



*NS Advisory Council on the Status of  
Women*

*Business Plan*

*2009-2010*

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## *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

### *Message from Minister*

The status of women has changed for the better. More of us attain higher education and better jobs. We make up nearly half of Nova Scotia workers. More of us are involved in policy and law. We are entering public life, representing diversity and experience. Maternity and paternity leaves and benefits, family illness benefits, policies encouraging respectful and healthy workplaces -- these are wins for all Nova Scotia families.

Other advances? Violence against women is on the permanent agenda of governments, through initiatives such as the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee, the Sexual Assault Services Planning Group, partnerships on family violence in Aboriginal communities and on interagency committees. We have moved from a culture of victim-shaming, secrecy, and blame to public awareness about violence, ceremonies to remember victims, and new work to assess and develop strategies to address sexual assault. Sex and gender are now recognized as important health determinants and crucial factors in health research.

Yet there remain barriers to a better life:

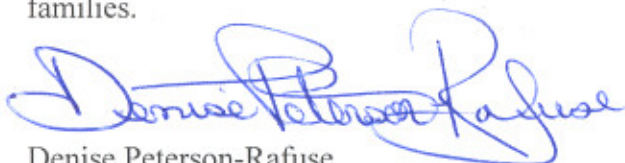
- Not enough women are involved in political participation.
- Many women have low income levels due to low-paying jobs and not enough education for well-paying work.
- Violence against women and girls is a continuing challenge that must be stopped.

This business plan outlines Council's goals and strategies for addressing these issues.

The principle of inclusion runs through all agency work. Council members and staff seek input from women, through roundtables and committee work on women's work and economic security and poverty, caregiving and respite, health and well-being, and domestic violence and sexual assault. This feedback is a key part of policy development and Council's processes for gathering information from women is a valuable resource for government.

The principle of inclusion also means Council members and staff participate in community and government meetings, strategies, and initiatives.

Council's connections with women shape its programs and products, for instance the need for resource guides and workshops on respite care, domestic violence, and political participation. Statistical reports and research help inform policy development across government and can be the hook for expanding public conversations about continuing challenges facing women and their families.



Denise Peterson-Rafuse  
Minister responsible for the administration  
of the *Advisory Council on the Status of Women Act*

## *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

### *Message from Chair*

In July 2008, Council members and staff held a planning retreat in Bear River, to discuss what we will take on during the next five years, and to ensure programs respond to the needs, experiences and challenges facing Nova Scotia women. We confirmed that our four goals and associated programs – increasing women’s participation and inclusion in leadership, improving their economic security, addressing violence, and improving health and well-being – will improve the status of women through targeted actions where we can make a difference.

Since the retreat, the financial security of some Nova Scotia families has been threatened by a sea change in the economy. So where can Council make a difference during 2009-2010? On projects and partnerships that will ensure women and their families can swim rather than sink through the rough waters.

By expanding the Bread and Roses Bursary Fund at the community level, we’ll be able to help women who are entering or continuing their studies in sciences, trades and technology. We will also get the word out about the successes and challenges for women doing paid and unpaid work, and their economic security.

By planning a forum on women, entrepreneurship and the green economy we can increase the capacity of women and their communities, for prosperity. By gathering women to discuss home-based business and technology for women who have disabilities, we can help build their capacity for long-term security.

These are some of the ideas that came out of that planning meeting in July, and they make a lot of sense six months later in an economic downturn.

We will continue to provide input into the Poverty Reduction Strategy, the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee, the sexual assault needs assessment and followup actions, and other government and community collaborations.

The role of chair moves to another Council member in April 2009. It has been a privilege to serve and connect with women across the province, to deepen my understanding of issues facing women today, and to be part of an agency that’s working to improve the equality, fairness and dignity of women everywhere.



Liz Chisholm  
Chair

# *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

## **1.0 Mission**

To advance equality, fairness and dignity for all women in Nova Scotia

### ***Vision***

A province where all women enjoy full equality

- where women of diverse cultures, races, religions and sexual orientation participate in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities ... where women sit in equal numbers on municipal councils and in the legislatures
- where legislation, policies and programs of governments reflect that equality, both in law and in fact
- where women's earning power equals that of men ... where women are welcomed in all professions and trades ... where household work and child care is valued by all and shared equally by women and men
- where women do not have to fear violence in their homes, workplaces or communities
- where women's health and well-being is a priority for women, health care services and government

### ***Mandate***

The mandate of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women derives from the statute establishing the Council. Section 4(1) requires the Council to advise the Minister and to bring forward the concerns of women in Nova Scotia. Section 4(2) defines the powers of the Council, which may:

- receive and hear petitions and suggestions concerning the status of women
- undertake and recommend research on matters relevant to the status of women
- recommend and participate in programs concerning the status of women
- propose legislation, policies and practices to promote equality of opportunity and status
- publish reports, studies and recommendations

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### **2.0 Links to the “7 Commitments that will make life better for today’s families”**

Council’s programs are directly aligned with four main goals. They are fiscally sustainable, align with government’s **7 Commitments** and help build the province we want for our families.

The four programs outlined below are guided by the principle of inclusion of women in all their diversity, with particular attention to those who are historically disadvantaged and marginalized, due to race, ethnicity, family status, sexual orientation, disability, and other factors.

<b>Council Programs</b>	<b>Strategic Goals</b>
Women in Leadership	<p>To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families and communities</p> <p>Links to decisions and delivery on <b>all 7 Commitments</b></p>
Women’s Work and Economic Security	<p>To promote women’s economic equality, specifically these priorities: expose girls and women to occupations where they are under-represented, particularly in science, trades and technology; highlight importance of women’s paid and unpaid work, through initiatives such as the Bread and Roses Bursary.</p> <p>Links to <b>Commitment 1 -- Create the secure jobs that Nova Scotia’s economy needs and 3 – Ensure more young people stay and build a life here in Nova Scotia</b></p>
Women’s Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence	<p>To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families, specifically these priorities: contribute to the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee by formulating policy and program recommendations to address violence against women; develop policy and program recommendations to address the needs of victims of sexual violence</p> <p>Links to <b>Commitment 5: ...keep communities strong – Increase and stabilize funding for Transition Houses and Women’s Centres</b></p>
Women’s Health and Well-Being	<p>To improve the health and well-being of women and their families, specifically these priorities: Make evidence-based recommendations to provincial and federal governments, and to professional and community audiences about the support needs of women in care-giving and care-receiving roles and through academic, community, and government partnerships, build knowledge and skills in the promotion of women’s health among students, researchers and community members, and communicate the results to relevant target audiences.</p> <p>Links to decisions and delivery on <b>all 7 Commitments</b></p>

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### **Council Program: Women in Leadership**

#### **Links to all Commitments, but especially ...**

- 1. Create the secure jobs Nova Scotia's economy needs*
- 5. ... keep communities strong – Increase and stabilize funding for transition houses and women's centres*

Increasing the political participation of women at all levels of government and all areas is key to ensuring government builds communities that are responsive to the needs of the population.

One opportunity for women in rural areas and where they are greatly under-represented is running for political office. Council will hold its fifth Nova Scotia Campaign School for Women during 2009-2010.

We will continue to partner with community organizations and women's centres, national organizations – such as Equal Voice, the National Organization of Immigrant and Visible Minority Women of Canada, YWCA, Girl Guides of Canada and others – to increase the participation of women in decisions that affect their lives.

The evolution of our website will expand access to information and publications, with particular attention to the possibilities of social media to enhance outreach opportunities in communities across the province.

### **Council Program: Women's Work and Economic Security**

#### **Links directly to Commitments ...**

- 1. Create the secure jobs Nova Scotia's economy needs*
- 3. Ensure more young people stay and build a life here in Nova Scotia*

Achieving economic equality for women continues to be a central goal for Council. Paramount to achieving this is the inclusion of women in all their diversity in programs that enhance and expand their employment opportunities. Projects will expand women's understanding of opportunities in trades, technology, and sciences – a main route to higher paying jobs. To that end, we'll work with partners to expand the Bread and Roses Bursary Fund.

We will work with our partners at Labour and Workforce Development to raise awareness about training programs and their impact on women regarding changes in labour market agreements and new opportunities.

Through effective partnerships with government, community and women's organizations, industry, and labour, Council will increase opportunities for women's economic well-being, and the recruitment and retention of women in trades and technology. Council provides program advice, direction and implementation assistance to Women Unlimited and Techsploration. These programs support the drive for Nova Scotia to be a Leader in Information Technology.

During 2009-2010, we will hold a forum to encourage women to become leaders and entrepreneurs

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in the green economy. Moreover, building on results from community consultations, Council will work with partners on programs that enable more women with disabilities to enter and succeed in the paid workforce.

### **Council Program: Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence**

#### **Links directly to Commitment ...**

*5. ...keep communities strong – Increase and stabilize funding for transition houses and women's centres*

During 2009-2010, a key role for Council is consulting key informants from diverse communities to develop actions for the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee. We'll also work with community and government partners to improve access to sexual assault services in all parts of the province.

Council will partner with government departments and agencies, community groups and academic institutions, in order to participate in projects aimed at educating and promoting safer homes, streets and communities.

Work will continue with Aboriginal women and their communities, to address violence against women, family violence, and other issues affecting women's health and well-being. We will follow up on recommendations from the National Aboriginal Women's Summit and participate in early planning for the next summit in Nova Scotia.

### **Council Program: Women's Health and Well-being**

#### **Links directly to ...**

*2. Keep emergency rooms open and reduce health care waits*

*5. ... keep communities strong – Increase and stabilize funding for transition houses and women's centres*

*6. Give seniors options for staying in their homes and communities longer.*

A substantial contribution to Nova Scotia's Caregiver Strategy comes from our Healthy Balance Research Program (HBRP), with work underway on the respite needs of families with children with chronically high needs. The *Caregiver's Handbook* and *Priorities for Caregivers* continue to generate initiatives – a provincial respite partnership, education workshops, and a website with Caregivers Nova Scotia. Council and its partners will present findings from the Creating Respite Workshops to government departments, agencies, school boards, and municipalities.

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### **3.0 Planning Context**

The Advisory Council, through the Minister responsible, advises the provincial government on issues of interest and concern to women, and brings those issues forward.

Key to our success in addressing women's concerns are partnership projects with women's centres and transition houses, the Women's Economic Equality Society, YWCA and YMCA programs, Girl Guides, the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, Zonta Clubs, University Women's Clubs, and others. Working with women's groups, federal and municipal governments, community and business organizations, and universities expands our ability to improve the status of women.

#### **Expectations, Needs and Gaps in 2009-2010**

Canada is facing the most challenging economic conditions we have seen in our lifetimes. That reality is still evolving and we do not yet know the changes that will occur.

We do know that the provincial government plans to balance the 2009-2010 budget, and is looking to all government departments, agencies, boards and other funded organizations to constrain expenditures.

We also know there are many economic factors affecting individuals, families, communities, the province and the country:

- ▶ changes to the Canada Social Transfer and equalization payments
- ▶ the global economic downturn –with attendant uncertainties
- ▶ fluctuating fuel and food costs
- ▶ health care challenges due to the inability to recruit human resources, rising medical treatment costs, an aging population and pressures on health system funding

Council is committed to supporting initiatives that will help build the capacity of women and their economic security.

The public, and especially the young public, is turning increasingly to online services and social media for communication. The medium can provide new opportunities for consultations and engagement on issues affecting women and their families. During tough times, it will also be important to continue providing print resources such as *Making Changes, A Book for Women in Abusive Relationships*.

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### **Challenges Facing Women**

Many Nova Scotia women experience multiple disadvantages and inequalities. The Advisory Council has adopted **inclusion as a principle that cuts across all program areas**. Race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and other grounds of discrimination and inequality intersect with gender to multiply disadvantage and increase vulnerability. For example:

- ▶ Although immigrant women, especially those who have immigrated recently, are more likely to have a university education than non-immigrant women in Nova Scotia (60 per cent versus 23 per cent in 2006), they continue to experience a significantly higher unemployment rate than non-immigrant women.
- ▶ Women with disabilities are much less likely to be in the paid work force than women without disabilities. In 2006, labour force participation rates of women with disabilities aged 15 to 64 was 49 per cent while for women without disabilities of the same age it was close to 80 per cent.
- ▶ The incidence of low income among women of African descent is much higher than it is for all women in the province (22.7 per cent versus 7.6 per cent according to the 2006 Census).
- ▶ Aboriginal women in Canada are three times more likely to have experienced spousal violence than non-aboriginal women and they are also more likely to experience the most severe and potentially life-threatening forms of violence compared to non-aboriginal women (54 per cent versus 37 per cent).

Although women in Nova Scotia have made significant advances in many respects, work remains to be done in each of our program areas as demonstrated below.

### ***Women and Leadership***

- ▶ Nova Scotia celebrated 250 years of representational government from 1758 to 2008 through the Democracy 250 initiative. For the first time in history, women occupy 10 of the 52 seats (19.2 per cent) in the provincial legislature. For local governments, the percentages are about 23 per cent of municipal council seats and 3 per cent of mayors. Despite the record numbers of women involved in public life in our province, these numbers are below many jurisdictions in Canada.
- ▶ Women's representation on agencies, boards and commissions continues to be much lower than that of their male counterparts. Currently, only 29 per cent of ABC members in Nova Scotia are women.
- ▶ Drawing young women into leadership and political life is a continuing challenge. Piloting social media opportunities may strengthen outreach to this group.

### ***Women's Work and Economic Security***

- ▶ Women in Nova Scotia continue to face economic inequality. The gap between male and female earnings continues to be significant, regardless of whether women are employed or self-employed. In 2006, women who worked full time in Nova Scotia earned 71.3 per cent of what their male counterparts earned.

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- ▶ Too many women live in poverty. Sole-support mothers are in a particularly difficult financial position, with about half living below the low income cut-offs. In 2005, the median after-tax income of female headed lone parent families in Nova Scotia was \$26,500, while for two-parent families with children it was \$73,000 if there were two earners and \$57,300 if there was one earner.
- ▶ Women with disabilities are significantly less likely to be in the paid labour force. According to the 2006 PALS, less than half (49 per cent) of Nova Scotian women with disabilities who are in their prime working years are in the paid labour force compared to more than 80 per cent of women without disabilities of the same age. (Note these are estimates based on available data (not sex-disaggregated) from 2006 and 2001 PALS, Statistics Canada).
- ▶ At the end of the life cycle, too many Nova Scotian women find themselves in financial hardship because they were not in a position to accumulate pensionable earnings or savings during their lifetime. Unattached seniors are at particularly high risk of living in poverty and older women are much more likely to be unattached than older men.
- ▶ The participation of women and girls in non-traditional careers continues to be alarmingly low. Women currently comprised only 4 per cent (206) of the 5,004 active apprentices in the province, and a large proportion of these (43 per cent) are apprentice cooks. In the past five years, women received 91 of the 3,788 apprenticeship certificates issued (or 2.4 per cent) in the province.

### *Women's Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence*

- ▶ Violence against girls and women in all its forms is highly prevalent in the province. Women in Nova Scotia are about 40 times more likely to be killed by a spouse or intimate partner than they are to be killed by a stranger. Between 1991 and 2005, more than half (56.5 per cent) of female victims of homicide in Nova Scotia were killed by their spouses or intimate partners compared to 9.5 per cent of male victims.
- ▶ The high incidence of sexual assault in Nova Scotia, combined with low reporting and a discouraging response to sexual offences, leaves women in a position of increased vulnerability.
- ▶ In 2004, 8 per cent of women in Nova Scotia indicated they had experienced physical violence at the hands of their current or former spouse/intimate partner within the past five years. Close to two-thirds of intimate partner violence does not get reported to police. Compared to male victims, female victims of spousal assault are more likely to experience more serious forms of violence and suffer more severe physical and emotional consequences.

### *Women's Health and Well-Being*

- ▶ As the number of seniors increases, women face a heightened demand for unpaid assistance and caregiving. Women are predominantly the caregivers to seniors at 61 per cent compared to 39 per cent of men. Moreover, adult daughters assume the greater amount of caregiving responsibility towards parents. Research indicates that this development entails increased stress for women who are in paid work, particularly when they also have children to care for.

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- ▶ In a recent provincial survey on caregiving, 20 per cent of caregivers indicated a range of physical and mental health impacts from physical injury and sleep deprivation to high levels of stress and feelings of hopelessness. The higher the intensity and duration of caregiving, the greater the health consequences.
- ▶ This emerging situation will increase pressure not only on women and their families, but also on employers and government.

### *Challenges for Council*

#### **Increase Visibility, Improve Outreach, Respond to Issues**

The agency will enhance its presence and visibility throughout Nova Scotia by working with Council members in their communities across Nova Scotia, a key resource for outreach. In 2009-2010, our strategy is to identify more ways for Council to bring forward the concerns from women in communities – through film nights, key date events (IWD), roundtables, and online opportunities.

The Federal-Provincial-Territorial Forum of Status of Women Ministers offers opportunities for joint action on issues affecting aboriginal women. At an Iqaluit meeting in July 2007, ministers committed to work on “improving the social, economic and cultural well-being of Inuit, Métis and First Nations women, both on and off reserve.” Work is underway to fulfill this commitment.

Advisory Council publications and information resources are a valued contribution to both government and community users. We continue to update our website and our materials to better serve women and our community and government partners. As new Census data is available, we will be able to continue updating our statistical publications, which are valuable input to several strategic initiatives such as the Long-Term Planning Council, sexual assault services needs assessment, and poverty reduction work.

To increase our capacity to effect change, we will partner with many community organizations throughout the year, on the hypersexualization of women and girls, the green economy, political leadership, and other issues brought forward from our Council members and the community.

#### **Strengths and Opportunities by Core Function**

Our strengths include our dedicated Council members, high-performance staff and trusted partners in community and government. These relationships make it possible to advance equality, fairness and dignity for all women.

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### ***Policy and Research Advice***

- ▶ Respond to policy, programs and consultations in a timely and comprehensive fashion, e.g. staff contributed to the long term planning council gender diversity subcommittee.
- ▶ Provide gender-based analysis and advice, e.g. gender-based analyses for initiatives including HIV /AIDs, Halifax by Design, the Mental Health Commission of Canada, and Statistics Canada.
- ▶ A recognized centre of expertise in women's issues

### ***Information and Education***

- ▶ Requests for publications continue to grow, e.g. *Making Changes* and *Guide for Girls*.
- ▶ Library is a research and resource centre.
- ▶ Website and electronic *Newsbytes* have widespread readership.

### ***Community Liaison and Outreach***

- ▶ Key issues concerning respite, inclusion, family violence and sexual assault, political leadership, etc. are addressed through collaborations, committees, and roundtables. Research and reports from these partnerships enable communities and government to take action together.
- ▶ We're building relationships with Aboriginal women to advance their full participation and equality, for instance through partnering on research in family violence.

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### **4.0 Strategic Goals**

Members of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women have defined the following strategic goals for the agency's work. The goals align with and support work in each of the programs.

- 4.1 To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status
- 4.2 To promote women's economic equality
- 4.3 To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families
- 4.4 To improve the health and well-being of women and their families

### **5.0 Core Business Areas**

The Advisory Council on the Status of Women will carry out its responsibilities through the following three core business areas and four programs.

#### **5.1 Policy and Research**

Advises Minister on concerns and priorities of women, and formulates strategies and options to address these. Conducts quantitative and qualitative research in consultation with academic and community groups and government departments to ensure advice is a feasible, relevant, timely and accurate guide to governmental action.

#### **5.2 Information and Education**

Collects and disseminates information on women's issues to Minister, Council, staff, and other key stakeholders, including media and the general public. Through a comprehensive communications strategy, including an up-to-date website and active library services, Council informs and influences key stakeholders about issues and concerns affecting women, and about Council and government priorities, activities, accomplishments and opportunities for improvement in addressing women's issues.

#### **5.3 Community Liaison and Outreach**

Through Council members and the Community Liaison and Outreach Program, brings forward concerns of women from across Nova Scotia, with particular attention to disadvantaged groups. Partners with communities and agencies to advance equality for women in programs and services.

#### **5.4 Council Programs**

Council has four programs:

- Women and Leadership
- Women's Work and Economic Security
- Personal Safety and Freedom from Violence
- Health and Well-Being

*These programs are inventoried in the Program Inventory and Costing Initiative.*

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### **6.0 2009-2010 Priorities and Performance Measures**

The strategic goals of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women advance equality, fairness, and dignity of all women in Nova Scotia. Our four strategic goals are addressed through four programs, with associated performance measures.

**Strategic Goal 1:** To increase the participation of women in all their diversity in decisions that affect their lives, families, and communities, with particular emphasis on those who face discrimination because of race, age, language, class, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or various forms of family status

The goal of inclusion addresses government priorities in areas of cultural diversity and the social inclusion of all Nova Scotians. It is the policy of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women that this goal will be an overarching one for all the Council's work. No projects or initiatives will be undertaken without a consideration of the ways in which social inclusion and cultural diversity are addressed and ongoing monitoring of the degree to which this objective is realized will be maintained.

#### **Program – Women and Leadership**

*Priority* Increase the participation and numbers and diversity of women in public and political life.

*Strategic Actions:*

- Convey concerns and issues raised by Council to the Minister and to appropriate government departments and agencies.
- Inform women about opportunities for participation in public life.
- Hold the Fifth Annual Campaign School for Women.
- Pilot the use of social media to increase women's participation and engagement in public life.
- Continued engagement and liaison of Canadian Women Parliamentarians (CWP) a network that provides members of parliament and legislatures the opportunity to seek solutions to the special problems faced by the female minority in parliament and legislatures.
- Collaborate with community groups who wish to conduct their own programs related to women's political participation and leadership.

*Priority* Recognize the contribution of women leaders in advancing fairness, dignity and equality of women.

*Strategic Actions*

- Partner with women's groups to mark Women's History Month.

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- Continue showing and distributing Women in the Lead: 4 Films. These films profile women as leaders and will be shown by Council members across Nova Scotia with diverse groups of women.

*Priority* Exercise leadership at the national and international level, by sharing expertise and experience.

*Strategic Actions*

- Complete project with All-China Women’s Federation on China’s policy for educating and training women.
- Collaborate with provincial and national partners to host other national and international delegations as invited to do so.

<b>To increase the participation of women in all their diversity</b>					
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA</b>	<b>TARGET 2009/2010</b>	<b>ULTIMATE TARGET</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>
Council’s work addresses diversity and social inclusion	Proportion of briefs, statistical publications, reports, etc., that address diversity and social inclusion	Year 01-02: 100% Year 02-03: 89% Year 03-04: 100% Year 04-05: 86% Year 05-06: 90% Year 06-07: 100% Year 07-08: 92%	2009-10: 100%	100%	Consistently review Council products for diversity/social inclusion content.
Increased numbers of Nova Scotia women obtain knowledge and skills necessary to participate in public and political life	Number of Campaign School graduates or political skill-building workshop participants	2004-05: 30 (25 from NS, 5 from out of province)  2005-06: 28  2006-07: One political skill-building workshop offered  2007-08: 29 graduates  2008-09: 25 graduates	30 graduates	30 graduates per year	Conduct a campaign school for women interested in standing for political office.

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### **Strategic Goal 2:** To promote women's economic equality

Women's participation in the full range of education, training and occupational opportunities is an integral part of building a learning culture, greater prosperity, and supporting families and Nova Scotians in need within a context of fiscal responsibility and accountability.

### **Program – Women's Work and Economic Security**

*Priority* Expose girls and women to occupations where they are under-represented, particularly in science, trades and technology.

#### *Strategic Actions*

- Plan a forum for women to explore small business opportunities for women's participation in the green economy for early fiscal 2010-2011.
- Work with partners to develop a program to assist the economic integration of women with disabilities.
- Expand the Bread and Roses Bursary program.
- Continued collaboration with partners from government, community, business, colleges and universities in programs for women and girls that increase their exposure to and participation in occupations where they are under-represented.

*Priority* Inform the development and implementation of the province's economic and social policy initiatives through relevant research and policy recommendations.

#### *Strategic Actions*

- Convey concerns and issues from Council to the Minister and appropriate government departments and agencies.
- Monitor, publish and disseminate statistical information on Nova Scotia women's earnings and incomes.
- Participate in F/P/T initiatives related to modernization of maternity and parental benefits.

*Priority* Highlight importance of women's paid and unpaid work.

#### *Strategic Action*

- Collaborate with partners across the province to mark International Women's Day.

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<b>To promote women's economic equality</b>					
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA</b>	<b>TARGET 2009/2010</b>	<b>ULTIMATE TARGET</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>
Increase women's and girls' exposure to and participation in science, trades and technology occupations	Number of girls and women exposed to non-traditional occupations for women*  * Council is one of several partners in this initiative.	Girls (Techsploration): 1998/99 to 2002/03: 48 each year 2003/04: 99 2004/05: 105 2005/06: 103 2006/07: 135 2007/08: 145  Women (Women Unlimited): 2006: 17 2007: 44 2008: 41	150 girls  50 women	150 girls per year  50 women per year	Collaborate with partners from government, community, business, colleges and universities in programs that provide women and girls exposure and participation in occupations in which they remain under-represented

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<b>To promote women's economic equality</b>					
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA</b>	<b>TARGET 2009/2010</b>	<b>ULTIMATE TARGET</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>
Government and community gain a fuller understanding of issues affecting women's paid and unpaid work	# of publications disseminated that relate to women's economic security	Publications downloaded from website: 2004/05: 15,711 2005/06: 14,665 2006/07: 19,447* 2007/08: 7,194** 2008/08 (to end of Feb/09 only): 9,346**	10,000	10,000 per year	Revise and disseminate <i>Money Matters</i>  Disseminate the findings of the <i>Action Plan For the Employment and Economic Well-Being of Women with Disabilities</i>
	# of presentations to government and other audiences	2007-08: 3	3	3	Make presentations to government departments and interested parties
	# of media articles	2007-08: 7	5	5	

Notes: \* The total for 2006/07 is based on 11 months of data as no data is available for March/07 due to technical problem with NS government server tracking software.

\*\* The government server software which enabled us to track our website usage and downloads (LiveStats) ceased operation in March/07. In February/09, it was replaced by a different software (WebTrends). WebTrends allowed us to go back to June/07 for the purposes of calculating website statistics. Hence we have no web-site data for March, April, and May of 2007. The new software, WebTrends, also makes use of more stringent "bot" filters than the previous software, resulting in significantly reduced numbers of downloads than was tracked by the previous software. As a result, we have adjusted our 2009/2010 target and ultimate target to more realistically reflect the statistical results generated by the new website software.

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**Strategic Goal 3:** To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families

### **Program – Personal Safety and Freedom From Violence**

Council is committed to addressing women’s personal safety and freedom from violence. Council staff participate on the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee. In addition, staff participate in a community-university-government project that is developing interventions for domestic violence in aboriginal communities in Nova Scotia.

Staff work collaboratively with community organizations and committees on educational activities related to violence against women. Council developed a partnership with community organizations working in the area of sexual assault in Nova Scotia. This report and its recommendations has been presented to the Minister. Furthermore, in the coming year, issues related to family law as it applies to women leaving abusive relationships will be explored, with recommendations for improved policy and practice brought forward.

*Priority*            Contribute to the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee by formulating policy and program recommendations to address violence against women.

#### *Strategic Actions*

- Convey concerns and issues raised by Council to the Minister and to appropriate government departments and agencies.
- Develop policy and program recommendations.
- Develop education materials and raise awareness about new resources.
- Participate and lead the Inclusion Working Group of the Domestic Violence Prevention Committee.

*Priority*            Make evidence-based recommendations to government and policy-makers for a comprehensive, provincial program for victims of sexual violence.

#### *Strategic Action*

- Develop policy and program recommendations to address the needs of victims of sexual violence.

*Priority*            Work with First Nations communities, governments, and the Mi’kmaq-Nova Scotia- Canada Tripartite Forum to develop culturally appropriate models of prevention and intervention to assist women, families and communities in responding to family violence.

## *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

### *Strategic Actions*

- Participate on the project steering committee and work in partnership with the Mi'kmaq-Nova Scotia- Canada Tripartite Forum; the Office of Aboriginal Affairs; NS Department of Justice, and the Canada Research Chair on Indigenous Peoples based at St. FX University. This participatory project will develop recommendations for culturally appropriate models of prevention and intervention to assist women, families and communities in responding to family violence.
- Respond to recommendations from the F/P/T summit in Newfoundland in partnership with other government departments and aboriginal organizations.

### *Priority*

Mark the 30<sup>th</sup> National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on December 6, 2009.

### *Strategic Actions*

- Hold a commemorative ceremony in Province House the week before December 6.
- Engage faith communities in marking December 6.
- Council members participate in activities to mark the day in their home communities.

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<b>To reduce violence against women and girls in communities, workplaces and families</b>					
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA</b>	<b>TARGET 2009/2010</b>	<b>ULTIMATE TARGET</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>
High use of Council's information materials pertaining to personal safety and violence against women	Track distribution and dissemination of <i>Making Changes</i> and other relevant resources	2001-02: 13,300 2002-03: 11,430 2003-04: 40,337 2004-05: 38,434 2005-06: 21,672 2006/07: 19,261* 2007/08: 6,902** 2008/09 to end of Feb/09 only: 6,393**  copies of <i>Making Changes</i> were either requested (hard copy) or downloaded from Council's website.	10,000	10,000 per year on average	Update and reprint <i>Making Changes</i> , and other publications as needed.

Notes: \* The total for 2006/07 is based on 11 months of data as no data is available for March/07 due to technical problem with the NS government server tracking software.

\*\* The government server software which enabled us to track our website usage and downloads (LiveStats) ceased operation in March/07. In February/09, it was replaced by a different software (WebTrends). WebTrends allowed us to go back to June/07 for the purposes of calculating website statistics. Hence we have no web-site data for March, April, and May of 2007. The new software, WebTrends, also makes use of more stringent "bot" filters than the previous software, resulting in significantly reduced numbers of downloads than was tracked by the previous software. As a result, we have adjusted our 2009/2010 target and ultimate target to more realistically reflect the statistical results generated by the new website software.

## *Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

**Strategic Goal 4:** To improve the health and well-being of women and their families

Service gaps, such as the respite needs of women providing care to children with chronically high needs, will begin to be addressed.

### **Program – Women’s Health and Well-Being**

*Priority* Make evidence-based recommendations to provincial and federal governments, and to professional and community audiences about the support needs of women in care-giving and care-receiving roles.

#### *Strategic Actions*

- Convey concerns and issues raised by Council to the Minister and to appropriate government departments and agencies
- Continued leadership of the NS Partnership On Respite Family Health and Well Being
- Dissemination of respite workshops findings and recommendations to appropriate community and government audiences.

*Priority* Through academic, community, and government partnerships, build knowledge and skills in the promotion of women’s health among students, researchers and community members, and communicate the results to relevant target audiences.

#### *Strategic Actions*

- Share expertise and experience in gender-based analysis and women’s health with research and community partners.
- Provide expert advice and gender based analysis on women’s mental health issues.

*Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women*

<b>To improve the health and well-being of women and their families</b>					
<b>OUTCOME</b>	<b>MEASURE</b>	<b>BASELINE DATA</b>	<b>TARGET 2009/2010</b>	<b>ULTIMATE TARGET</b>	<b>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</b>
Target audiences gain deeper understanding of health implications of caregiving.	Number of presentations made and participants reached	2007/08: 11 presentations, 233 participants 2008/09 to end of Feb/09 only: 11	10 presentations with an average of 20 participants at each	6 presentations per year for next two years with average of 20 participants at each	Continue disseminating findings of Healthy Balance Research Program to policy, clinical, and community audiences.
Caregivers acquire information, skills, and tools necessary to enable/enhance their own respite outcomes.	Workshops for parents: # workshops offered # participants evaluation ratings of participants	2008-09 Workshops: HRM: 90 participants Yarmouth: 25 Wolfville: 40 New Glasgow: 25	a minimum of 2 additional workshops are planned, one in Cape Breton and another in location TBD	Total of 4-5 additional workshops around province with 25 caregivers participating in each	Build on HBRP findings by initiating policy-based research work and caregiver education/consultation on respite for families who have children/adult children with chronically high needs.
Policy and program staff gain deeper understanding of gender analysis on health issues.	Number of presentations made	As of end of Feb: 2	3	3	Dissemination of respite workshops findings and recommendations to appropriate community and government audiences.  Share expertise on gender analysis in health.

## **7.0 Human Resource Strategy**

Council continues to take proactive steps to ensure that new employees and newly-appointed Council members are representative of diverse communities. When appropriate, Council does targeted recruitment of Council members to ensure the diversity of membership. Orientation of new Council members is conducted on an as-needed basis. Staff supports members in various local activities.

Council consults with the Public Service Commission's diversity pool when filling casual, temporary and permanent positions. Given staff size (8 FTEs), orientation is done on an individual basis, taking into account the informational and developmental needs of each staff member. Council's human resource strategy is in alignment with the Government's Corporate Human Resources Plan, with particular attention to diversity and active participation in Occupational Health and Safety initiatives.

## **8.0 Budget Context**

	<b>2008-09 Estimate (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>2008-09 Actual (\$ thousands)</b>	<b>2009-10 Estimate (\$ thousands)</b>
<b>Gross Expenses</b>	<b>1,003</b>	<b>964</b>	<b>969</b>
<b>Salaries and Employee Benefits</b>	<b>610</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>629</b>
<b>Funded Staff (FTEs)</b>	<b>8.0</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>8.0</b>

## **9.0 Finance, Human Resources, Information Technology and Communications**

Finance, Human Resources and Information Technology functions are carried out on behalf of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women by the Department of Justice CSU. This enables the Advisory Council to function with minimal expenditure for administrative overhead.

A communications advisor will continue to be assigned to the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. The advisor provides 1) communications support to the Minister, Council Chair, members and staff, 2) strategies and tactics on initiatives and programs, and 3) messaging on public information, policy documents and media plans that support the Province's work to advance equality, fairness and dignity for Nova Scotia women.