ministers and deputies and supported by senior officials, will be accountable for monitoring this framework and its links to related strategies. This effort will be integrated with the work of the Deputy Ministers’ Committee on Sustainable Prosperity. Further, this framework will be used in developing and reporting on government’s corporate business plan and as part of the decision-making process when evaluating government priorities.

Conclusion

We expect that Nova Scotians will agree with the importance of having and communicating a vision and goals for the future. We also expect—indeed they have repeatedly told us—that they will welcome efforts for greater collaboration within government, and with and within communities.

But Nova Scotians will also want to know

- how we are going to reach this vision?
- how will talk of this vision have meaning in their everyday lives?
- how are we going to make things happen?

Those questions will be answered in the strategies and action plans that are developed and released, based on this framework. While the vision is long term, we have set priorities for this year, including

- Strategy for Children and Youth
- Crime Prevention and Reduction Strategy
- Shorter wait times for health services
- Drug Strategy
- Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Family Pharmacare Program
- Labour Force Development Agreement
- Caregivers' Strategy

As these and future strategies and action plans are laid out, our vision will become increasingly clear and meaningful to Nova Scotians. Further, as we more tightly weave our efforts in economic and social prosperity, Nova Scotians will see, and can measure, our success, in sustaining prosperity now and into the future.



Appendix A: Related Strategies and Actions

Framework, Strategy, or Action Plan	Description
<i>Action Plan on Volunteerism</i>	<p>The Nova Scotia government values, respects, and actively supports the volunteer sector. Volunteers and volunteer organizations are essential to the planning and delivery of most community-based programs and services. The Volunteerism Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee (VICC) is working with a broad range of stakeholders and sectors to develop and implement a volunteerism plan for Nova Scotia that addresses such issues as volunteer capacity, tools and resources, and training needs. The goal is to strengthen and support the volunteer sector and thereby enable its vital contribution to the quality of life of Nova Scotians, to our communities, and to our province.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/volunteerism.html</p>
<i>Affordable Housing Initiatives</i>	<p>There are a range of programs that provide affordable housing for people with low to moderate incomes, some of which are cost-shared with the federal government.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/coms/housing/index.html</p>
<i>African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnerships</i>	<p>The African Nova Scotian Community Action Partnerships was launched in May 2007. The program will seek advice from African Nova Scotians through an advisory volunteer group. The partnerships will give African Nova Scotian communities a chance to discuss issues and future projects and a forum for bringing their solutions to government. The partnerships will offer a valuable opportunity for people with an interest or expertise in a subject area to contribute to their community.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/ansa/default.asp</p>
<i>Community Development Policy Initiative</i>	<p>The Nova Scotia Community Development Policy Initiative is a framework for building stronger, healthier, more prosperous communities in Nova Scotia. Government recognizes that sustainable communities are essential to the continued prosperity of our province. We have created this policy to guide us in our efforts to promote and support community development projects province wide.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/econ/cdpolicy/</p>





<p><i>Comprehensive Workplace Health Strategy</i></p>	<p>The Comprehensive Workplace Health Strategy for Nova Scotia is a 10- to 15-year plan to create thriving workplaces that are healthy, safe, and productive. Implementation of the strategy will help workplaces incorporate CWH into their vision, business strategy, and organizational culture. Successful implementation of the strategy will ultimately help to improve organizational outcomes (e.g., decreased absenteeism, decreased injuries, better job retention, higher productivity, customer satisfaction, etc.) and individual outcomes (e.g., improved health status, better quality of life, more job satisfaction, etc.).</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/index.asp</p>
<p><i>Continuing Care Strategy</i></p>	<p>The Continuing Care Strategy is a 10-year plan to enhance and expand Nova Scotia's continuing care system. By building on current community support, increasing local solutions, and ensuring that care options are available when and where they are needed, the strategy aims to create a system that supports Nova Scotians in their desire to live well in a place they can call home.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/health/ccs/ccs_strategy/default.htm</p>
<p><i>Creative Nova Scotia—How Arts and Culture Can Help Build a Better Nova Scotia</i></p>	<p>The goal of the culture report is to strengthen connections across the sector, promote connections between culture and other sectors such as health and education, and increase public awareness of the value of culture to a healthy society. In response to this report, created by the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council, government is addressing the recommendations and has developed a committee with senior representation from key government departments to review all the recommendations in this plan and determine how best to focus existing and identify new resources to grow the culture sector in Nova Scotia.</p> <p>www.nsacpc.com</p>
<p><i>Diversity Roundtable</i></p>	<p>The Diversity Roundtable is a collaborative interdepartmental forum whose purpose is to support and promote the corporate human resource goal to be a representative public service that is an inclusive, culturally competent organization that values diversity. The Diversity Round Table includes champions of key stakeholder communities from central agencies, line departments, and offices.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/psc/diversity</p>

<p><i>Early Learning and Child Care Plan</i></p>	<p>This plan is intended to ensure that all children enjoy a good start in life, nurtured and supported by caring families and communities and to lay the foundation for a flexible, equitable child-care system. With a focus on the needs of Nova Scotia families, the 10-year, made-in-Nova Scotia, Early Learning and Child Care Plan will add more day-care spaces, increase subsidized spaces, and provide ongoing support for our child-care sector.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/coms/families/elcc.html</p>
<p><i>Healthy Eating Nova Scotia Strategic Plan</i></p>	<p>Healthy Eating Nova Scotia is a strategic plan to address nutrition-related health issues. The strategic plan outlines four priority action areas: breastfeeding, children and youth, fruit and vegetable consumption, and food security.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/repPub/HealthyEatingNovaScotia2005.pdf</p>
<p><i>Helping Kids, Protecting Communities: Government's Response to the Nunn Commission</i></p>	<p>This document outlines government's response to the Nunn Commission and includes provincial action and partnerships for streamlining justice administration and improving accountability, toughening the Youth Criminal Justice Act, and preventing youth crime.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/just/documents/NunnResponse.pdf</p>
<p><i>Immigration Strategy</i></p>	<p>Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy charts the key directions required to ensure that we value and welcome immigrants and their economic, social, and cultural contributions, now and in the future. The implementation of the strategy will focus on attracting and retaining immigrants, supporting a welcoming community, and integrating immigrants into daily life.</p> <p>www.novascotiaimmigration.com</p>
<p><i>Learning for Life II: Brighter Futures Together</i></p>	<p>This is a four-year plan for public school education. The plan includes actions to set higher standards for learning and teaching, help all students succeed in school, develop healthy and active learners, address time to teach and time to learn, measure and report success, and strengthen partnerships.</p> <p>http://www.brighterfuturestogether.ednet.ns.ca/</p>





<p><i>Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia–Canada Tripartite Forum</i></p>	<p>The Mi'kmaq–Nova Scotia–Canada Tripartite Forum is a partnership between governments (Mi'kmaq, federal, and provincial) aimed at strengthening the relationship and furthering the social and economic prosperity of Mi'kmaw communities in Nova Scotia. The forum provides a conduit for government to develop approaches, strategies and initiatives in collaboration with the Mi'kmaq that address the fundamental social and economic issues facing Mi'kmaq communities.</p> <p>www.tripartiteforum.com/</p>
<p><i>Minimum Wage Review Committee</i></p>	<p>This bipartite committee reports annually to the Minister of Environment and Labour with recommendations about the minimum wage. In 2007–2008, at the Minister's request, the committee is researching the feasibility of a multi-year plan for increases and a formula for setting the minimum wage.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/enla/employmentworkplaces/</p>
<p><i>Public Health Renewal</i></p>	<p>The Department of Health Promotion and Protection is leading a comprehensive and long-range planning process throughout the Nova Scotia public health system aimed at preventing illness and injury and promoting and protecting health. The renewal strategy is aimed at improving the health of all Nova Scotians and at reducing the disparities in health status.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/index.asp</p>
<p><i>Primary Health Care Renewal</i></p>	<p>Primary health care is the first and continuing point of contact for Nova Scotians with the health-care system. It focuses on promoting health, preventing illness, managing chronic diseases and treating people when they are sick. The primary health-care plan is well under way, with improvements such as nurse practitioners working throughout the province, diversity and social inclusion initiatives, and information management. The expansion of interdisciplinary teams and the introduction of self-management support for people living with chronic disease are also in the works.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/health/primaryhealthcare/default.htm</p>

<p><i>Services for Persons with Disabilities Renewal</i></p>	<p>The Services for Persons with Disabilities Program provides services for children and adults with an intellectual disability, a long-term mental illness, a physical disability, or some combination of the three. The goal is to provide a range of programs that support people at various stages of their development and independence. The program has been under review, and with additional investment by government, progressive strides have been made in providing a more responsive, accessible, and sustainable system of supports for Nova Scotians with disabilities. Work continues with a review of residential programs, planning for enhancements to adult day programs, and the implementation of a funding strategy for service providers.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/coms/disabilities/index.html</p>
<p><i>Skills Nova Scotia Framework</i></p>	<p>The Skills Nova Scotia Framework provides the basis for advancing the province's vision of a world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow. There are three fundamental goals: meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market, provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians, and strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities.</p> <p>http://skillsnovascotia.ednet.ns.ca/index.shtml</p>
<p><i>Strategy for Positive Aging</i></p>	<p>The Strategy for Positive Aging is a long-term guide to helping all sectors create senior-friendly communities and prepare for an aging population. Several goals and action items are outlined in the strategy document.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/scs/positiveaging.asp</p>
<p><i>Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities</i></p>	<p>The Minister's Task Force on Safer Street and Communities was made up of 25 volunteer community members from diverse backgrounds. The task force explored best practices at home and abroad and identified ways to support communities that are making efforts to address situations that have a negative effect on their neighbourhoods. The task force submitted its final report to the Minister of Justice in May 2007.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/just/minister/safer_streets.asp</p>





<p><i>University Tuition Reduction Plan</i></p>	<p>The province has committed to a multi-year program to make university education more affordable for Nova Scotia students, through lowering undergraduate tuition fees by more than \$1,000 over a four-year period (2007–2008 to 2010–2011). This plan will bring Nova Scotia tuition fees to the national average by 2010–2011.</p> <p>www.ednet.ns.ca/</p>
<p><i>Voluntary Planning</i></p>	<p>As a citizens' policy forum, Voluntary Planning engages Nova Scotians on the important policy questions facing our province and reports the results to government. Voluntary Planning establishes task forces and project committees, made up of Nova Scotians with a variety of experiences and perspectives, to engage all Nova Scotians in a dialogue on important policy issues.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/vp/Index.html</p>
<p><i>Workplace Violence Initiative</i></p>	<p>In April 2007, Nova Scotia launched its workplace violence prevention strategy. The strategy, led by Environment and Labour, is a multi-faceted approach for dealing with violence in workplaces in Nova Scotia. It is designed to engage employers and employees to ensure that workplaces remain safe and productive. The strategy builds on elements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act to achieve improved outcomes in relation to an organization's health and safety objectives and ongoing consultation with employees.</p> <p>www.gov.ns.ca/enla/employmentworkplaces/</p>