

Time to Fight Crime *Together*

Our Strategy to Prevent and Reduce Crime



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Premier's Message



We live in a great province, with caring, hard-working people living in vibrant, friendly communities. We have set a vision for the New Nova Scotia that will protect, sustain, and enhance the quality of life we enjoy to make our great province even better.

One immediate priority is to create safer communities. We live in a small province where neighbours watch out for neighbours, yet Nova Scotians are increasingly concerned about their safety.

It doesn't have to be this way. It is time to take a stand against the few who threaten the quality of life for too many. Our strategy to prevent and reduce crime, by working together, will begin taking us in this direction.

I want to thank the task force members for producing such a frank and informative report. I also want to thank the many individuals and organizations that inspired the task force, by sharing their personal and professional experiences.

I know you want to see action more than acknowledgement. We are committed to taking that action, and to reporting to you on our progress.

*Sincerely,
Premier Rodney MacDonald*

Minister's Message



I am pleased to present Nova Scotia's first provincial crime prevention strategy, developed based on the ideas and input of Nova Scotians. This report would not have been possible without the hundreds of Nova Scotians who participated in the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. Through the task force, Nova Scotians demonstrated that they are committed to their communities and the people who live and work in them. Inspired by their dedication, we have developed this strategy based on what they believe is needed to create a stronger, safer province. I want to thank the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities, who devoted so much time and energy to speak to Nova Scotians and gather their views and ideas on community safety.

The strategy details new and expanded initiatives to deal with the crime we have now, while also preventing future crime. It is a multi-year strategy that builds on other government initiatives, including government's response to the Nunn Commission of Inquiry, the Social Prosperity Framework, and the Child and Youth Strategy.

We will continue to work with Nova Scotians of all ages, from all across the province, as the strategy is put into action. Together, we will make our province stronger and safer.

*Hon. Cecil Clarke
Minister of Justice*

Executive Summary

As Nova Scotians, we value our quality of life. The vast majority of us care about and look out for each other and respect and obey our laws. Yet, sadly, more and more Nova Scotians do not feel safe.

Statistics reinforce this concern. While the crime rate has generally declined in Nova Scotia and in Canada over the past 15 years, Nova Scotia's crime rate is above the national average. Youth and violent crime are of particular concern.

The purpose of this strategy is to change this: to help Nova Scotians feel safe and be safe in their communities—by reducing and preventing crime in partnership with organizations, communities, and individuals.

In May 2006, government created a Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. After broad consultation around the province, the 25-member task force submitted a comprehensive report in May 2007.

Time to Fight Crime Together is based on the ideas and concerns of Nova Scotians, presented to government by the task force. We also considered research and best practices from elsewhere in Canada and the United States. We have been guided by six principles:

- Our actions are **focused on key priorities**.
- We are **doing what works**, based on evidence, experience, and evaluation.
- We will achieve the greatest results by **working more effectively together**.
- We must be **innovative, inclusive, and flexible**.
- We want results that can be **sustained** over time.
- We **share responsibility and accountability** for results.

The following two pages present a snapshot of our strategy, beginning with our vision, goals, and expected results. The snapshot also lists actions—new and under way—under our three pillars (**enforcement, intervention, and prevention**) that will advance us toward our vision and goals.

We have to take a stand together against the few who are threatening the quality of life for too many.

Where We Want to Go

Our Vision

An improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia

Our Goals

People are and feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.

Those in conflict with the law are held accountable.

The frequency and severity of offending and victimization are reduced.

Individuals at risk of being involved with crime are supported in ways to reduce the likelihood of offending.

Communities and individuals are actively involved in creating a safer Nova Scotia.

Expected Results

Lower crime rates

Offenders in court more quickly

More reporting of crime to police

Less fear of crime, greater confidence in the criminal justice system

Less severe, less frequent offences

More people successfully integrated into the community after contact with the criminal justice system

More support for victims

People and communities at a lower risk of being involved in or impacted by crime (because risk factors are addressed)

People know more about, and are more involved with, crime prevention

How We Plan to Get There

Items underlined in [green](#) are **next steps: new or expanding actions**.
Other activities to help advance us toward our goals are in place now.

Enforcement

Effective Laws; Swift, Serious Consequences

Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act

Protection from Illegal Drugs Act

Plan to Reduce Case-Processing Delays

Federal Amendments, Review of Youth Criminal Justice Act

Youth Liaison Workers Pilot Project

Provincial Proceeds of Crime Unit & Legislation

Catching Lawbreakers

Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia

Rewards for Major Unsolved Crimes Program

New Police Officers

Collaborative, Regional Crime Reduction Teams

Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act

Integrated Impaired Driving Enforcement Unit

Security Intelligence Management Services Unit

Keeping Communities Safe, Holding Offenders Accountable

Domestic Violence Case Co-ordination Program

Criminal Injuries Counselling Program

Provincial Victims' Services Program

Expanded Electronic Supervision

Expanded Youth Bail Supervision Program

Provincial Drug Strategy

Stronger Regulations for Private Security

Restitution Collection Program

Intervention

Planning the Right Intervention

Risk Assessment Tools

Mental Health Court Program

Community Partnerships

Restorative Justice Court Liaison Project

Literacy Assessment Tool

Restorative Justice Research

Providing the Right Mix of Supervision and Support

Restorative Justice

Halifax Youth Attendance Centre

Reintegration Planning for Youth

Respectful Relationships

Sexual Offender Assessment and Treatment

Options to Anger

Literacy Support

More Attendance Centres

Restorative Justice for High Risk Youth

Community-Based Navigation and Referral

Helping Victims Protect against Revictimization

Framework for Action Against Family Violence

Domestic Violence Intervention Act

Stronger Response to Family Violence and Violence against Women

Prevention

Gathering and Sharing Information

Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities

Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia

Community Crime Profiles

Building Partnerships

Within Government

With Communities, Municipalities

African Nova Scotian Pilot Project

Children at the Critical Hour (CATCH)

Restorative Justice in Schools

Involving and Supporting Individuals

Efforts of Volunteers, Homeowners

Counselling for Children who Witness Domestic Violence

Seniors' Safety Program

Providing Leadership

Community Crime Prevention Fund

Crime Prevention and Reduction Symposium

Minister's Award for Leadership

Public Education Campaign

Crime Prevention Division

While both the new and existing actions will advance us toward our vision and goals, people are understandably most interested in what is new.

Under enforcement:

- We will continue our efforts to bring offenders into court more quickly through a **youth liaison workers pilot project** to help ensure that young people show up and are prepared for court. The project will be delivered in partnership with community agencies.
- We want to create a **Proceeds of Crime Unit** to allow the seizure of money and goods acquired through illegal activity.
- As part of our commitment to **250 more police officers**, we will provide funding to police forces to hire officers to work in schools and as part of **collaborative, street crime enforcement teams**.
- We will support a new **Integrated Impaired Driving Enforcement Unit** to be tested as a pilot project in Southwest Nova Scotia.
- We will support the RCMP and municipal police agencies to focus on repeat and chronic offenders through **intensive supervision** of those released into the community on conditions imposed by the court.
- We are encouraged by **amendments** introduced by the federal government **to the Youth Criminal Justice Act**, which, if passed, will give judges more options to hold young offenders in custody. The federal government has also announced plans for a **full review of the act** in 2008, and we will continue our efforts to address Nova Scotians' concerns as part of that process.
- We are creating a new **Security Intelligence Management Services Unit** responsible for receiving and sharing intelligence and information on security matters with senior officials.
- We are **expanding electronic supervision**, to now include voice verification technology as well as global positioning system technology and ankle bracelets, for high-risk adult offenders. We will also be piloting the use of electronic supervision of high-risk young offenders.
- We are co-leading with the Department of Health Promotion and Protection the development of a **provincial drug strategy**.
- We are sharing information with Crown attorneys and the courts to **support the testimony of vulnerable witnesses**.
- We will introduce **new legislation governing the private security industry**.
- We are developing a **restitution collection program** to ultimately improve the collection of court-ordered restitution from the offender to the victim.

Under intervention

- We will develop a **mental health court program** that will hold offenders accountable for their behaviour in a way that is supportive and sensitive to their illness.
- We will pilot community-based, community-led projects, such as a community-based, **Restorative Justice/court liaison workers project** in the Halifax Regional Municipality that will refer young people to Restorative Justice more quickly; a **Restorative Justice program for high-risk youth**, designed to help youth and their families develop new ways of communicating and to make positive choices in their lives; and a **navigation and referral service** to help offenders reintegrate successfully into their communities.
- We will **expand attendance centre programming**, now available in the Halifax Regional Municipality, to Cape Breton and the Annapolis Valley.
- We will gather more information on how to intervene effectively with youth through the development of a new **literacy assessment tool** and more **research in delivering Restorative Justice** in ways that respect diversity, are gender-specific, and support equity.

Under prevention

- We have requested federal funding to tailor our information on crime—including information on socio-economic factors that put communities and individuals at risk—by creating **community crime profiles**.
- We will provide funding to support a community-led pilot project to develop an **educational and self-esteem building program** for African Nova Scotian children and a **conflict resolution program** for communities in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
- We will fund a pilot program to bring **Restorative Justice into schools** in the Yarmouth area.
- We will provide funding for **counselling for children who witness family violence**.
- We will work with communities to develop **seniors' safety programs**.
- We will create a **Community Crime Prevention Fund** designed to support programs that engage youth in positive activities.
- We will hold an annual **Crime Prevention and Reduction Symposium** and create a **Minister's Award for Leadership in Crime Prevention**.
- We will develop a **public education campaign** to help people get involved with crime prevention—protecting themselves and their communities.
- We will create a **Crime Prevention Division** within the Department of Justice, primarily responsible for leadership in turning this strategy into action.

While we expect these initiatives will bring us significantly forward toward our goals, more work remains.

We will learn more every day from our partners, from our experiences with communities and with our pilot projects, from young people and from all Nova Scotians. In fact, our new **Crime Prevention Division** is being created to seek out advice, build on progress, and fill any gaps.

We look forward to working with communities and individual Nova Scotians as we put this plan—to fight crime together—into action.

Introduction

As Nova Scotians, we value our quality of life. Individually, our quality of life is defined by how we live, what we do, and how we do it. Collectively as a province, we link quality of life to our social prosperity.

As a government, we have released a framework for social prosperity, entitled *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric* (see <http://gov.ns.ca/coms/departement/Publications.html>).

Our vision for social prosperity is:

“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.”

Further, one of our five goals is for all Nova Scotians to feel and be safe in their communities.

Yet sadly, more and more Nova Scotians do not feel safe. They are worried about walking on their streets or in their communities. They are worried about their children being victims of, or their teenagers being lured into, criminal activity. Or they are worried about aging relatives or neighbours living alone. Often, watching the evening news only intensifies these worries.

It shouldn't be this way. We are a small province, where the vast majority of people care about and look out for each other and respect and obey our laws.

We have to take a stand together against the few who are threatening the quality of life for too many. Then, our vision of a province where Nova Scotians once again feel safe and are safe—will be achieved.

Background

Preventing and fighting crime are a top priority for Nova Scotians and for government.

In developing this strategy, we started by listening to what Nova Scotians had to say—our consultations. We also considered the reality of what is going on around us—our crime statistics here at home and the national picture.

Our Consultations

In May 2006, we created a Minister’s Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. The 25-member task force represented Nova Scotians of all ages, from communities large and small, and of differing experiences and ethnicities.

The task force held meetings and focus groups in 30 communities, as well as a focus group at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville. At these sessions, the task force heard from more than 800 people, some representing individuals and others representing one of the more than 50 participating organizations from communities. Another 120 Nova Scotians submitted comments in writing.

Nova Scotians delivered a very clear message:

“Vigorous attention is needed to address crime to restore their sense of safety and pride in having a province where citizens can count on a satisfying quality of life.”

—Minister’s Task Force Report on Safer Streets and Communities

They also recognized that no simple or singular factor causes crime, nor will any solitary, straight-forward approach combat it. While the full task force report contains much interesting and informative detail (see www.gov.ns.ca/just), three significant themes guided their recommendations and the substance of this strategy

- More attention is needed to **prevent crime**: Nova Scotians recognize the root causes of crime (from poverty to poor role models, from changes in social values to the need for change in social programs, from substance abuse to lack of accountability for one’s actions). They believe more emphasis on addressing these root causes is the best way to prevent crime.
- We need to **intervene quickly and effectively** to keep those likely to offend from doing so, and to keep first-time offenders from living a life of crime.
- Nova Scotians want **tough laws**, and they want those laws **strictly enforced**—including swift and serious consequences for those who break the law.

These themes were also emphasized during the Nunn Commission, which was established by the provincial government to examine the circumstances surrounding the release of a young offender who ultimately caused a tragic and fatal car crash. While this commission focused on issues relating to youth, the weeks of emotional and informed testimony and pages of constructive and common-sense advice were a valuable guide.

Our success will take time, and will only be achieved by working and standing together.

Key Statistics

Crime in Canada and in Nova Scotia today is very different than it was just a few decades ago.

Incidence of Crime

Nationally

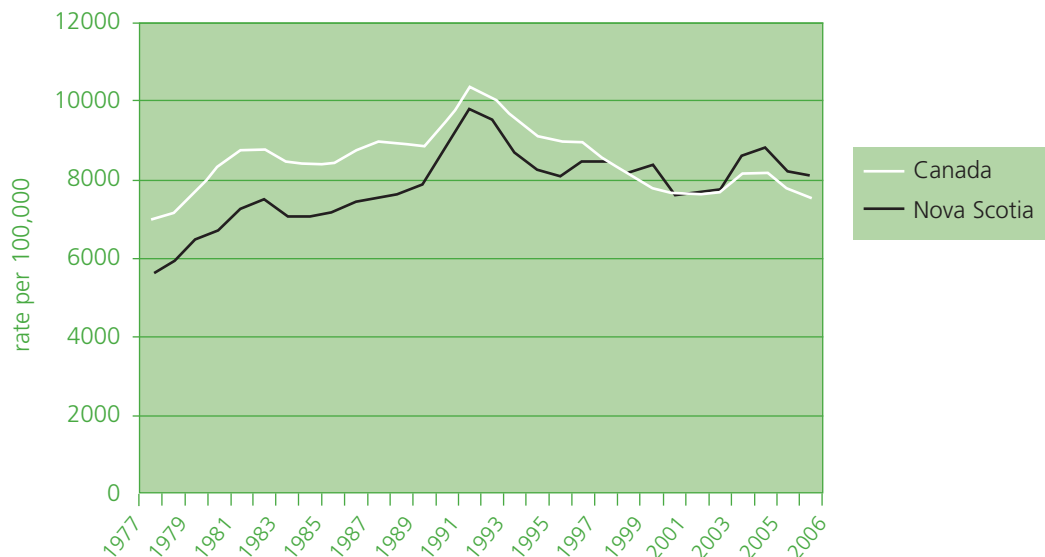
After increasing steadily throughout the '60s, '70s and '80s, the crime rate in Canada peaked in 1991.

People may be surprised to learn that since that time, the crime rate has decreased. In fact, just last year, the crime rate reached its lowest point in 25 years.

In Nova Scotia

We experienced a similar trend, with a 20 per cent decrease in crime between 1991 and 2001. However, between 2001 and 2004, we saw a steady increase in overall crime. In the last two years, we are seeing a slight decline. Overall, our crime rate in 2006 was higher than the national average, and the highest in eastern Canada.

Overall crime rate, Canada and Nova Scotia, 1977 to 2006



Source: Uniform Crime Reporting Survey, Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, Statistics Canada

Type of Crime

Despite the fact that crime is down compared to 15 years ago, we are very concerned that violent crime in Nova Scotia is 19 per cent above the national average. Even more worrisome, youth crime has been increasing since 1998 and is currently the third highest in the country.

Crime “Hot Spots”

Statistics can also pinpoint where more crimes, or more types of crime, are being committed. Pointing to “hot spots” for crime can lead to stigmatization of certain regions or communities and can overshadow the strengths within those communities.

But it would be irresponsible to ignore the realities that the statistics present. For example, like in the rest of Canada, we see higher rates of violent crime within our cities (Halifax and Cape Breton regional municipalities) and in communities struggling due to socio-economic circumstances.

These realities emphasize the need to closely link our efforts in crime prevention to efforts to strengthen communities. They also require us to work closely with the people living in and leading these communities to develop solutions that respond to their strengths and unique needs.

Costs of Crime

We can never put a price tag on the emotional cost of crime: the tragedy of losing a loved one, the feeling of being violated after a burglar has rifled through your personal belongings, a lifetime of looking over your shoulder or coping with physical injury, or the hopelessness and helplessness a parent feels seeing a son or daughter struggling with a drug addiction.

But we can put a price tag on the financial costs of crime. In Nova Scotia, taxpayers—through the federal and provincial governments—spend more than \$400 million a year to operate the criminal justice system, and the costs are climbing. When we add in economic losses to victims and the costs of insurance and private security, that number is even more significant.

Private businesses, large and small, also lose millions each year as a result of shoplifting, robberies, property damage, and fraud. As consumers, we pay for the losses that businesses suffer.

Violent crime and youth crime above the national average.

The National Picture

Nova Scotia's strategy is in line with the direction set by organizations such as the National Working Group on Crime Prevention. In its first report, *Building a Safer Canada*, the group calls for a vision for crime prevention, more resources targeted where they are needed most, actions based on research and evidence, public engagement, and a focus on sustainability. *Time to Fight Crime Together* is consistent with all of these recommendations.

As well, at the *Crime Reduction, Exploring Leading Practices* international conference on crime reduction held in Alberta this year, it was reassuring to learn that the key elements of our strategy echo themes from around the globe. A balance of enforcement, intervention, and prevention is working successfully elsewhere. Like others, our strategy also highlights key elements critical to success: engaging and mobilizing communities and individuals in responding to crime; building and solidifying partnerships; and enlisting strong and inspirational leaders who are able to bring the strategy to life and nurture its continued growth.

Strategy Approach

A team from the Department of Justice led the development of this strategy, while consulting with other professionals working in related government departments. First and foremost, the team based its work on the report of the Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. They also reviewed research and projects under way in the rest of the country and in the United States.

Based on this information, the team was guided by six principles and developed three pillars to support the strategy. They also developed a multi-year action plan and established clear linkages with related government strategies.

Guiding Principles

Our principles are based on what Nova Scotians told us they believe will work best to prevent and reduce crime. Our principles also reflect our values, as presented in our framework for social prosperity, *Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric*.

Our actions are focused on key priorities.

- Trying to do everything at once is likely to achieve nothing of substance.
- We will target our efforts at helping those individuals most likely to become victims (for example, seniors, children, and people living in communities where crime rates are higher) and stopping those individuals most likely to commit crime.
- We will focus on those crimes of most concern to most people: youth crime, drugs, organized and street crime (including swarmings, random violence, theft, assault, sexual assault, vehicle theft and vandalism).

We are doing what works, based on evidence, experience, and evaluation.

- Our new programs and actions are based on a track record proven elsewhere or in other research.
- We are expanding programs that are already achieving results in our own communities.
- Based on evaluations, we are prepared to discontinue programs and redirect our resources when programs are not demonstrating the results they set out to achieve.

Most crime is committed by repeat offenders: 15–20 per cent of Canadians commit 50–60 per cent of all crime.

We will achieve the greatest results by working more effectively together.

- Crime affects everyone, and everyone has a stake in making our communities safer.
- Individuals and organizations are already doing a lot. For example,
 - our dedicated police and criminal justice professionals work on our streets and communities, in our courts, and in our schools
 - our professionals in health, education, and social services work to prevent crime and to keep first-time offenders from reoffending
 - our businesses and individual homeowners invest in their own security
 - our volunteers work with kids and in neighbourhood watch and citizens' patrol programs—making a real difference in keeping our communities safe

However, these efforts are not always well co-ordinated, well-known, or evaluated. Some with the greatest potential may struggle for funding. Most, if not all, would benefit by working as part of a network or partnership where experience, expertise, and information can be readily shared.

We must be innovative, inclusive, and flexible.

- We can only expect to get different results if we are prepared to do things differently through innovation.
- Communities—of different size, culture, ethnicity, interest, and location—have unique needs and strengths. They also have the best sense of how to build on their strengths, and to overcome their challenges. That requires an inclusive approach, defining and addressing problems and programs and services that are relevant and respectful to all cultures and communities.
- We must be flexible in responding to changing circumstances in our communities, as well as to changing patterns of crime. For example, advances in technology have created new opportunities for cyber-criminals who use the Internet to prey on vulnerable seniors and children.

We want results that can be sustained over time.

- We must balance our efforts in ridding the streets of crime (enforcement) with intervention and prevention, if we want to see lasting effects.
- We must support communities in developing their own networks and resources to respond to local priorities, so they have the capacity and resilience to sustain their efforts and success.

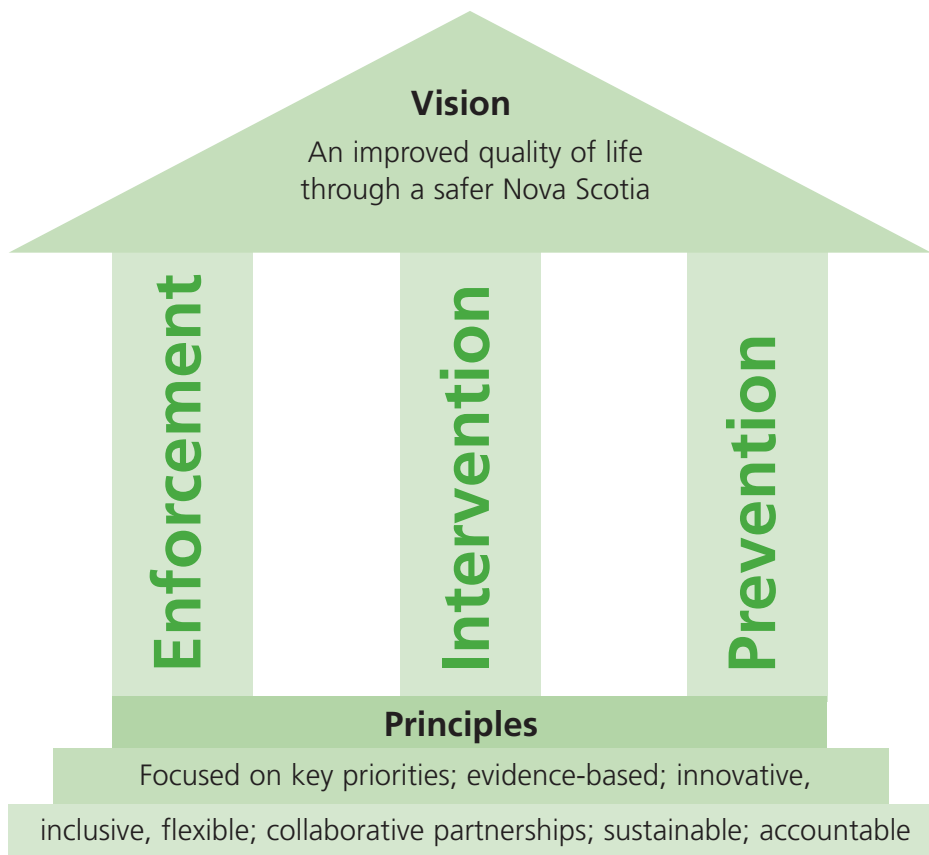
We share responsibility and accountability for results.

- We all have a role to play, such as obeying the law, assisting police, and supervising and acting as positive role models for our children and young people.
- Government is responsible for providing leadership in creating partnerships and putting this strategy into action, as well as for funding and delivering programs, cost-effectively, that support the strategy goals.
- Annual reports on progress toward our expected results will help hold everyone accountable for how we are meeting our responsibilities.

Pillars

We are taking a balanced approach:

- Catching lawbreakers and holding them accountable for their crimes—**enforcement**
- Identifying and working with those at risk of offending or reoffending—**intervention**
- Addressing the root causes of crime—**prevention**



Linkages with Related Government Strategies

Consistent with our approach in our social prosperity framework, we are integrating efforts within our crime prevention and reduction strategy with other related government strategies. As we consulted other government departments, we identified about 20 related strategies and more than 100 related programs and services. Examples of four strategies—new or under development—with direct links are

- *Our Kids Are Worth It, Our Strategy for Children and Youth*—see <http://gov.ns.ca/coms/departement/Publications.html>
- poverty reduction strategy, now under development, and a key factor in addressing the root causes of crime
- drug strategy, now under development, with a focus on prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and enforcement
- alcohol strategy, which promotes responsible use of alcohol—see www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/addictionprevention.html

Nova Scotians told the task force that drug-related crime was their number one concern.

Vision and Goals

Our Vision

The Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities set a vision that is clear in its simplicity:

An improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia

Our Goals

Primary Goal:

People are and feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.

We have also linked our goals to our three pillars: enforcement, intervention, and prevention.

Enforcement

- Those in conflict with the law are held accountable.

Intervention

- The frequency and severity of offending and victimization are reduced.

Prevention

- Individuals at risk of being involved with crime are supported in ways to reduce the likelihood of offending.
- Communities and individuals are actively involved in creating a safer Nova Scotia.

Enforcement

- *People are and feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.*
- *Those in conflict with the law are held accountable.*

Context

Enforcement is about

- having effective laws, including swift, serious consequences for committing serious crimes
- catching those who break the law
- keeping communities safe and holding offenders accountable

Effective Laws; Swift, Serious Consequences

Nova Scotians are very concerned about the effectiveness of laws—in particular, about our ability to keep individuals charged with, or convicted of, serious crimes in custody. They understand that effective laws with appropriate consequences not only keep criminals off our streets and away from our communities, but are significant factors in deterring crime.

Our strategy contains new and recently introduced provincial laws in priority areas. However, law-making is a shared responsibility among the federal, provincial, and municipal governments. In developing our strategy, we must understand and work within the realities of the laws under the sole jurisdiction of the federal government.

The federal Youth Criminal Justice Act is the most obvious example. By and large, this is good legislation that works for most youth, most of the time. It recognizes that part of growing up is about making mistakes and that balancing consequences with counselling, supervision, and support is the best way to help young people lead productive instead of destructive lives.

However, we have lobbied for changes to the federal act because it is simply not working for repeat young offenders or those who commit serious offences. In general terms, the act does not recognize public protection as a primary goal and promotes release into the community, limiting custody options available to the court.

Similarly, we have continued to press for changes to the Criminal Code of Canada that would see stricter bail conditions for those accused, and stiffer penalties for those convicted, of serious crimes.

Understanding these limitations is critical in understanding and implementing our strategy. But it is no excuse for inaction.

We can advocate for changes to federal laws—by presenting our concerns persistently, persuasively, and in person. We are.

We can push our laws and legal options to the limit—by getting offenders into court quickly and promoting the maximum sentences allowed. We’re doing that.

And we can develop programs and controls—such as the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre and electronic supervision to monitor offenders placed on community supervision by the courts. Our strategy expands our efforts in these areas too.

Catching Lawbreakers

No one likes to look in the rear-view mirror and see flashing red lights, and we always fear the worst news when we see a police officer at our door. But despite performing these seemingly thankless jobs, our police officers deserve our utmost gratitude and respect.

Quite simply, when police pull over a speeding car, they may be preventing an accident down the road. And each time police officers approach a car, a locked door, or a dark alley, they are potentially putting their lives at risk to protect ours.

They are doing a great job. In fact, we may be seeing a rise in our crime rate, not because more crime is being committed, but because more offenders are getting caught.

Crime shows make everyone aware of how the latest tools and technology can help police track and catch offenders. But good, old-fashioned tips and eye-witness reports from the general public remain one of the best sources of information and intelligence available to police.

Keeping Communities Safe, Holding Offenders Accountable

Nova Scotians want people who are thinking about committing or leading a life of crime to know they will face certain and swift consequences for doing so.

Our judges, prosecutors, probation officers, court officials, sheriffs and staff in our correctional facilities are doing their part. They work in very stressful situations—responsible for difficult, life-altering decisions and in daily contact with criminals and often traumatized victims.

We all have a role to play in helping police catch lawbreakers.

We need to ensure that the procedures and rules they are expected to follow are clear and streamlined—with as little red tape as possible. We also need to ensure that they have the training and the resources they need to do their jobs effectively and get offenders to trial and through the court system as quickly as possible.

Victims can also play an important role in holding offenders accountable. We need to encourage and support victims—who may be fearful or simply don't know where to turn for help—in reporting crime and in testifying against their offenders.

What's Happening Now

In Summary

- Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act
- Protection from Illegal Drugs Act
- Plan to Reduce Case-Processing Delays
- Federal Amendments, Review of the Youth Criminal Justice Act
- Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia
- Rewards for Major Unsolved Crimes Program
- Electronic Supervision, Home Checks
- Youth Bail Supervision
- Domestic Violence Case Co-ordination Program
- Criminal Injuries Counselling Program
- Provincial Victims' Services Program

Effective Laws; Swift, Serious Consequences

Making Our Communities Safer

In January of 2007, the **Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act** came into effect, targeted at shutting down illegal activities (e.g., prostitution, illegal drug use, alcohol sales, and gaming) in residential and commercial buildings or properties.

Citizens aware of illegal activity can confidentially call a complaint line (1-877-35-SAFER), and the new Public Safety Investigation Unit will follow up. If the investigation confirms the illegal activity is occurring and the surrounding community or neighbourhood is adversely affected, a court order can be issued to shut down the operation.

The 2004 Statistics Canada General Social Survey estimates only about 33 per cent of crimes come to the attention of police.

To date, we've shut down illegal operations at 25 different sites.

The **Protection from Illegal Drugs Act** will soon be proclaimed, allowing government to regulate the storage, transportation, distribution, and sale of ingredients and equipment used to produce illegal drugs. This act requires businesses and individuals to notify police if any such materials are lost or stolen.

Bringing Offenders to Court More Quickly

Offenders should experience consequences as soon as is realistically possible after a crime is committed. This is true for people of all ages, but particularly significant for youth. We are taking a number of steps to **reduce case-processing delays** and bring offenders to court more quickly:

- We will work with our justice partners to bring youth charged with serious and violent offences to court for their first appearance within seven days.
- We have set a new case-processing target to get all youth accused of crime into court sooner. We will meet and revise this target by continuing efforts with our justice partners to identify and resolve issues that cause delays.
- The Public Prosecution Service has hired two additional youth Crown attorneys.
- New clinical social workers and psychologists have been hired to speed up mental health assessments.

Amending the Youth Criminal Justice Act

Nova Scotians say they are most concerned about the federal Youth Criminal Justice Act. Unfortunately, this act is also outside of our direct control. This said, our persistent lobbying efforts—including five trips to Ottawa by three successive Nova Scotia justice ministers—are paying off.

On November 19, 2007, the federal justice minister introduced amendments to the **Youth Criminal Justice Act**, amendments that the Nova Scotia Justice Minister has urged all members of Parliament and senators to support.

If passed, the amendments will provide more flexibility to allow courts to hold a youth when their behaviour is a danger to themselves or others. The changes will also allow courts to consider denunciation and deterrence when sentencing youth. The federal government has also committed to a full review of the act in 2008.

Handing Out Stiffer Sentences

The federal government's new drug strategy also responds to issues of concern for Nova Scotians, including **stiffer sentences for those who profit from or lure others into drug-related crime**. While we have questions about how the strategy will be implemented, we support its direction.

Within our own jurisdiction, Nova Scotians want offenders convicted of serious, violent, and repeat crimes to receive stiffer sentences. While the Public Prosecution Service and judges must act within the scope of consequences defined in law, the Public Prosecution Service is taking steps to support prosecutors in their efforts to actively influence sentencing. For example, **professional development on crimes of violence** and new resources, such as a **comprehensive manual** with the latest research and resources **on key issues relating to sexual assault trials**, have been provided to all Crown prosecutors.

Getting Drunk Drivers off the Roads

Government has introduced **tough new anti-drunk driving legislation**. Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) recognized our progress in their 2007 report on the activities of all provinces and territories, stating that our province was among four that “led the way in introducing important legislative reforms.”

Catching Lawbreakers

Hiring More Police, Working on Highest Priorities

People want to see more police officers on their streets and in their communities. That is happening.

In 2006, we committed to provide \$65 million to hire **250 new police officers** over four years to work across the province. Within the first two years, every municipality will receive at least one additional officer. Already, funding has been provided to municipal police forces and the RCMP to hire 80 new officers.

Many of the new officers have been assigned to **Street Crime Enforcement Units**, which have improved information sharing and co-ordination between the municipal police forces, RCMP, and Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia (see below). This, in turn, supports greater success in responding to crimes of concern to most Nova Scotians.

Police Working in Partnership

Like in other areas of government and public service, police can achieve greater results by working more effectively together. In 2006, **Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia** was created to gather and share criminal intelligence information among all provincial police agencies.

We have committed \$6.1 million over four years to fund this service. Part of this funding has been used to hire 13 local intelligence officers to work in six districts across the province. Gathering and sharing information and intelligence are recognized nationally and internationally as the best ways to prevent, detect, and **disrupt organized crime**.

Already, we are seeing results.

Some Success Stories

- Information that Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia shared with the Pictou County Street Crime Enforcement Unit was used for a search warrant on a private residence. As a result, 74 grams of marijuana, \$1,040 in cash, and a weapon were seized.
- In the South Shore, the RCMP, Bridgewater Police, Street Crime Enforcement Team, the Marijuana Grow Team, and Cross Border Services Agency worked together to seize cocaine, crack cocaine, ecstasy pills, marijuana, hashish, magic mushrooms, morphine, illegal tobacco and cigarettes, large amounts of stolen goods, weapons, and cash. This effort resulted in 27 charges.

Helping Everyone Do Their Part

Individuals can help police catch lawbreakers by being observant and sharing information. We have already talked about the Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods Act, which enables citizens to report illegal activities in their communities (see p. 25).

We have also launched a **Rewards for Major Unsolved Crimes Program**. This program is intended to encourage Nova Scotians to provide information to police concerning major unsolved crimes. Police agencies submit the cases they believe could benefit most from more public information, and a reward will be provided to anyone who provides information that leads to a conviction.

This program brings cases that many people have forgotten about back into the public eye. A number of victims' families—and the police agencies that submitted the cases—have expressed their gratitude for the program. Even when cases remain unsolved, victims' families are comforted to know that their loved ones have not been forgotten and that police and government are still trying to solve the crimes.

Businesses and special events organizers also have a role to play. For example, many hire private security to keep their customers and event participants safe. To support this effort, the **Private Investigators and Private Guards Act** requires that businesses hire licensed private investigators and guards. Criminal records checks are a requirement for licensing, to ensure that the security industry is not infiltrated by unlawful activity.

Keeping Communities Safe, Holding Offenders Accountable

Keeping Communities Safe

Not surprisingly, Nova Scotians are particularly fearful and concerned about those accused of or convicted of serious crimes, who are living in their communities. These individuals may be awaiting trial, out on bail, on probation, on house arrest, or serving a conditional sentence.

We are using the latest technology to supervise certain high-risk adult offenders. **Electronic supervision**—using global positioning system (GPS) technology—can keep track of the activities of these offenders 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

An offender on electronic supervision wears an ankle bracelet and monitoring device that provides location information to an Offender Monitoring Centre. If an offender on house arrest leaves home, the monitoring centre is immediately notified. As well, exclusion zones can be established (for example, an offender who poses a risk to youth can be excluded from going to or near a school). Again, the monitoring centre is notified if the offender enters an excluded zone.

Electronic supervision is currently used for those offenders under house arrest who present the greatest risk to reoffend. Probation officers and police monitor other offenders on house arrest and curfew through **random house checks**.

We have also recently introduced a **youth bail supervision program** in the Halifax Regional Municipality. This program is available as an alternative to custody for youth who agree to follow strict conditions if released on bail. Those conditions include a 9 p.m. curfew; daily reports by telephone and weekly visits to probation officers; and participation in counselling, education, or other programs. The program is operated out of the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre (see pp. 40–41), providing these youth with direct access to a wide range of programs and services designed to help them become responsible, productive citizens.

Helping Victims Hold Offenders Accountable

Victims of crime often struggle with a range of emotions—from anxiety and fear, to a sense of hopelessness and helplessness, to even the belief that they themselves are somewhat to blame. These emotions can make reporting crimes and testifying against the offenders extremely difficult and traumatic for victims; yet their role in helping to hold offenders accountable is critical.

Some existing programs intended to help victims include the following.

- The **Domestic Violence Case Co-ordination Program** provides funding to police to support co-ordinated case management and information sharing with related agencies in cases of family violence.
- The **Criminal Injuries Counselling Program** provides funding for victims to get the professional help they need.
- The **Provincial Victims Services Program** provides support and information to victims as cases proceed through the justice system, including support targeted at the special needs of children who are victims of or witnesses to crime. The program also assists victims in preparing victim impact statements to be considered at sentencing hearings.

Next Steps

In Summary

- Youth Liaison Workers Pilot Project
- Provincial Proceeds of Crime Unit and Legislation
- New Police Officers
- Collaborative, Regional Crime Reduction Teams
- Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act
- Integrated Impaired Driving Enforcement Unit
- Security Intelligence Management Services Unit
- Expanded Electronic Supervision
- Expanded Youth Bail Supervision Program
- Provincial Drug Strategy
- Stronger Regulations for Private Security
- Restitution Collection Program

Effective Laws; Swift, Serious Consequences

Bringing Offenders into Court More Quickly

Building on existing efforts to reduce delays in case-processing times, we will work in partnership with community agencies to hire **youth liaison workers** for a pilot project in the Halifax Regional Municipality and Truro. The goal is to reduce the number of youth who arrive unprepared at arraignment and thereby shorten the time between when a crime is committed and when the youth is convicted or acquitted.

Youth liaison workers will work with young people from the time the police lay the charge until the arraignment to ensure that the youth is well prepared, has contacted legal aid, and knows when to attend court. This project will be based on youth court workers already employed by the **Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network**¹ and build on the youth court case management process they have in place.

The youth court case management process involves a caseworker contacting the youth, and his or her parents, two weeks before the first court appearance. The caseworker explains the youth's responsibilities, such as having a lawyer present, and gives them information about the time of their appearance, court location, parking, and other details.

Taking Proceeds of Crime Away from Offenders

One measure of the effectiveness of laws is their ability to deter crime. If criminals know that they may lose their house, cars, or other assets if it can be demonstrated they are related to a crime, they may think twice about committing the crime in the first place.

We want to create a new provincial **Proceeds of Crime Unit**—composed of the RCMP, municipal police, Public Prosecution Service, and the Department of Justice—that will have the power to seize or restrain assets that may be related to criminal activities or purchased from the profits of crime.

We have introduced new legislation to ensure that these assets are properly managed and protected until the offender is dealt with through the courts. If the court directs, forfeited assets may be sold, and the money raised may be directed to crime prevention programs, victim compensation, and law enforcement grants.

A provincial Proceeds of Crime Unit would, for the first time, enable provincially prosecuted Criminal Code offences, and assets seized, to be appropriately dealt with.

¹ The network is an umbrella organization, based on a partnership among the Union of Nova Scotia Indians, Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, Mi'kmaw-Nova Scotia-Canada Tripartite Forum, Nova Scotia Native Women's Association, Native Council of Canada, and the federal and provincial governments.

Catching Lawbreakers

Hiring More Police, Working in Partnership

In this, the second year of our additional police officer program, we will be allocating officers to municipal police services and the RCMP based on the needs of communities and on provincial priorities that will advance us toward our strategy goals. We are particularly focusing attention on plans for new officers to work collaboratively with other police forces, with schools, and with other community agencies.

For example, more officers will be allocated to work in schools as **community-school resource officers**. These officers not only serve as positive role models for young people, but they can deter bullying and other abuse, and gain valuable information that can limit and shut down drug-, alcohol-, and gang-related activities involving youth, on and off school grounds.

We are also supporting the development of **collaborative, regional crime reduction teams**, building on the Street Crime Enforcement Units now in place.

The Street Crime Enforcement Units are improving the co-ordination and effectiveness of activities involving municipal police, the RCMP, and the Criminal Intelligence Service Nova Scotia in fighting street crime.

We will sponsor a **provincial workshop** where police involved in these units can share their experiences, successes, and challenges with their colleagues. We will also seek their advice on how we can build on this collaborative approach, involving other agencies that support enforcement efforts.

Over the longer term, we are interested in broadening the focus of the collaborative teams to include intervention and prevention efforts. For example, in British Columbia, collaborative teams focus on **preventing first-time offenders from becoming repeat offenders**.

Together with police, team members from community and government agencies work to help get offenders' lives back on track so they are more likely to live peacefully and productively within their communities. The team of professionals develops a range of programs and services tailored to the unique needs of the individual.

For example:

- probation officers provide appropriate supervision
- education and employment professionals help the offender learn new skills and find work
- counsellors and mental health professionals help the individual cope with anger or other emotional and psychological issues

We will support the establishment of **four collaborative regional crime reduction teams** on a pilot basis. Our first team will be located in the South Shore, building on their work within their Street Crime Enforcement Unit. Each team will have unique features and focus, and the lessons learned collectively will help shape the expansion of this approach province-wide.

Getting Critical Information to Police Quickly

The success in catching someone who breaks the law is related to how quickly police receive critical information. Government has introduced new legislation—the **Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act**—to require hospitals and other health-care facilities to report gun shot and stab wounds to police. Police have said the critical first hours of an investigation are lost if these wounds are not reported when someone seeks medical treatment. Hospitals can report anonymously and are protected against legal action.

Getting Drunk Drivers off the Road

Partnerships and collaboration are key in our efforts to get more drunk drivers off the road. As a pilot project, municipal police and RCMP will work closely together as part of an **Integrated Impaired Driving Enforcement Unit**. The unit will develop enforcement strategies, based on the unit's combined experience, expertise, and awareness of their community needs.

This approach will be tested first in Southwest Nova Scotia, involving the Bridgewater and Kentville police services and the RCMP. This project will be evaluated to determine if and how more units should be created across the province.

Stiffer Sentences

We are somewhat limited by the Criminal Code of Canada and the Youth Criminal Justice Act in our ability to hold offenders in custody while awaiting trial, as well as to impose stiffer sentences for serious, violent crimes.

This said, we are encouraged by recent statements and actions by the federal government. We support the tougher penalties proposed in their drug strategy. We are also encouraged by their amendments to, and plans for a full review of, the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

Further, the federal Criminal Code has been amended to limit the use of conditional sentences for convictions. We endorse this direction, and the Public Prosecution Service is issuing a new policy re-emphasizing their position that conditional sentences are inappropriate for any cases involving serious violence.

Within the scope of our authority, the Justice Minister has directed the Public Prosecution Service "to employ every appropriate means" to ensure that individuals accused of committing violent crimes are kept in custody before and during the trial process. As well, prosecutors have been instructed to continue to vigorously pursue any offender who commits a crime, or breaches terms of their release, when on bail.

Our goal, through this and other road safety measures, is to reduce drunk-driving collisions by 40 per cent by 2010.

Conditional sentences are never appropriate for offenders convicted of serious, violent crime.

Expecting the Unexpected

The brazen attacks on September 11, 2001, brought the reality of international terrorism very close to home. While this is not a top-of-mind concern for Nova Scotians on a day-to-day basis, they rely on their governments to expect the unexpected and prepare accordingly.

A new **Security Intelligence Management Services Unit** is being created within the Department of Justice. The unit will be responsible for receiving intelligence and information on security matters and sharing that information with senior officials involved in public safety. This includes being entrusted with secret, classified intelligence information related to international, national, regional, and provincial threat assessments.

Keeping Communities Safe, Holding Offenders Accountable

Expanding our Electronic Supervision

We are expanding our electronic supervision of adults to now include voice verification technology, and we will extend our electronic supervision to youth.

Voice verification is an automated telephone monitoring system that uses the latest technology to confirm that an offender under house arrest or close supervision is actually at home. This will help supervise approximately 350 offenders serving conditional sentences province-wide.

We are also **extending our electronic supervision to youth**. If they leave the house arrest location when they are not supposed to—or don't meet curfew—we'll know it. This will increase their understanding that if they break the conditions of their bail or release, they will be caught and held accountable.

Voice verification for adults and youth will be available province-wide. The use of ankle bracelets for youth will be tested on high-risk youth in the Halifax Regional Municipality first, because the number of offenders creates the greatest need. We will consider the need and benefits of extending this electronic supervision of youth in other parts of the province in 2008–2009.

Expanding Supervision of Youth on Bail

We will evaluate our Youth Bail Supervision Program and the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre now operating in the Halifax Regional Municipality in 2008. Based on these evaluations, we expect to expand the program to more parts of the province—to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality in 2008–2009 and the Annapolis Valley in 2009–2010.

Youth bail supervision increases the accountability of young offenders and keeps the community safer in two ways: youth are subject to strict rules and supervision, and they are linked to programs and services that can reduce the likelihood of their continuing to break the law.

Protecting against Drug-Related Crime

The task force reports that Nova Scotians in every community it visited expressed concerns about drug use and drug-related crimes. They are particularly concerned about drug use and availability in schools and believe that other crimes in their communities are directly related to drug use and addictions.

The task force specifically recommends that we develop a provincial drug strategy that includes a strong enforcement message. We agree. **A provincial drug strategy is under development.** As part of this work, we are reviewing the stiff penalties proposed by the federal government for people who lure or victimize others through drug-related crime.

The Departments of Justice and Health Promotion and Protection are leading the development of the drug strategy. Justice is also working with Education, Community Services, Health, Aboriginal Affairs, and African Nova Scotian Affairs to ensure the strategy balances enforcement with prevention, treatment, and harm reduction issues.

Helping Everyone Do Their Part

Building on the supports we now provide to victims, we are developing information to share with Crown attorneys and the judiciary to encourage and support the testimony of vulnerable witnesses, particularly children. The goal is to ensure that the court process does not cause undue stress or harm to a child and to support the child's ability to give accurate, reliable testimony.

Businesses and special events organizers want their customers and event participants to have confidence in the ability of the private security guards they hire to keep them safe. New **legislation governing the private security industry** will help build this public confidence by

- strengthening training standards
- extending regulations to all security providers (such as commissionaires and in-house security staff)
- enhancing our ability to monitor compliance with these standards and to investigate complaints

Holding Offenders Accountable

We expect offenders to pay for their crimes in more ways than one. Beyond sentencing, we expect offenders to compensate their victims for losses when the court orders them to do so.

We will develop a **Restitution Collection Program** that

- includes measures to improve collection rates, such as linking the payment of restitution to other programs under the province's control, such as renewal of drivers' licences
- gathers and reports statistics on the frequency and amounts of restitution ordered by the courts, as well as collection rates

We will also help victims present their victim impact statements by covering their travel and other expenses associated with attending sentencing hearings. We will also make victims' services more accessible in Aboriginal communities.

Expected Results

- Lower crime rates
- Offenders in court more quickly
- More reporting of crime to police
- Less fear of crime and greater confidence in the criminal justice system

Intervention

- *People are and feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.*
- *The frequency and severity of offending and victimization are reduced.*

Context

Intervention and prevention are closely linked. Certain factors or conditions can increase the likelihood of someone committing crime, or of crime happening in a particular place. Intervening early with these individuals, or in partnership with these communities, can prevent future crime and violence.

Within this context, intervention is about

- planning effectively, based on the needs of and risks associated with the offender
- providing the right mix of supervision and support
- helping victims protect against revictimization

We are also talking about intervention after a crime has been committed or after someone has gotten into trouble with the law.

Planning the right intervention begins with using reliable tools to assess the offender's needs (e.g., the underlying reasons, including socio-economic factors, emotional and mental health issues, and negative or absent relationships) and risks. A team of qualified professionals can use these tools—added to what their own experience and expertise tell them—to develop tailored case-management and monitoring plans that match the unique needs and circumstances of individual offenders and minimize risk for communities.

An effective intervention plan should have the right mix of **supervision and support**. Specifically:

- What level of supervision is needed to keep communities safe and to help prevent offenders from reoffending?
- What kind of support is needed so an offender can live a peaceful, productive life once they return to the community after custody?

We are all accountable for our actions and must take responsibility if we break the law. Some motivations—such as greed, a quest for power and control, or feelings of invincibility—are unacceptable by any standard. This said, some offenders are in trouble with the law, because they are in trouble themselves.

Some people who commit crime grew up surrounded by crime. Some have low literacy skills, can't find work, or believe they have to commit crime to feed themselves or their families. Others struggle with mental health issues or addictions.

They still need to be held accountable. They still need to be closely supervised. But it is in their—and our—best interests that they get the support they need to lead productive lives that no longer put their neighbours and communities at risk.

We also want to **intervene with victims**, in ways that can help them protect themselves from being repeatedly victimized. The best example of this is the need to support victims of family violence.

These victims are not only dealing with physical pain or loss of material possessions. They are emotionally traumatized because they have been hurt by someone they love and trust. Or even if those feelings have been shattered, they may be relying on that person for financial support, or for a roof over their head, or to help them raise their children.

We commonly think of family abuse as abuse between spouses or intimate partners, but seniors and persons with disabilities are also vulnerable, fearing they will have no one to care for them if they speak out. Abuse and violence against children and teens can put their future lives in jeopardy and continue a cycle of victimization and crime we want to end.

We need to help these victims cope with their trauma and range of emotions. We need to help them identify other options available to them. And we need to support them as they take steps to protect themselves against revictimization.

What's Happening Now

In Summary

- Risk Assessment Tools
- Restorative Justice
- Halifax Youth Attendance Centre
- Reintegration Planning for Youth
- Respectful Relationships
- Sexual Offender Assessment and Treatment
- Options to Anger
- Literacy Support
- Framework for Action against Family Violence
- Domestic Violence Intervention Act

Planning the Right Intervention

Probation officers generally prepare case management and monitoring plans for offenders. Effective case management plans and interventions begin with assessing

- the unique needs and circumstances of the offender (e.g., addictions, emotional or mental health issues, employability)
- the risks the offender poses to reoffend (e.g., past history, peers or other associates, family or other support networks)

Validated risk assessment tools are used for all youth and adults under community supervision—and for all youth sentenced into custody. In the near future, they will also be used for all adults sentenced into custody.

Providing the Right Mix of Supervision and Support

Holding Young Offenders Accountable to Their Victims

Interventions that help offenders—particularly youth—understand the impact of their actions on their victims and communities are proving to be particularly effective.

Our **Restorative Justice Program** is perhaps the best example. This program is available to young offenders who meet certain criteria (most notably, that the public is not considered to be at risk and the youth accepts responsibility for his or her actions). The goals of this community-led program are to reduce the number of repeat offenders, increase victim satisfaction, strengthen communities, and increase public confidence in the justice system.

Community justice agencies, which deliver Restorative Justice, work with youth, challenging them to confront their actions and holding them directly accountable. Once the agency has completed the detailed preparation, community volunteers bring offenders and their victims together, face to face (often joined by their families and other community members).

During these sessions, youth get a full understanding of the impact of their actions, and victims have a voice in the process. The youth must sign an agreement that includes measures to make up for the harm they have caused and can include compensation to their victims and communities.

Again, community volunteers play a key role in supervising youth as they meet the commitments they have made to those they have harmed. Our preliminary evaluation shows exceptional results. Further, a recent evaluation showed that youth referred to Restorative Justice are less likely to again come into conflict with the law.

Because Restorative Justice is community-led, partnerships with Aboriginal and African Nova Scotian communities have led to models that are relevant and respectful to different cultures. For example, the Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network provides a range of specialized programs, including a Restorative Justice service for Aboriginal youth.

As well, through our partnership with the Community Justice Society, we are supporting a pilot program within the Halifax Regional Municipality. This program provides Restorative Justice and other interventions for African Nova Scotian youth through two community outreach centres.

Supervising and Supporting Young Offenders within the Community

Earlier this year, we opened the **Halifax Youth Attendance Centre**. The centre provides **supervision and structured programming** tailored to meet the individual needs of young offenders. These youth must have been ordered by the court to community supervision with the condition that they participate in behavioural or educational programming.

Professionals—including probation officers, youth workers, teachers, an employment counsellor, social worker, and psychologist—work together, under the direction of an on-site deputy superintendent from the Nova Scotia Youth Facility. They offer a full-time, weekday education program for up to 20 youth, as well as evening and weekend programs for more than 200 other youth under community supervision. Programs range from education, employment, and life-skills programs, to counselling and support for addictions, anger management, and other emotional and mental health issues.

About 90 per cent of youth meet the commitments they make to the people they have harmed.

These professionals also work closely with family members and build partnerships with community agencies, as defined in the individual's case management plan.

Helping Young Offenders Return Successfully to Community Life

We have developed a **reintegration planning process** to support a young person's successful return home and into the community.

Planning begins during the first month that youth are in custody. The planning involves the supervising youth worker at the Nova Scotia Youth Facility, parents or guardians, appropriate community agencies (e.g., school professionals, addictions staff, social workers, health professionals), the supervising probation officer, and youth themselves.

By bringing the right team of professionals and the people who care together early—and keeping the team connected during and after custody—we can ensure that the right mix of supports and services is in place when the youth is released back into the community. Once implemented, the plan can be amended as circumstances change, in order to support the individual's successful transition back into the community and to promote responsible future behaviour.

The Mi'kmaw Legal Support Network is piloting reintegration support services, based on Mi'kmaw traditions and customs and provided in the family's language of choice, for all Aboriginal persons released from federal institutions.

Promoting Responsible Behaviour, Accountability among Adult Offenders

We offer a number of programs to offenders in custody or under community supervision:

- **Respectful Relationships** is designed to help men understand what domestic abuse is, how they have been using abusive behaviour, and how to cope with anger or in other situations that have previously escalated to violence.
- The **Provincial Sexual Offender Assessment and Treatment Program** is an intensive program designed to help sexual offenders understand the harm caused by their behaviour and what triggers their behaviour. This helps them identify situations and risks that could lead to their reoffending. They also help offenders avoid risky situations and present other ways for offenders to respond when they find themselves in a high-risk situation (e.g., leave the situation, call someone to help). The program is led by the East Coast Forensic Hospital and supported by probation officers.
- The **Options to Anger Program** helps offenders understand what causes their anger—including the early physical and emotional warning signs—and helps them cope with anger in other ways. Probation officers, youth workers, and correctional workers deliver this program to adult and youth offenders. We are also working with school boards interested in adapting this program for use as a preventative program in our schools.

- **Literacy Support** is provided for offenders who need help to become successful, fluent readers. This can help them develop other skills, find work, and increase their quality of life—all factors that reduce the likelihood of their becoming repeat offenders.

Substance abuse education, substance abuse management, CALM (Controlling Anger and Learning to Manage It), VOICES (a program of self-discovery and empowerment for girls), and cultural and recreational programs are other examples.

Helping Victims Protect against Revictimization

For more than a decade, we have worked to improve the response of the justice system to the serious problem of intimate partner violence.

The **Framework for Action against Family Violence** provided justice partners with a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of family violence and a clear vision of the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in addressing the issue. This supported the collaborative efforts of justice workers and relevant agencies to improve procedures for responding to family violence, promoting more arrests, charges, and prosecutions. The framework also focused on enhancing support for victims.

Building on this work, the **Domestic Violence Intervention Act** allows the justice system to act immediately to protect victims in emergency situations. Through a 30-day emergency protection order, the victim can be granted exclusive possession of the family home, control over household property, temporary care and custody of children, and other protections. The offender may also be ordered to stay away from the victim. This supports other efforts, such as the high-risk domestic violence case co-ordination protocol. This protocol ensures that information about individuals at high risk of being abused is shared between police and social agencies.

Next Steps

In Summary

- Mental Health Court Program
- Community Partnerships
- Restorative Justice/Court Liaison Project
- Literacy Assessment Tool
- Restorative Justice Research
- More Attendance Centres
- Restorative Justice for High Risk Youth
- Community-Based Navigation and Referral
- Stronger Response to Family Violence and Violence against Women

Planning the Right Intervention

Supporting Offenders with a Mental Health Illness

Most people with mental illness seek treatment through their family doctors or from other health professionals. And the vast majority of people with mental illness never contemplate or commit crime.

However, some people with a mental health illness end up in court in greater need of counselling and treatment than custody and confrontation.

Working with the judiciary, we will develop a **Mental Health Court Program**.

In year one, we will begin to develop a “made in Nova Scotia” program that will address those offenders in need of mental health services. They will be held accountable for their behaviour in a way that is supportive and sensitive to their illness.

Those involved in holding persons with mental illness accountable should have expertise and experience in dealing with mental health issues. We will work with the Departments of Health and Community Services to develop this expertise.

In year two, we will implement the mental health court program, based on the best practices of other jurisdictions, tailored to meet the needs of Nova Scotians.

Building Community Partnerships

One of our strategy priorities is to target “hot spots” of crime. Yet naming those hot spots creates two problems.

First, associating crimes with a community ignores the many strengths that exist within that community. As well, sweeping generalizations about any community do not recognize the many peaceful, law-abiding people living within them.

Second, we don’t want to forewarn criminals within those communities that they are about to become the target of focused, strategic enforcement efforts—the success of which rely in part on an element of surprise.

We don’t need to identify hot spots of crime here. People living in communities with high crime rates know who and where they are and are the most frustrated—yet most committed to doing something about it.

But we cannot allow sensitivities around stigmatization serve as an excuse to stand still. We must **build solid partnerships with communities** with high crime rates that will make a difference.

As one example, we will pilot a **Restorative Justice/court liaison project** that will refer young people to Restorative Justice more quickly. The Halifax Community Justice Society (which is responsible for Restorative Justice in metro) will consult with police and Crown attorneys regarding possible referrals to Restorative Justice before arraignment. They will also have staff attend court on arraignment day to update the court on all Restorative Justice matters. Being in court on arraignment day also enables them to immediately begin interviews with youth referred to Restorative Justice by Crown attorneys.

Along with the benefits of more speedy intervention, this program has the added benefit of removing backlogs and speeding up case processing in our courts.

Using the Right Tools

We are building on the tools we have available to assess risk and plan the most appropriate intervention for offenders. As one example, we are working with the Department of Education to develop a **tool to assess literacy skills of youth** in custody or attending the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre. Teachers working with these youth can use this information to develop plans targeted at the strengths, skills, and struggles of the individual learner.

Building on Our Success in Restorative Justice through Research

We are working with our university and community partners (through the Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Community University Alliance) on a research project examining how to put the theory and principles of Restorative Justice most effectively into practice. Ways to deliver Restorative Justice that respect diversity, are gender-specific, and support equity—as well as how to measure program effectiveness—are some of the areas that will be examined over the five-year research program.

Providing the Right Mix of Supervision and Support

Targeting At-Risk Youth

Research and experience tell us who are at greatest risk of committing crime. We must use this information and target interventions before crime (or more serious crime) is committed. This is particularly important for youth.

Working with the Community Justice Society and other community leaders in the Halifax Regional Municipality, we will support a **Restorative Justice for High Risk Youth** pilot project.

In the Boston area, an agency called Roca makes intensive outreach efforts to youth on the street, getting them involved in education and employment programs, as well as community programs that help them develop skills to live self-sufficiently and out of harm's way. They also use "peacemaking circles," which teach young people and their families new ways of communicating and new ways of dealing with, and healing from, painful and difficult issues.

Our project will be adapted from the Roca model, which has gained international respect and recognition. While tailored to our needs, our project will help young people cope with anger and resolve conflict before they commit a crime (or commit a more serious crime). This will be accomplished by helping young people make stronger connections with their families and within their communities, and by offering conflict resolution sessions—based on a Restorative Justice model—that focus on healing and making positive choices.

Promoting Responsible Behaviour and Accountability

Early in 2008, we will evaluate the Halifax Youth Attendance Centre. While we expect the evaluation to provide information to fine-tune our programming and approach, we are confident that the model—which provides stable, structured support and supervision by a team of professionals—is working.

We plan to **expand the attendance centre model** to other communities following this evaluation.

- In 2008–2009, we will develop a youth attendance centre in Cape Breton, building on the Cape Breton Youth Resource Centre currently operated by the Salvation Army in Sydney.
- In 2009–2010, we will open a youth attendance centre in the Annapolis Valley, building on services offered through the Centre 24/7 program, operated by the Nova Scotia Youth Facility in Waterville.

We want to have confidence that, when an offender is released from custody, he or she is ready and able to live peacefully within our communities. Yet, people just out of custody are often at a loss as to what steps they can take to succeed and remain crime-free. This is particularly true for young people, who often do not have the maturity, patience, family support, or social skills to support the right decisions.

"Programs that work offer hope to youth so that they can reach their full potential."

—Participant comment at task force meetings.

Building on our reintegration planning process for youth in custody (see p. 41), we will work with the John Howard Society to develop a **community-based navigation and referral service**. This service will link the individual with job search assistance, housing, training, and addictions and mental health support. Efforts will also be made to develop new community-based services such as circles of support. This will help strengthen the community's ability to support safety and crime prevention efforts.

We will test this approach in a pilot project in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Although targeted at young males between the ages of 18 and 24, the service will be available to all offenders released from custody in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Helping Victims Protect against Revictimization

We are building on our efforts to enhance our response to services for victims of family violence, intimate partner violence, and sexual assault. We also want to increase awareness relating to issues of violence against women.

We plan a comprehensive approach, based on partnerships within government and with community agencies. This comprehensive approach will include

- continuing to implement the high-risk domestic violence case co-ordination protocol to increase safety. This will include implementation of the new validated Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool. This new tool will improve police capacity to effectively assess risk.
- co-ordinating existing services, and identifying and filling service gaps
- continuing to provide annual training to justice stakeholders responding to family violence, and to develop training on new approaches such as the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment (ODARA) tool.
- developing information and approaches to change attitudes and misconceptions about family violence, sexual assault, and violence against women

We will also examine current policies and protocols to identify any necessary changes to support this comprehensive, co-ordinated approach.

Expected Results

- Less severe, less frequent offences
- More people successfully integrated into the community after contact with the criminal justice system
- More support for victims

Prevention

- *People are and feel safe and secure in their homes and communities.*
- *Individuals at risk of being involved with crime are supported in ways to reduce the likelihood of offending.*
- *Communities and individuals are actively involved in creating a safer Nova Scotia.*

Context

The primary mandate of the Department of Justice is enforcement—supporting the efforts of police, the courts, the Public Prosecution Service, Corrections staff, and others—by developing laws and funding policies and programs that hold offenders accountable.

As Commissioner Merlin Nunn stated simply, “It would be foolhardy to suggest that we can prevent all youth crime.” The truth of his statement extends to crime generally. Therefore, our primary focus on enforcement should and will remain.

This said, we can play a greater role in crime prevention—and we are.

Crime prevention involves

- **gathering and sharing information** needed for effective decision making
- **building partnerships** that tackle the root causes of crime (within government, with communities, municipalities, and schools)
- **involving and supporting individuals** in their efforts to prevent crime against themselves and their neighbours, as well as preventing crimes against children and seniors
- **providing leadership**

First, we are playing a leadership role in gathering and **sharing information needed for effective decision making.**

In a paper submitted to the Nunn Commission, *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia* (see www.gov.ns.ca/just), we outlined risk factors that are consistently and strongly related to delinquency, youth crime, and violence generally. In summary, the people most likely to offend

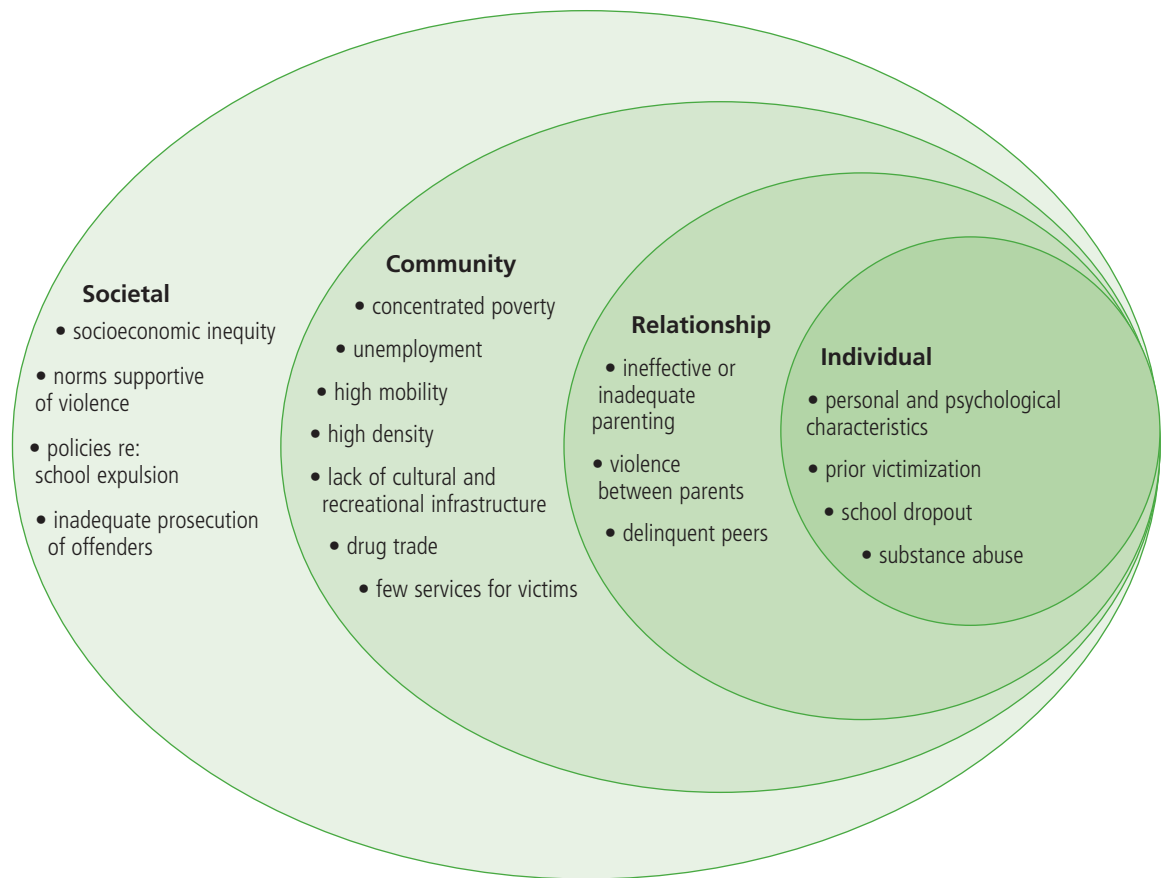
- live in poverty or in a neighbourhood with high crime
- lack positive role models and support—from within their families, among their peers, and in their communities
- struggle with learning difficulties, emotional problems, addictions, or mental illness
- have often been exposed to, or are victims of, crime themselves

In its *Building a Safer Canada* report, the National Working Group on Crime Prevention builds on this information, stating:

No single factor predisposes a person to become involved in crime ... Individuals are affected not only by their personal histories, but also by those in their immediate sphere, such as family members and peers, by their wider local community, and by society at large. (see diagram below)

Risk Factors for Crime and Delinquency

Adopted from World Health Organization (2002)



Because the causes of crime are complex and interrelated, so too must be our response. We must tackle crime together and on many fronts—in our homes, schools, streets, and communities. This requires us to **build partnerships**.

We already have partnerships in place among those working within the justice system—police, the courts, the Public Prosecution Service, Corrections staff, and others. Their day-to-day work motivates a shared and professional interest—and often a personal conviction—to prevent crime. They also recognize that combining their expertise and experience can bring greater results in preventing crime.

Reviewing the risk factors makes it very clear that people working in social policy—outside the justice system—must also play an active role in crime prevention. We must extend our partnerships to those working in social policy within government and in communities if we are to effectively respond to the root causes of crime.

Finally, we have information on where crime takes place and what factors can put Nova Scotians at greater risk of becoming victims. For example, unlocked doors, dark walkways, or an obvious lack of security can prove too tempting to criminals who might otherwise pass us by. Again, partnerships with communities and with related government departments will help us identify and communicate actions an individual can take to reduce their risk of becoming a victim.

What's Happening Now

In Summary

- Minister's Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities
- *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia*
- Partnerships within Government
- Partnerships with Communities, Municipalities
- Efforts of Volunteers, Homeowners

Gathering and Sharing Good Information

As we mentioned, *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia* is what Commissioner Nunn called a “substantial paper” that provides “statistical information on youth criminal activity, an overview of risk and protective factors, and insights on effective interventions ... although it is only a start.”

We agree. Within our next steps, we plan to build on this and other information resources to support work with our partners.

Building Partnerships

Partnering within Government

In October, 2007, we held our first Crime Prevention Strategy Stakeholders Round Table, involving all government departments and offices dealing with aspects of crime prevention. At that first meeting, we identified about 20 strategies and more than 100 programs and actions already under way that directly support the Crime Prevention Strategy.

Since that meeting, government has released a framework for social prosperity, *Weaving the Threads*. The framework's main themes are co-ordination, partnerships, and collaboration.

A framework provides direction and vision; while strategies outline specific actions that show how this direction and vision will make a difference in people's day-to-day lives. *Our Kids Are Worth It: Our Strategy for Children and Youth* was the first strategy released under this framework.

Our Kids are Worth It is also based on co-ordination and partnerships, both in how new pilot and provincial programs will be delivered and in how child- and youth-related strategies are linked across government. The interdepartmental committee that developed *Our Kids Are Worth It* also helped inform and develop *Time to Fight Crime Together*, and the two groups regularly exchange information.

As a result, both strategies are closely linked, and many of the crime prevention strategies that the task force recommended can be found within *Our Kids Are Worth It*. Specifically, the task force recommended initiatives:

- At the community level, including youth engagement, youth recreation, and access to programs that youth consider to be "cool." Youth engagement is one of the five key directions in *Our Kids Are Worth It*. As well as a commitment to pursuing community partnerships, we are committing to a **provincial youth network** to advise on programs and activities that engage youth in positive ways. We are also piloting **A Place to Belong** program, aimed at giving at-risk youth positive, "cool" ways to follow their passions and develop their talents.
- At the family level, with "supportive parenting programs" topping the list: *Our Kids Are Worth It* commits to a new **Parenting Journey** pilot project, which will expand home visits and other outreach services to families. As well, a successful **coaching program** (known as Family Help) will be expanded, where families with children who have behavioural problems receive information to help them cope.

- At the family level, with more assessment and early intervention: The child and youth strategy outlines a range of **early intervention and assessment programs**. As one example, beginning this year, the educational and general well-being of all grade primary students will be assessed to help determine their support needs.
- At the school level, specifically, in-school suspensions and alternative education programs: The Department of Education is gathering information now on what schools offer **in-school suspensions** and how they are operating them (i.e., effective in-school suspensions must focus on helping the young person in a way that addresses the underlying problems leading to the suspension). As well, **more alternative education options** are being developed and expanded in schools. More broadly, two new pilot projects address these and other issues within the broader context of what services should be available for children, youth, and families within schools. **Schools Plus** and **Wrap-Around Services** bring people (professionals, as well as family and community members) and programs (tailored to meet the full range of needs of children and youth at different ages and amid changing circumstances) together in a welcoming, accessible place.

Finally, municipalities and individual communities are providing leadership and developing partnerships in crime prevention. The Mayor's Round Table on Violence and the Spring Garden Merchants Association are two examples from the Halifax Regional Municipality.

Throughout the task force meetings, we heard many other stories about community initiatives that are helping to prevent crime. These initiatives ranged from the Healthy Beginnings program (home visits and other family outreach after having a baby), to transition homes, to community schools (e.g., the Forest Heights Community School in Lunenburg County).

We are building on these crime prevention programs and initiatives within our next steps.

Nova Scotians are donating countless hours to keep their neighbourhoods safe.

Involving and Supporting Individuals

Individuals are making a difference in crime prevention, as community volunteers and in their own homes. As volunteers with organizations such as Neighbourhood Watch, Citizens on Patrol, Mothers against Drunk Driving, and community Restorative Justice agencies—and as team coaches, youth mentors, or chaperones at a school dance—Nova Scotians are donating countless hours to keep their neighbourhoods safe.

Further, a burglar is more apt to target a poorly lit house with an open window than one with a security system readily visible from the street. Individuals are taking common-sense steps such as locking doors and windows, keeping outside lights on, and installing alarms.

Next Steps

In Summary

- Community Crime Profiles
- African Nova Scotian Pilot Project
- Children at the Critical Hour (CATCH) Program
- Restorative Justice in Schools
- Counselling for Children Who Witness Domestic Violence
- Seniors' Safety Program
- Community Crime Prevention Fund
- Crime Prevention and Reduction Symposium
- Minister's Award for Leadership
- Public Education Campaign
- Crime Prevention Division

Gathering and Sharing Good Information

Developing and Sharing Community-Specific Information

Facts and statistics become more meaningful and useful as they become increasingly specific to a community.

We have good provincial statistics on crime rates and causes. Now, we want to develop **community crime profiles** that provide insights on the types and frequencies of crime, linked to factors that either put the community at risk of higher crime rates (e.g., high unemployment) or protect against crime (e.g., high levels of education).

We would like to build these profiles from government's existing Community Counts database. The database contains information on social, health, economic, and environmental conditions in the province.

We have applied for funding for this work from the National Crime Prevention Centre. If our funding request is approved, we will develop the profiles and make them readily available to communities. The profiles will be shared with approximately 300 stakeholders identified by the Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities. Workshops will be held on how to use the profiles to make informed decisions about crime prevention efforts in these communities.

Building Partnerships

Working with At-Risk Communities

We want to work with communities who are developing partnerships and crime prevention strategies tailored to their unique needs.

As one example, we will build on our sponsorship of the **Community Justice Society African Nova Scotian Pilot Project**, which is providing community outreach services in Mulgrave Park and East Preston. Services in this project now include helping youth prepare for Restorative Justice sessions, recruiting Restorative Justice volunteers, developing individual case management plans for at-risk youth, and partnering with community groups to provide after-school, family literacy, and evening recreational programs.

These programs are effective because they are community led, allowing community members to address their issues of greatest concern in ways that they know will work. Young people and others participating in the programs have a greater level of trust because they know the people delivering the program or know that the people delivering the program understand their community.

We will now support the expansion of these services in two ways.

First, the Community Justice Society of Halifax is working with the Law Foundation of Canada to develop the curriculum for an **educational and self-esteem program** for children ages 8 to 12. This program will

- help African Nova Scotian children learn about and identify with their heritage
- encourage them to adopt the values and teachings of their African heritage
- help children understand the impact that a history of oppression has had on their communities
- create self-esteem building opportunities
- help them make better choices for themselves and their communities

We will provide funding to pilot and evaluate this program in Mulgrave Park and East Preston. Based on the evaluation, we will consider expanding the program to other communities.

Second, we will provide funding for the Community Justice Society of Halifax to work with these two communities and police in creating a **community conflict resolution process**. For example, communities have come together to discuss vandalism at specific sites. They have discussed reasons why the vandalism has occurred, ways to build community understanding of the impact of the vandalism, and specific strategies to curb the vandalism. They now want to build on and formalize this conflict resolution process, using Restorative Justice principles.

As another example, the Island Community Justice Society in Cape Breton developed a pilot project called Children at the Critical Hour (CATCH). The project is designed to help, and **hold accountable, children aged 8 to 12, who have harmed others** or have harmed property.

Perhaps most alarming, the children referred to this program have been involved in serious offences. Even young children must understand that there are serious consequences for serious offences.

Even more significantly, this provides an opportunity for the community to support a family and child in crisis. As the program is voluntary, the family is fully committed to getting support in guiding their children to better choices. This is critical, not just as a deterrent, but to “catch” children at a young age, before they get into more serious trouble. It is also an opportunity to instill values that will help children grow into responsible, caring adults.

We will provide funding to continue this project in Cape Breton and to conduct a full evaluation before expanding it to other communities.

Working with Schools

Our Restorative Justice program has shown exceptional results in helping young offenders understand the consequences of their actions and take responsible steps in being accountable for them. We would like to help more young people understand the consequences of conflict and learn ways to resolve conflict responsibly—before the conflict becomes criminal.

The Tri-County Restorative Justice Society, Nova Scotia Legal Aid, and Tri-County School Board have developed a project that may do just that. We will fund their project—**Bringing Restorative Justice to Schools**—on a pilot basis in Yarmouth junior high schools.

The CATCH program promotes positive emotional development and breaks the cycle that entrenches the child in criminal behavior.—Dr. Loretta Secco, community health researcher who reviewed the program

Helping young people resolve conflict, before the conflict becomes criminal.

Youth from Yarmouth Consolidated High School will be trained as community representatives at Restorative Justice sessions, building their knowledge and leadership skills. These young people will be used as intervention teams in neighbouring junior high schools to support school administrators in responding to school-based conflict situations.

Project goals include

- developing new approaches to school discipline, including helping youth to solve problems constructively
- reducing school suspensions
- reducing youth crime
- developing youth leadership
- identifying and getting help for youth with mental health and addictions issues
- strengthening relationships among the school community, legal community, youth, and the community at large

This project will be evaluated, with the goal of expanding it to other school communities.

Involving and Supporting Individuals

Helping Children Exposed to Family Violence

It is difficult to think about the range of emotions felt by children who witness the people they trust and rely on to care for them hurting each other. These children live with fear, anxiety, anger, and tension every day and experience negative effects on their emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Studies show that this exposure to family violence puts children at higher risk for victimization, delinquency, criminal activity, and violent behaviour.

These children need a safe environment in which to express their feelings and get the help they need to break the cycle of violence that repeats itself in generation after generation.

We will **expand our Criminal Injuries Counselling Program**—now primarily focused on direct victims of crime—**to cover young children who witness family violence.**

Along with funding support, we will require counsellors to have training in therapeutic approaches specific to counselling children, such as play therapy. Ways to involve the parent or family member who was the victim of the abuse will also be incorporated.

These direct efforts will be supported by initiatives arising from the Continuation of the Response to Family Violence. These will include a focus on raising public awareness of the issues of family violence and violence against women.

Helping Seniors

Seniors deserve to live in communities that are safe and supportive. A **seniors' safety program** was piloted in Cumberland County in 2006, in partnership with the municipal police force. The program included home visits and information sharing. While the pilot was short term, it demonstrated a high level of need for such programs.

Seniors felt more secure in their homes, and they were able to share their safety concerns with the police. This increased their confidence in the system and reduced their fear.

Working with the Department of Seniors, we will support community programs focussed on seniors' safety. We will do this by providing collaborative funding to support seniors' safety programming across the province.

Providing Leadership

Investing in Community Crime Prevention

We are creating a **community crime prevention fund** to support recreational, educational, life-skills, cultural, and other after-school programs for youth that engage them in positive activities. Organizations delivering these programs in partnership with schools, police, other community groups, and young people can apply for \$15,000 a year.

Funding criteria will encourage proposals that

- involve youth designing programs for youth
- make use of other community resources (e.g., schools, recreation centres)
- promote approaches that are relevant to and respectful of all cultures and communities
- are based on strong inter-agency partnerships
- link "fun" with educational opportunities (e.g., learning conflict resolution skills through team play)
- link activities to community crime prevention goals
- demonstrate innovation
- commit to evaluation

Manitoba operates a similar program, known as the Lighthouse Program. Funded activities there include anti-vandalism and clean-space projects, police appreciation days, and student mock courts.

This program complements a program announced within *Our Kids Are Worth It* child and youth strategy, called A Place to Belong. That program is designed to help give vulnerable children and at-risk youth a sense of belonging with their peers and caring adults.

Sharing Expertise, Recognizing Excellence

We will hold an **annual Crime Prevention and Reduction Symposium** where all partners in crime prevention will network and share information on what is working well in their communities. This will help to spread best practices in crime prevention province-wide. Each year, a different theme will be selected.

We will also recognize excellence through a **Minister's Award for Leadership in Crime Prevention**. The criteria will be based on an award program developed in New Brunswick.

Raising Public Awareness

During task force meetings, Nova Scotians said they want to get involved in crime prevention, but they need information and support. **The public education campaign** will reinforce that crime prevention is a shared responsibility, with everyone having a role to play. Topics will include

- keeping kids safe
- home security
- seniors' safety
- crime prevention in the workplace
- youth crime prevention
- crime prevention in rural communities

Creating a Crime Prevention Division

Words on paper have little meaning until they are turned into action. We are creating a **Crime Prevention Division** in the Department of Justice to be responsible for making this happen.

Along with implementing and monitoring the strategy, the division will

- build partnerships across the provincial government, among governments (provincial, federal, municipal, and First Nations), with community agencies, businesses and organizations and with police, courts, and Corrections staff
- evaluate the pilot projects within this strategy
- research and advise government on future crime prevention policies and programs (This includes the development of community crime profiles.)

- administer the Community Crime Prevention Investment Program
- organize the annual crime prevention symposium and administer the Minister's award for leadership
- develop a public education campaign to include spreading the word about what works, what doesn't, and for whom through a crime prevention website, brochure, presentation, etc.

Outreach services will be a significant focus with new program officers working directly with communities. This work will include:

- training and support for groups on how they can contribute to crime prevention
- navigation to help people and groups find existing resources and partnership possibilities
- identification of gaps in services in local communities

Expected Results

- People and communities at a lower risk of being involved in or impacted by crime (because risk factors are addressed)
- People know more about, and are more involved with, crime prevention

Conclusion

Acknowledgements

We want to end by expressing our sincere thanks to Nova Scotians—first, to the 25 individuals who took time away from their busy lives and families to serve on the Minister’s Task Force on Safer Streets and Communities.

To Frank Beazley and Oralee O’Byrne, thank you for your leadership and the extra hours that your role as co-chairs demanded. To all members of the committee—who brought individual perspectives and concerns to the table, but stayed focused on a common vision—we hope you see your vision and ideas clearly within the words and on every page of this strategy.

Frank Beazley, Halifax (Task Force Co-Chair)

Oralee O’Byrne, Parrsboro (Task Force Co-Chair)

Ingrid Brodie, Kentville

Frank Capstick, Glace Bay

Owen Carrigan, Halifax

Tara Connolly, Halifax

Timothy Cremo, Eskasoni

Tim Crooks, Halifax

Barb Dewtie, Pictou County

Janice Fraser, New Glasgow

Pamela Harrison, Halifax

Donald Jacquard, Wedgeport

Franz Kesick, Truro

Frank MacArthur, New Glasgow

Jim MacLeod, Sydney

Harold Miller, Amherst

Steve Miller, Newport

Jane Moffat Schnare, Bridgewater

Jemell Moriah, Dartmouth

Avid Olding, Halifax

Brad Parks, Port Hawkesbury

Barbara Ann Simmons, North Preston

Stephanie Simonsen, Truro

Colette Williams-Dooks, Jeddore

Carolann Wright Parks, Beechville

To everyone who braved our Nova Scotia winter to attend meetings, to everyone who took the time to write or visit our website, to everyone who had the courage to share personal experiences, hopes, and fears—we understand you want to hear more than words of thanks. You want to see action that will make a difference in your lives and the quality of life in your community.

You have shared with us what we need for our plan. We are now sharing our commitment to make it happen and to hold ourselves accountable—through regular reporting—along the way.

Accountability for Results

Our vision is for:

An improved quality of life through a safer Nova Scotia

The purpose of our strategy is:

To reduce and prevent crime by working in partnership with agencies, communities, and individuals.

While the words of our vision and purpose are simple and straight-forward, getting there will be part of a long-term and sometimes difficult process.

This said, people expect to see continuing progress. We have stated our expected results, or outcomes, within each of our three pillars: enforcement, intervention, and prevention.

We restate those expected outcomes here, along with key indicators that will be used, and reported on, to mark progress.

Enforcement

Expected Results

- Lower crime rates
- Offenders in court more quickly
- More reporting of crime to police
- Less fear of crime, and greater confidence in the justice system

Task force members
“understood crime as a complex problem, and that there is not a single ‘magic’ solution or cause of crime.”

Lower Crime Rates: We will report on overall and youth crime rates and trends, here in Nova Scotia and as they compare to the national average. The overall crime rate in Nova Scotia and Canada is found on p. 14 of this report.

Rate of Youth Accused of Crime—Overall (2003–2006)



We will also collect, and make available, rates of drug, violent, and property crime.

Offenders in Court More Quickly: The Nunn Commission recommended that we get youth offenders accused of serious and violent crimes into court without delay; we reduce case processing times overall; and we report regularly on progress. We accepted these recommendations and are acting on them with our justice partners.

- We have set a standard of having youth accused of serious, violent crimes in court within seven days. We are now collecting benchmark data and will report that data, as well as how our practice compares to this standard twice a year.
- We have set a target of 98 days for moving cases through the court (from the time a charge is laid to the acquittal or conviction). We will report every six months on our progress and revise this target with our justice partners as we move forward.

More Reporting of Crime to Police

Statistics Canada conducts the General Social Survey on Victimization every five years. The most recent survey shows a lower percentage of crimes coming to the attention of police.

	Canada	Nova Scotia
Percentage of Crime Reported to Police in 2004	33%	33%
Percentage of Crime Reported to Police in 1999	37%	36%

Less Fear of Crime, Greater Confidence in the Criminal Justice System

We will report results of public opinion surveys to report change in attitudes and perceptions. Data will continue to be gathered from questions in the CRA Atlantic Quarterly Survey, as well as through the General Social Survey on Victimization conducted by Statistics Canada.

According to the 2006 CRA Survey:

- 10% of Nova Scotians have a great deal of confidence in the justice system
- 66% have some confidence
- 15% have not much confidence
- 7% have no confidence at all in the justice system
- 2% don't know or had no answer

Intervention

Expected Results

- Less severe, less frequent offences
- More people successfully integrated into the community after contact with the criminal justice system
- More support for victims

Less severe, less frequent offences: We will monitor and report on trends associated with the violent crime rate in Nova Scotia.

Violent Crime (Rate per 100,000 people)

2006	1134
2001	1048
1996	1132

Currently, we do not have reliable data on recidivism (that is, the number of times an offender reoffends). We believe this data is critical to mark our progress within this strategy, and to inform future decisions.

In 2008, we will conduct a study to gain benchmark data related to recidivism. This will include recidivism data from those who participated in the Restorative Justice Program, as well as benchmark data on the proportion of one-time, repeat, and chronic offenders.

More offenders successfully reintegrated: The best way to measure our progress toward this outcome is again through the collection and analysis of statistics on recidivism. The study referenced on p. 62 will provide this data.

More support for victims: A key indicator will be our progress in reducing the number of victims who recant their statements, or do not show up at trial to testify against the offender. While we do not have data for all victims of violence in Nova Scotia, our recently released Family Violence Tracking Project indicates that, of the 195 family violence cases withdrawn or dismissed, 35 per cent were because the victim recanted or refused to attend court.

Prevention

Expected Results

- People and communities at a lower risk of being involved in or impacted by crime (because risk factors are addressed)
- People know more about, are more involved with, crime prevention

Addressing the risk factors associated with crime: As discussed on p. 48, a wide range of risk factors are associated with higher rates of crime. We will monitor census data on these factors, as well as exchange information with related government departments to report on progress in addressing the root causes of crime.

People know more about, are more involved with, crime prevention: Evaluation methods to show progress in increasing awareness will be developed as part of the public education campaign, discussed on p. 57.

Final Words

While we are now at the last page of this document, there are pages—indeed chapters—yet to be written in the story of our efforts to prevent and reduce crime.

We will learn more every day from our partners, from our experiences with communities and with our pilot projects, from young people and all Nova Scotians. In fact, our new Crime Prevention Division is being created to seek out advice, build on progress, and fill any gaps.

We look forward to working with communities and individual Nova Scotians as we put our plan—to fight crime together—into action.

Notes
