

Operational Plan

A year of renewal



2020

A MODERNIZED WCB NOVA SCOTIA

In many ways, 2020 is a year of renewal for WCB Nova Scotia.

It will be our first full year of working with our new Guidewire-powered claims and assessment system – the most significant milestone in our modernization. We will be operating in different ways, settling into new processes, and becoming more proficient in using these tools, all with an end goal of providing enhanced levels of service to workers, employers, and service providers.

2020 also marks the final year of the *WCB Strategic Plan 2016-2020*, which outlined our multi-year modernization and overall business transformation as a key theme. The other strategic themes driving our commitment toward a Nova Scotia safe and secure from workplace injury include prevention, return to work, progress to full funding, and strategic relationships.



While we've seen progress over time when it comes to injury prevention, short-term progress has slowed. Claim durations are high and, as such, our efforts in 2020 must focus on continuing to reduce the human and economic impact of workplace injury, especially as the face of workplace injury continues to change in Nova Scotia.

Claims today are often more complex, requiring different levels of service. The population is older, and the injury itself is often not straightforward – much more likely to be a mix of physical injury and mental health considerations – which often leads to longer claim durations, more time away from work, and higher health-care costs.

While better processes and improved systems will, over time, contribute significantly to the reduction of both claims and administrative costs, in 2020 we will also invest in programs focused on improving return-to-work outcomes. We will continue to address ongoing challenges in the health care and community services sector through our support of the recommendations outlined in *Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long Term Care & Disability Support Sectors*. And we will create a mental health program for first responders in response to the presumptive Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) regulations that came into effect in October 2018.

Moving toward financial stability

The Funding Strategy lays out WCB's planned approach to fund current operations and the eventual elimination of the unfunded liability between 2020 and 2024, with a targeted date of 2022. As this date approaches, discussions regarding possible changes to the workers' compensation system are ongoing.

Our transformation at a glance:

2015

We introduced direct deposit, online registration for employers, and made enhancements to our phone systems.

2017

We introduced new, secure online services so employers, workers, and service providers can interact with us online by sending and receiving messages, completing forms, and accessing claim and account information.

2019

We replaced our 25-year-old systems claims and assessment systems and launched a new and improved MyAccount online portal for employers.

Cover: Jennifer Muise, Professional Practice Coach with WCB Nova Scotia, leads employees through a training session on our new core operating system.



Claims today are often more complex, combining both physical injury and mental health considerations. Cody Ross sustained a life-changing injury in 2013 when a heavy piece of steel crushed his left hand, causing him to lose his thumb. Cody had 14 surgeries over three years. Therapy helped him cope with the trauma and make a successful return to work.

Throughout 2020, we will continue to implement all recommendations included in both phases of a report from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG). The report's first phase, released in late 2018, found that the WCB had effective governance structures and processes that provide oversight and accountability, and noted the significant progress toward financial sustainability.

Phase two of the OAG's report was released in spring 2019, and it found that while the WCB is effectively managing claims for workplace injury and return to work overall, improvements are needed, particularly in the areas of timeliness, complaints, and documentation.

We will review our internal risk protocols as part of an overall assessment of our risk management program, which began as a pilot in 2009, and was rolled out to all departments across the organization in 2016.

Finally, although the most significant pieces of our modernization have been implemented, there are a number of new initiatives planned for 2020, the final year of WCB's business transformation program.

As our business processes continue to change, our workforce will continue to evolve as well to support our modernized environment, and to ensure we are aligned to support our organization of tomorrow.

OVERVIEW OF 2020 PROJECTS

The Corporate Plan is developed within the overall framework of the Funding Strategy and the 2016-2020 Strategic Plan, while also considering overall our corporate performance and the broader Nova Scotia environment in which WCB operates.

The projects outlined below, together with our regular day-to-day operational activities, are expected to impact corporate performance over the long term.

Business Transformation

In the final year of our business transformation program, we will focus on the following initiatives:

- Continue to support the **stabilization of Guidewire**, and make enhancements and necessary fixes to improve functionality and support business case achievements.
- Plan for the **expansion of online services** to other service providers, and improved integration with hospitals and physicians. If appropriate, we will also start implementation in 2020.
- Establish a **dedicated team** who will lead ongoing Guidewire support, with a focus on team building and integration, process enhancements, learning, and the planning and implementation of the next waves of Guidewire functions.
- In keeping with our current trend of modernization, we will begin the process of updating our current **human resources systems**, continue to focus on **information management and security** of our new systems, and **evolve our business intelligence function**, which analyzes the information and data within our new systems.

Continued focus on health care and community support sectors

Our work will continue in the long-term care, home care, and disability support sectors, which together comprise a significant part of claims costs. In 2020, we will do our part to support the year-three priorities outlined in *Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long Term Care & Disability Support Sectors*, which include a focus on return to work and the development of an occupational health and safety management system.

Supporting workplace mental health for first responders

In 2019 we began working with stakeholders to develop workplace mental health resources for first responders in response to the PTSD presumption changes that became law in October 2018. We will continue to support this work in 2020 by expanding the resources and launching a campaign, leveraging work done in other jurisdictions, and hosting a conference that will bring together first responders, mental health researchers and service providers from across the province.



*In 2020, WCB Nova Scotia will continue our focus on the health and community services sectors by working with our partners and supporting the year-three initiatives outlined in *Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long Term Care & Disability Support Sectors*. Pictured here is Sue Dempsey, Executive Director of AWARE-NS, at the June 2018 launch of this report.*

Continued focus on return to work

Over the past two years, we have been working to develop the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our service delivery teams to better support return-to-work outcomes for workers and employers. In 2020, we will build on this work with a focus on the important role of health care providers.

We will work to establish WCB's medical advisors as recognized experts in the field of occupational health and medicine, and ensure the delivery of our advisory services is consistent through standardized learning.

Externally, we will work to build new relationships with the medical community to ensure we are strategically aligned with health-care practitioners and to provide confidence in the collaboration between treating practitioners and WCB.

Tier 1 Physiotherapy Contract Renewal

As we prepare to renegotiate our contract with Tier 1 physiotherapists in 2020, we will also take some time to evaluate our current approach with these service providers, ensuring the new contract meets our requirements both now and into the future.

Auditor General Recommendations

In December 2018 and May 2019, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) released two phases of a report on an audit into WCB governance and operations. Phase one found that WCB is a well-governed organization, on a path to financial sustainability. In phase two of the report, which focused on claims management, the OAG found that while the WCB is effectively managing claims for workplace injury and return to work overall, important improvements are needed. The WCB accepted all 12 recommendations outlined in the report, and in 2020 we will continue to implement these recommendations.

Strategic Innovation

Innovation helps organizations identify new or improved solutions, and challenges them to be open-minded and creative, and to move beyond established business boundaries and past practices. In 2020, we will develop a framework for strategic innovation at the WCB. The overall goal is to lead a review of WCB business opportunities and define a process for sustainable innovation over time, using a multi-disciplinary set of practices, processes, and tools.

CONCLUSION

2020 marks the end of WCB Nova Scotia's *Strategic Plan 2016-2020*.

Elimination of the unfunded liability is on the horizon. And, through our overall business transformation, our people, our processes, and our technology, we are continuing to focus on our core business – reducing the impact of workplace injury and championing safe and timely return to work.

In this year of renewal, we are adapting to new business systems and processes, and responding to the changing demographics and increased complexity in our claim mix, as well as ongoing challenges in priority sectors.

We are continuing to focus on building and maintaining strong strategic relationships that will help to create new opportunities to improve workplace health and safety and return to work across our province.

All of this is part of our ongoing, important contribution to a stronger, safer Nova Scotia, both today, and for years to come.

OUR VISION

Nova Scotians – safe and secure from workplace injury.

OUR MISSION

We set the standard for workplace injury insurance. We inform and inspire Nova Scotians in the prevention of workplace injury, but if it occurs, we support those whose lives it touches by championing a timely return to safe and healthy work.

OUR GOALS

Working in collaboration with workers, employers and our partners, the WCB's goals are to:

- Build a **workplace safety culture**;
- Improve outcomes for **safe and timely return to work**;
- Be **financially stable and sustainable**;
- **Expand strategic relationships** to enhance the commitment to workplace health and safety and return to work across the province;
- Provide **excellent and efficient service**, leveraging technology to meet worker and employer expectations.

PROPOSED WCB 2020 BALANCED SCORECARD

		ACTUAL RESULTS					TARGETS		
QUADRANT	MEASURES	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2024
Service	Worker Satisfaction Index ¹	75%	72%	74%	76%	75%	70%	70%	70%
	Employer Satisfaction Index	79%	81%	79%	78%	81%	70%	70%	70%
Operations	Time Loss Injuries per 100 Covered Workers	1.82	1.84	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.72	1.65 - 1.72	1.56
	Return to Employability	96%	95%	95%	94%	94%	94.3%	94.1% - 94.7%	94.6%
	Duration Index (composite, in days)	102	108	110	117	127	127	130 - 147	123
	Time Loss Days Paid per 100 Covered Employees	226	236	232	241	252	252	250 - 290	224
	Cost of New EERBs (\$M)	\$46.8	\$54.5	\$59.2	\$67.8	\$80.1	\$82.4	\$68.3 - \$90.9	\$84.4
Employee	Employee Satisfaction Index	73%	73%	71%	70%	66%	70%	70%	70%
Financial	Claims Payments for the last 3 years per \$100 of Assessable Payroll	\$0.656	\$0.657	\$0.664	\$0.667	\$0.705	\$0.7096	\$0.6943 - \$0.7771	\$0.7131
	Administrative Costs per \$100 of Assessable Payroll (excluding prevention costs)	\$0.38	\$0.38	\$0.40	\$0.41	\$0.42	\$0.46	\$0.44	\$0.36
	Return on Investment Five-Year Rate of Return	9.6%	8.8%	9.8%	9.6%	6.2%	Exceed Benchmark Portfolio Return		
Five-Year Benchmark Portfolio Return	9.1%	8.1%	9.3%	9.3%	5.9%				

1 The Worker Satisfaction Index does not include workers on long-term benefits or those with claims for claims with little or no time-loss.