



# *Shift*

Nova Scotia's Action Plan  
for an Aging Population

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# Shift

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## ***Our vision:** Together, Nova Scotians value, promote, and support older adults and their contributions to our province*

The Government of Nova Scotia is leading a shift in thinking and in practice that values, promotes, and supports how older adults in all their diversity make Nova Scotia a better place for all of us.

It's time to reframe the discussion about aging and build on the good news and benefits of our demographic shift. An aging population reflects advances in population health and improvements in the social and economic well-being of Nova Scotians. Older adults offer knowledge, skills, experiences, and connections that help people and communities thrive. People of all ages, including older adults, have much to contribute.

***A massive population shift is underway.***

The fact is a massive population shift is underway. The world is aging, and so is Nova Scotia. The first of the baby boomers have turned 70. By 2030—a little more than a decade away—more than one in four Nova Scotians will be aged 65 and over. Longer life expectancies and lower birth rates mean that, from now on, our population will be older.

In Nova Scotia, older adults help to sustain families, workplaces, communities, and the province as a whole. They care for others, work on community projects, donate time and money to charitable causes, run businesses, participate in full- and part-time employment, and get involved in politics. They are leaders, guides, and mentors, sharing a wealth of knowledge and experience. We all benefit when we value, encourage, and support these diverse contributions.

Unfortunately, ageist attitudes and stereotypes in our society perpetuate the notion that getting older is, in itself, a problem rather than a natural part of life. Ageism is stereotyping and discrimination based on a person's chronological age. It is ingrained in our thinking and ways of relating. Ageism manifests any time someone is thought to be "too old" for something—a new job, a physical challenge, a style of clothing. It shows up in quips like "I'm having a senior moment" or "you look good for your age." Ageism is so pervasive and the effects can be so powerful that many people come to believe the stereotypes, even older people themselves. Ageism can get in the way of people being appreciated and included in things that matter, even when the evidence shows how important older adults are to our province.

Getting older does have its challenges; but we need to understand that aging is a highly individual process and chronological age is not a precise marker of capacity or ability to participate. Factors such as income, education, gender and gender identity, ethnicity, racialization, sexual orientation, disability, health status, family status, and geography have a profound impact on a person's experience of life and of getting older, their opportunities in the community, and their experience of ageism.

## *Developing the Plan*

This action plan has been a government-wide initiative, led by the Department of Seniors, involving broad consultation with Nova Scotians.

An advisory committee was established, consisting of community leaders and senior officials from across government. The advisory committee was supported by three working groups made up of representatives from various government departments, business, academia, and the community. Each working group had a specific area of focus and provided recommendations to the advisory committee.

At the same time, the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging at Mount Saint Vincent University led a public engagement initiative on behalf of the Government of Nova Scotia.



## What we heard

From May to October 2016, government received advice and recommendations from the advisory committee, working groups, more than 300 Nova Scotians attending community conversations, and over 300 submissions from individuals and organizations in the province.

Here are some of the messages that Nova Scotians shared about aging and older adults.



### Strengths and positive attitudes

Older adults bring valuable experience and knowledge to the workplace.

Older adults are often the backbone of communities—serving as volunteers, leaders, and caregivers to others.

Nova Scotians value healthy, active living for people of all ages. They also want older adults to be able to age in place and stay connected to their communities.

Nova Scotia includes diverse communities, cultures, and ways of life.

### Challenges

Ageism and other factors (racism, sexism, ableism) can be major barriers to participation in both paid and unpaid work.

Burnout can be a problem.

Barriers to living well while aging in place include the cost of living, lack of transportation, and the risk of social isolation.

Poverty affects too many older adults, limiting their access to adequate housing, nutritious food, healthy activities, and participation in society and the economy.

One size does not fit all. In community and health planning, it is important to include people who are not in the majority, and to engage with all older adults in culturally competent ways that build on people's strengths and address their needs.

Some Nova Scotians said they dislike the term “seniors” to describe everyone aged 65 and over. As one person wrote:

*We all have various identities in our lives – we are athletes, artists, musicians, labourers, professionals, carpenters, etc.,...but we turn 65 and become “a Senior” ...the term used for everyone from the age of 65 – 105...It’s like calling the rest of the world ‘the juniors’ and stripping away all other identities or titles which allow us to be individuals.*

With that in mind, this action plan generally uses the term *older adults*.

It became clear from the engagement process that opportunities and issues for our aging population are complex and interrelated. A comprehensive age-friendly approach must involve all areas of government, our federal partners, municipalities, diverse communities and community organizations, employers, the not-for-profit sector, and older adults themselves, in all their diversity.

Government activity must be forward thinking and reflect demographic trends. Therefore, some of the commitments in this plan focus specifically on older adults. Others are more broadly focused. Investing in our population at earlier stages of life can make a big difference in people’s quality of life and health at later stages.

### ***This action plan includes:***

- our vision
- 3 main goals
- 12 major commitments
- an implementation plan



## GOAL

# Value the social and economic contributions of older adults

### Commitments

Value older adults as entrepreneurs

Value older adults in the workplace

Value unpaid community and volunteer work

### Value older adults as entrepreneurs

More than half of Canadian baby boomers are considering or have started a business before retirement.<sup>1</sup> The 50+ age group is the fastest growing segment of the start-up market.<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneurship represents an opportunity for older adults to tap into and build on years of experience and networks, while having the flexibility and control they might not have had in a traditional workplace. According to a recent global summit on the experienced economy, five years after business start-up, 70 per cent of businesses started by older entrepreneurs were still operating, compared to 28 per cent started by younger people.<sup>3</sup>

Some older adults are looking to do something that makes a difference and has an impact on the world, creating an opportunity for the development of social enterprises. (A social enterprise is a business venture operated for the purpose of addressing a social, cultural, environmental, or economic challenge. Most of the profits are reinvested to support that purpose.)

Older, experienced entrepreneurs also have much to offer in knowledge, experience, and mentoring.

*Therefore, government will work with partner organizations involved in entrepreneurship education to promote entrepreneurship—including social entrepreneurship—as an option for older adults.*





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## Value older adults in the workplace

A major concern of policy makers and business leaders has been and continues to be the aging workforce and its impact on the economy. According to a 2012 report by TD Economics, “37% of business owners state that a shortage of skilled labour is a business constraint.”<sup>4</sup>

*When older people have work opportunities, it means more jobs for youth as well.*

Mandatory retirement in Nova Scotia ended in 2008. But the participation rate of people over the age of 50 in the labour force (people employed plus those actively seeking work) remains lower in Nova Scotia than the national average.<sup>5</sup>

Increasing the participation rate of adults over 50—and supporting people who still want to work after age 65—could help to lessen the economic impacts of a smaller workforce and the shortage of skilled labour.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) notes: “[Full and productive employment] is important, more than ever, in countries experiencing low growth or recession. Promoting productive employment also includes raising productivity growth so that those at work contribute more to society and the economy.”<sup>6</sup> Some people worry that if older adults keep working there won’t be jobs for young people. In fact the reverse is true. When older people have work opportunities, it means more jobs for youth as well.<sup>7</sup>

*Therefore, government will work with employers and the public to promote the value of older workers and encourage their participation in the labour market.*

*As an employer, government will lead the way in demonstrating how to be an age-friendly, inclusive, and intergenerational workplace that values its older workers.*

## Value unpaid community and volunteer work

In the community conversations that informed this action plan, many contributors commented that “older adults keep our communities going.” From formal volunteering to simply pulling together to care for other people and get things done, older Nova Scotians play a huge role in sustaining community life and not-for-profit organizations through their unpaid work.

Research on volunteering suggests that bringing people together from all walks of life, including older adults, to work on a common project or objective, contributes to social cohesion or social capital.<sup>8</sup> (The OECD describes social capital as “the links, shared values and understandings in society that enable individuals and groups to trust each other and so work together.”<sup>9</sup>)

Working together to address common needs and issues helps to alleviate social isolation, and creates a supportive social environment that is good for the health of all those involved.<sup>10</sup>

Civic engagement by Canadians aged 75 and over increased by 14 per cent between 2003 and 2013.<sup>11</sup> This increase “may reflect a greater propensity

for an active retirement, made possible by better health.”<sup>12</sup> However, research on voluntarism,<sup>13</sup> and comments by people attending the community conversations, suggest that the burden of volunteering and unpaid community work often falls on a small number of people. From our community conversations, we heard that it can be difficult to find out what opportunities are available for volunteering; that it costs money to volunteer; that access to transportation can be a barrier; and that some people lack confidence in or undervalue their own knowledge, experience, and ability to contribute.

Unpaid community and volunteer work by Nova Scotians is and will continue to be critically important to the well-being of our province. The challenge for government, community organizations, and not-for-profits that rely on volunteers and unpaid community work is to sustain and promote the value of volunteering and participating in community to more people, including older adults, and to break down barriers to their participation.

***Therefore,** government will work with the voluntary and not-for-profit sectors to involve older adults in all their diversity as community leaders, mentors, volunteers, and clients.*



## GOAL

# Promote healthy, active living

## Promote an inclusive and supportive population health approach throughout Nova Scotia's health system

### Commitments

Promote an inclusive and supportive population health approach throughout Nova Scotia's health system

Reduce the impact of poverty on health

Promote physical activity and regular exercise

*Population health is an approach to health that aims to improve the health of the entire population and to reduce health inequities among population groups. In order to reach these objectives, it looks at and acts upon the broad range of factors and conditions that have a strong influence on our health.*

*The population health approach recognizes that health is a capacity or resource rather than a state, a definition which corresponds more to the notion of being able to pursue one's goals, to acquire skills and education, and to grow. This broader notion of health recognizes the range of social, economic and physical environmental factors that contribute to health. The best articulation of this concept of health is "the capacity of people to adapt to, respond to, or control life's challenges and changes" (Frankish et al., 1996).<sup>14</sup>*

The working group that created recommendations for helping older adults live healthier lives noted the need to understand how inequities—social, economic, and environmental—affect a person's health. A population health approach that includes and supports older adults should include "the application of a comprehensive range of strategies and interventions"<sup>15</sup> aimed at improving health status and reducing health inequities.<sup>16</sup>

**Therefore,** in planning for Nova Scotia's health system, government will take a comprehensive approach to improving the physical and mental health of Nova Scotians of all ages.



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## Reduce the impact of poverty on health

*“Even in the richest countries, poverty is linked to a shorter life span and to poorer health and disability in older age...Poor health in financially disadvantaged people is also a reflection of the psychological effects of material insecurity, including stress, anxiety, feeling of lack of control and low self-esteem... The impact of anxiety on health also includes increased susceptibility to infection, and high blood pressure with its associated cardiovascular consequences.”<sup>17</sup>*

**Poverty is linked to shorter life spans.**

A key message that came from the working groups and from the community conversations across Nova Scotia was that the costs of living (including food, housing, transportation, access to technology)—and by association, income security—are major barriers to health for older adults.

A 2013 report from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) found that poverty in old age increased by two percentage points in Canada between 2007 and 2010.<sup>18</sup>

*The biggest increase in old-age poverty occurred among elderly women, especially those who are divorced or separated. Higher poverty among older women reflects lower wages, more part-time work and career gaps during women’s working lives, as well as the effect of longer female life expectancy for which many women have not been able to save enough.<sup>19</sup>*

In Nova Scotia:

- 19.7 per cent of women aged 65 or more live in low income households, compared with 14.7 per cent of men 65 and over.<sup>20</sup>
- More than one third (35.5 per cent) of people 65 and over who live alone (not in an economic family) have low income in Nova Scotia — second only to people in one-parent families (47.1 per cent).<sup>21</sup>

Low income is defined as less than 50 per cent of the median income of Nova Scotians after tax.

Having a reliable and sufficient income helps to improve the likelihood of good health. It provides purchasing power and enables appropriate housing, more nutritious food, access to transportation, and involvement in community activities.



*Therefore, government will assess approaches to income security for all low-income Nova Scotians—particularly single people struggling with the cost of living—and will improve access to healthy, affordable food and intergenerational food literacy programs.*

### **Promote physical activity and regular exercise**

Regular physical activity is important for healthy aging and has been shown to be a major factor in the ability of older adults to live independently and stay as healthy as possible. Lack of physical activity increases the risk of developing and dying from chronic conditions, including obesity, diabetes, circulatory diseases, and dementia. “Even small improvements in physical capacity in older people are associated with significantly lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease.”<sup>22</sup>

Being active may help to promote mental well-being, including self-perception and self-esteem, mood and sleep quality, and may reduce stress, anxiety, and fatigue.<sup>23</sup> In older people, it may also improve cognitive function and reduce the risk of dementia.<sup>24</sup>

Walking is one of the most effective ways adults of any age can maintain mobility and improve their health, both physical and mental.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, research suggests that “older people who are physically more active and who exercise regularly are more likely to walk independently and do other activities of daily living on their own compared to sedentary elders.”<sup>26</sup> Engaging in a structured exercise program can make a difference among frail older adults who do not currently exercise.<sup>27</sup>

*Therefore, government will ensure that provincial initiatives aimed at promoting physical activity and recreation include affordable and accessible options for middle-aged and older adults in all their diversity.*

*Regular physical activity is important for healthy aging.*



## GOAL

# Support aging in place, connected to community life

Many older adults wish to stay in their homes as they age. However, this can increase the risk of social isolation.

### Commitments

Support community transportation

Support appropriate, affordable housing

Support age-friendly community planning

Support social connections

Keeping older adults socially connected has been described as the number one emerging issue facing seniors in Canada.<sup>28</sup> Social isolation is commonly defined as a low quantity and quality of relationships with others. Poor health can lead to social isolation; <sup>29</sup> it can also be a result of social isolation.

*Socially isolated seniors are more at risk of negative health behaviours including drinking, smoking, being sedentary and not eating well; have a higher likelihood of falls; and, have a four-to-five times greater risk of hospitalization. Research also indicates that social isolation is a predictor of mortality from coronary heart disease/stroke.<sup>30</sup>*

According to research, the “lack of a supportive social network is linked to a 60% increase in the risk of dementia and cognitive decline; while socially-integrated lifestyles protect against dementia.”<sup>31</sup>

Social isolation is also associated with higher levels of depression, anxiety, and suicide.

*According to research, 1 in 4 seniors lives with a mental health problem (e.g., depression, anxiety or dementia) or illness while 10 to 15% of adults 65 years or older and living in the community suffer from depression. The percentage of seniors in residential care who have been diagnosed with depression or showed symptoms of depression without diagnosis is higher at 44%. Approximately 50% of people over the age of 80 report feeling lonely; men over the age of 80 have the highest suicide rate of all age groups.<sup>32</sup>*

Furthermore, socially isolated people are at increased risk of abuse—psychological, emotional, physical, and financial.

Many factors can lead to social isolation and it can happen at any age. However, older adults and their caregivers, many who may be older adults themselves, are among those at highest risk.

Creating supportive environments that foster autonomy and independence while helping older adults stay connected to their community is key to preventing social isolation and promoting healthy, active living. Factors that help older adults stay connected and involved include well-designed neighbourhoods, access to appropriate and affordable housing, transportation, in-home support, social connections (both in person and through digital media), and nearby services.





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## Support community transportation

At every community conversation about this action plan, Nova Scotians identified transportation as a key issue for older adults. When people lack transportation options, it severely limits their ability to participate in society and the economy and to access services, including health services. This is a particularly significant issue in rural areas.

Community transportation services are available in one form or another across much of Nova Scotia. However, the type and availability of services varies significantly between and within communities, and there are challenges when crossing jurisdictions and travelling between regions. Organizations that support volunteer driving programs report that driver liability and insurance expenses are also a challenge.

*Therefore, government will work with its partners to improve access to transportation in Nova Scotia, with a particular focus on rural communities.*

## Support appropriate, affordable housing

The Province of Nova Scotia and the Government of Canada are partnering on a number of significant investments to improve and create affordable housing for Nova Scotians. Older adults will benefit from many of these initiatives. For example, nearly 70 per cent of the residents of public housing are aged 58 and over. These people will benefit from investments in the renovation and repair of existing public housing.

*Therefore, government will work with municipal and federal partners to invest in housing so that Nova Scotians can age in place in their homes and communities.*

## Support age-friendly community planning

Age-friendly communities are communities that enable everyone to participate while intentionally including older adults in all their diversity. The World Health Organization and the Government of Canada have identified eight critical areas for age-friendly community planning: outdoor spaces and buildings; transportation; housing; social participation; respect and social inclusion; civic participation and employment; communication and information; and community support and health services.<sup>33</sup>

Nova Scotia's municipal governments and other stakeholders have a key role in this work, in partnership with the province.

*Therefore, government will work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities and individual municipal governments to support the development of age-friendly communities and community planning that fosters aging in place and the continued economic and social participation of older adults.*

## Support social connections

The World Health Organization emphasizes the importance of combatting social isolation by involving older adults in building socially inclusive and healthy communities for all ages.

Modern technology can help to reduce social isolation, but only for those who are able to use the technology. Challenges such as access, cost, literacy, and comfort with the technology are factors in the isolation of older adults.<sup>34</sup> From telephone answering systems to computers, social media, and electronic parking meters, changes in technology can seem daunting.

Exposure and support are key to helping people use technologies that are unfamiliar. Recognizing the potential of mobile technologies (such as tablets) to meet the needs of older adults, the Nova Scotia C@P Association partnered with the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), St. Francis Xavier University, and the Nova Scotia Provincial Library to develop a training program. *Connecting Older Adults with Mobile Technology* provided orientation, training, and support for using these technologies. Between July 2014 and July 2015, the program brought together 305 paid youth interns with older Nova Scotians in 4,600 one-to-one training sessions. Six hundred of these sessions occurred during the snowy months of January to March 2015.<sup>35</sup>

Digital technologies are not the only way to promote social connections, but they offer vital support.

*Therefore, government will work with older Nova Scotians and their organizations to ensure they stay socially connected and are able to participate in public policy development, in person and through digital technologies.*

*Lack of a supportive social network is linked to a 60% increase in the risk of dementia and cognitive decline.*



# Implementing the plan

## Base decisions and actions on evidence

### Commitments

Base decisions and actions on evidence

Learn from each other

It can be difficult to obtain reliable data to understand the experiences and circumstances of older adults within specific communities and involving factors like gender, ethnicity, socio-economics, and other aspects of identity. Working groups, the advisory committee, and participants in the public engagement process noted that older adults, in all their diversity, need to be engaged on an ongoing basis by government and service providers on the issues that impact them. Contributors also noted that public engagement, program development, and service delivery need to happen in a culturally competent way. This includes having a solid understanding of the historical context of various populations—in particular, Mi'kmaw and African Nova Scotian communities. Programming needs to be culturally safe and address barriers and opportunities as defined by members of the community, to ensure that programs and services are accessible and relevant.

It was strongly recommended that government increase the hiring of diverse candidates and provide training in cultural competencies for government staff, service providers, healthcare workers, and others.

Government has already participated in alternative forms of research, such as human-centred design, social labs, and sensemaking, that work to understand and address complex problems in new ways. People engaged in the development of recommendations, including external partners who served on the working groups and advisory committee, encouraged greater use of these approaches. They also strongly recommended that government encourage its data partners (e.g., Statistics Canada, Medical Services Insurance (MSI), and others) to consider alternative data collection methodologies and appropriate sample sizes to enable disaggregated analysis and reporting of socio-economic, labour market, and ethno-racial health data.

*Therefore, government will find better ways to understand the experiences of older adults in all their diversity. We will improve how we collect and use information in order to deliver programs and services that respect the people we serve.*

## Learn from each other

If we are to make Nova Scotia a place that values and promotes the well-being of its older population, we need to combat ageism and recognize how it works against us all. We need to ensure that Nova Scotians of all ages, including older adults, have what they need to stay healthy and active in our communities. We need to understand and break down barriers to participation in paid work, while recognizing and supporting the valuable contributions



older adults make through unpaid labour. Most importantly, we need to ensure that every person in Nova Scotia, no matter their age or health status, is valued and supported to contribute to this province in the best way they can.

*Therefore, government will launch a public education campaign that shows older adults in all their diversity. The campaign will dispel myths and misconceptions about older age and demonstrate the contributions of older adults to our province.*

## Accountability

The Minister and Deputy Minister of Seniors have overall responsibility for coordinating and implementing the action plan, creating an evaluation framework, and reporting annually on progress.

Deputy Ministers and Deputy Heads of other departments and agencies are responsible for reporting their activities related to the action plan in their annual business plans.

For periodic updates, visit [novascotia.ca/shift](https://novascotia.ca/shift)



## Specific actions in fiscal years 2017/18 through 2020/21

### Goal: Value the social and economic contributions of older adults

Commitment Specific Actions	Lead Department	Fiscal Year			
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 onward
<b>Value older adults as entrepreneurs</b>					
Work with partner organizations involved in entrepreneurship education to promote entrepreneurship—including social entrepreneurship—as an option for older adults	Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	
Increase the participation of older adults in the Self-Employment Benefit Program—a program that helps people receiving Employment Insurance (EI) to start their own business.	Labour & Advanced Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Support the advancement of the social enterprise sector.	Dept. of Business	✓			
<b>Value older adults in the workplace</b>					
Lead the way in demonstrating how to be an age-friendly, inclusive, and intergenerational workplace that values its older workers.	Public Service Commission	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educate employers about the advantages of hiring and retaining older workers <i>in all their diversity</i> .	Labour & Advanced Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Educate employers about age-friendly workplaces and emerging Human Resources practices that support all generations in the workplace.	Labour & Advanced Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create an online, free training module for employers about the benefits of hiring and retaining older workers and creating an age-friendly workplace.	Labour & Advanced Education	✓			
Provide training and professional development for career practitioners (advisors) employed through Nova Scotia Works Employment Services Centres, to help them work with older adults <i>in all their diversity</i> .	Labour & Advanced Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Research the barriers to employment for older workers, and how to address those barriers, from the perspectives of employers and job seekers.	Labour & Advanced Education	✓			
Help older workers who face challenges in re-entering the workplace, including those of age 65 or more who want to continue working.	Labour & Advanced Education	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Value unpaid community and volunteer work</b>					
Build the capacity of community and not-for-profit organizations to involve older adults <i>in all their diversity</i> as community leaders, volunteers, and clients.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build public awareness about the benefits of being active in the community, and how to get involved.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓

Commitment Specific Actions	Lead Department	Fiscal Year			
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 onward
Make it easier to connect people with organizations. Evaluate, improve and promote existing databases and other information sources that help connect people with volunteer organizations.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sponsor three community pilots, plus an evaluation, to examine different ways of sustaining volunteer and unpaid community work.	Communities, Culture & Heritage		✓	✓	
Work with partner organizations to promote mentorship opportunities for older adults.	Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Goal: Promote healthy, active living</b>					
<b>Promote an inclusive and supportive population health approach throughout Nova Scotia's health system</b>					
Create a comprehensive approach to improve the health of all Nova Scotians, as part of the development of a multi-year strategic plan for Nova Scotia's health system.	Health & Wellness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop a provincial approach to evidence-based service delivery for mental health and addictions that includes older adults living with mental illness and addictions.	Health & Wellness, with Nova Scotia Health Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Reduce the impact of poverty on health</b>					
Assess approaches to income security for all low-income Nova Scotians. This will include examining how income security programs and taxation can work together to provide better support, particularly for single Nova Scotians struggling with the cost of living.	Community Services; Finance & Treasury Board	✓			
Improve access to affordable, healthy foods for vulnerable older adults, through the pilot or expansion of food subsidy programs (e.g., mobile food markets, coupons for farmers' markets, meals-on-wheels).	Health & Wellness, with other departments, Nova Scotia Health Authority, and communities	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide grants for inter-generational food literacy programs (e.g., community gardens, community kitchens) that help older adults share and develop food and nutrition skills and knowledge.	Health & Wellness, with Nova Scotia Health Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Promote physical activity and regular exercise</b>					
Expand the focus of the Municipal Physical Activity Leadership program to add older adults as a priority population, ensuring that the program is culturally competent and includes diverse adults.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure that provincial physical activity and recreational strategies and initiatives include the needs and perspectives of middle-aged and older adults <i>in all their diversity</i> .	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓

Commitment Specific Actions	Lead Department	Fiscal Year			
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 onward
Develop a provincial approach to encourage physical activity at all ages, including diverse middle-aged and older adults, with a strong emphasis on walking.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Build the capacity of communities and the recreational and sport sectors to work with an aging population <i>in all its diversity</i> .	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓

## Goal: Support aging in place, connected to community life

### Support community transportation

Establish a Ministerial Committee with a mandate to address community transportation in Nova Scotia. Designate Communities, Culture and Heritage as the lead department.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Deliver a community-based transportation strategy and solution for Nova Scotia.	Communities, Culture & Heritage		✓	✓	✓
Work with the insurance sector to protect volunteer drivers from liability.	Communities, Culture & Heritage; Dept. of Seniors; Finance & Treasury Board	✓	✓		
Enhance the use of technology within the health system to decrease barriers for people who lack transportation to health services and programs (e.g., video conferencing).	Health & Wellness, with Nova Scotia Health Authority & IWK	✓	✓	✓	✓

### Support appropriate, affordable housing

Help more low-income Nova Scotians make repairs and adaptations to their homes, and increase maximum levels of assistance.	Housing Nova Scotia	✓			
Support the construction of affordable housing for seniors, with an investment from the federal Social Infrastructure Fund.	Housing Nova Scotia	✓			
Create additional rent supplement subsidies to reduce the waiting list for public housing.	Housing Nova Scotia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Improve the quality of social housing for low-income households through an investment from the Deferred Federal Contribution Funds.	Housing Nova Scotia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Increase funding to create and upgrade shelter and transitional housing spaces for victims of family violence.	Housing Nova Scotia	✓			
Review the Statement of Provincial Interest on Housing to determine if it adequately directs municipal planning and zoning to support a range of options that bridge the gap between independent living and long-term care.	Municipal Affairs, with Housing Nova Scotia; Dept. of Seniors; Health & Wellness	✓			



Commitment Specific Actions	Lead Department	Fiscal Year			
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 onward
<b>Support age-friendly community planning</b>					
Establish a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the province, supporting the development of age-friendly communities that foster aging in place in communities across Nova Scotia.	Municipal Affairs; Dept. of Seniors	✓			
Work with the UNSM to develop a recognition program for municipalities that have taken active and ongoing steps to become age-friendly communities.	Dept. of Seniors, with Municipal Affairs	✓	✓	✓	✓
Explore the development of a Statement of Provincial Interest on Healthy Built Environments that supports healthy, sustainable communities and addresses issues related to aging in place.	Municipal Affairs, with Dept. of Seniors; Health & Wellness	✓			
Align age-friendly community planning with the municipal planning process.	Municipal Affairs; Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide funding to communities for age-friendly planning through the Department of Seniors' Age-Friendly Communities program.	Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Implement accessibility legislation that provides a framework for future standards that will benefit all Nova Scotians, including older adults and people with disabilities. These standards might address things such as customer service, information and communication, employment, the built environment, and transportation.	Dept. of Justice	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enhance primary care for older adults by investing in programs that are community based and provided by collaborative teams.	Health & Wellness, with Nova Scotia Health Authority	✓	✓	✓	✓
Help older adults stay safe by expanding the Senior Safety Program to more communities in Nova Scotia.	Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Create a new Continuing Care Strategy.	Health & Wellness, with Nova Scotia Health Authority	✓			
<b>Support social connections</b>					
Work with municipalities and other partners to increase access to culturally safe, convenient, and affordable facilities and recreational programs for older adults <i>in all their diversity</i> —including frail older adults, and especially people with low incomes.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Encourage older adults and their organizations to participate in public policy development by creating workshops and public engagement sessions focused on healthy public policy and community resilience.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	
Invest in a community Internet/digital literacy training project for older adults, using provincial libraries as a hub.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	

Commitment Specific Actions	Lead Department	Fiscal Year			
		2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21 onward
Help participants of the Disability Support Program, and their aging parents, to remain together in their homes by providing services such as snow shoveling and lawn maintenance.	Community Services; Health & Wellness	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Implementing the Plan</b>					
<b>Base decisions and actions on evidence</b>					
As part of Nova Scotia's Culture Action Plan, ensure that government programs and services include the perspectives and needs of older adults and diverse communities.	Communities, Culture & Heritage	✓	✓	✓	✓
Train government employees in cultural competence.	Public Service Commission, with Communities, Culture & Heritage; Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Develop a population health profile to better understand health issues for diverse older adults (including social determinants of health, such as gender, education, income, marital status, differences in rural and urban living arrangement, mental well-being, physical activity, injury, and other measures).	Health & Wellness	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strengthen the collection and analysis of information to support evidence-based decision making that reflects our diverse population (e.g., bigger sample sizes for socio-economic, labour market, and ethno-racial health data).	Finance & Treasury Board; Labour & Advanced Education; Health & Wellness; Community Services; Communities, Culture & Heritage; Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Establish a social innovation lab focused on aging that can study and develop ways to address complex issues associated with an aging population.	Dept. of Seniors	✓	✓	✓	
Host a TEDx Aging Well conference.	Dept. of Seniors	✓			
<b>Learn from each other</b>					
Launch a public education campaign that shows older adults <i>in all their diversity</i> , dispels myths and misconceptions about older age, and demonstrates the contributions of older adults to our province.	Dept. of Seniors	✓			

# Acknowledgements

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## The public engagement initiative included:

### seven regional community conversations:

- Amherst
- Antigonish
- Sydney
- Spryfield  
(for the Halifax region)
- Bridgewater
- Yarmouth
- Kentville

### community conversations for seven identified groups:

- First Nations
- off-reserve aboriginal peoples in Nova Scotia
- Acadians and Francophones in five locations across the province (a teleconference in French)
- African Nova Scotians
- immigrants (newcomers from diverse cultures and languages)
- LGBTIQ+ communities (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersexual, Questioning, and others)
- persons with disabilities

**A survey was also available online and in print.**

# Endnotes

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**35** Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.



## ***Our vision***

*Together, Nova Scotians  
value, promote, and support  
older adults  
and their contributions  
to our province*

# *Shift*

