

## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

### Access PEI

**Contact:** Mark Belfry  
Director, Access PEI  
Department of Development  
Government of Prince Edward Island

**Tel:** (902) 368-4219

**Email:** [mmbelfry@gov.pe.ca](mailto:mmbelfry@gov.pe.ca)

#### Overview of Access PEI

*"The appropriateness of the service, the universality of its coverage, the sensitivity with which it is rendered to the human need can be measured, changed, and appropriately improved, only when the people rendering the services are close to the people receiving them."*

Being accessible means making it easy for the client to find out what services are available where and when. Access PEI is a customer-centred service concept built on the base provided by the Regional Services Centres, which were established in 1972 and 1973 to bring service access points closer to Islanders in rural communities. Centralised service delivery was recognised as an impediment to community development as well as quality service delivery. These Centres offered a broad range of services to the public through line department staff housed in one facility.

Access PEI is founded on three key principles:

- Taxpayers have a right to good, accessible Service
- Service should be organised to serve the client first
- The needs of the customer and staff must be balanced

Citizens can visit any of the several Access PEI locations across the province, contact Access PEI by telephone or use the single government electronic service channel. They can obtain licenses/permits/registrations, pay for fees, fill in applications or obtain information on government programs. By providing a citizen-centric approach and eliminating red-tape barriers to businesses and social development, Access PEI aims to provide multi-level single window service delivery to the citizens of Prince Edward Island.

Strategic Planning for Access PEI anticipates four ways by which Access PEI will provide service to the public:

- through facilitated counter service
- through Community Information Resource Centres
- by telephone
- over the Internet.

### **Project Catalysts/Drivers**

Human Resources and Development Canada (HRDC), Prince Edward Island's provincial social insurance programs and Access PEI came together in the same physical location for three reasons:

- To satisfy the mandate of Access PEI to improve customer service
- It was expected that HRDC would move from downtown Summerside to another location on the outskirts of town. Given that most cities are striving to revitalise their downtown cores, this issue was politically charged.
- The uptake rate for government services online, and the addition of new Access PEI Centres, meant that some of the offices in Summerside were seeing a decline in business. By co-locating with HRDC, there was greater confidence that the government offices would remain active and relevant.

Access PEI is the brand on the building where other government offices are located. While HRDC moved in, the probation function of Justice moved to a new location. This alleviated some security issues and proved to be a better fit from a customer service perspective – the customers don't care what level of government they were interacting with and prefer to have more of their needs met under the same roof.

### **Achievements**

The co-location is complete and operational issues are currently being fine-tuned.

### **Challenges**

#### *Operational and Cultural Differences*

- Difficulties can arise when different organisations and individuals have different approaches

- It can be difficult to negotiate a common set of standards and reach agreement on how those standards should be applied.
- Different organisations are more or less agile for a variety of reasons including size and access to resources. For example, while individuals at the federal level may be very committed to an initiative and making it happen, the size of the organisation and the intensity of its bureaucracy can be daunting.

#### *Funding*

- Making the project work financially with no new funding
- Distribution of resources and balancing the contribution from each partner, including reaching agreement on what the contribution should be
- Attracting funding for ISD projects can be a challenge

#### *Stakeholder satisfaction*

- How to satisfy a broad range of stakeholders by determining how to meet their needs and then actually meeting them

#### *Human Resources*

- Who does what?
- How are staff shared?

Overall, the challenge of integrated service delivery is that it means a transformation of the way ministries and individuals traditionally do business. People are accustomed to owning a certain area of responsibility. Integration means that you no longer own complete control, and even worse, you can find yourself negotiating to keep any stake at all in the area. ISD is also more complex, at least at the stage of setting up the relationship and delivery system. People would often much rather just do things themselves than go to hassle of negotiating the service delivery etc. ISD must be driven by a common desire to increase customer service.

### **Critical Success Factors**

#### *Broad Buy-in*

It can be very difficult to get all stakeholders to agree that a particular initiative is a good idea. To achieve this buy-in, all groups at the table need to feel that their needs are being met – or at least that there is a benefit to them of participating. Those negotiating the partnership need to be open to recognising

every individual's needs; dictating how the project will proceed can very easily lead to the failure of the project.

### **Vision for ISD**

*Vision:* a multi-channel Access PEI brand integrated across multiple physical counter locations, a virtual call centre, and over the Internet. Inter-jurisdictional services available wherever possible.

PEI has been working hard on integrated service delivery. Access PEI is a successful walk-in/counter channel, but now it needs to be fully integrated across channels. Moving toward a multi-channel model should be a priority before integrating across jurisdictions. While structural and organisational problems associated with crossing ministry boundaries are being resolved, the big hurdle they face is connecting the front-end applications back end databases.

### **Potential Cross-Jurisdictional Initiatives**

Electronic service delivery is still at an early stage, and there isn't much infrastructure yet that can be shared across jurisdictions. Neither the provinces nor the federal government has a truly robust system, with the **possible** exception of the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency partnerships for online business registration. Opportunities for leveraging and mutual benefit between the provinces should also be explored more fully. Specific initiatives to advance the integrated service delivery agenda include:

#### *Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency*

The need to exploit the capacity for common business registration for those provinces that don't already provide this integration exists.

#### *Joint technology venture*

All jurisdictions face similar legacy system issues: new front-end applications for integrated service delivery don't connect readily to existing back end databases. The very best thing to advance integrated service delivery in Canada would be for a core group to tender a middleware application that would serve as the bridge between the front end application and databases in different formats. The middleware application would be designed for plug and play and sharing with others, rather than as a piece of code that couldn't be separated from the whole

entity. A middleware application such as described doesn't exist yet, and it would be an opportunity for whoever won the contract to build it to become a world leader in this area. There is enormous potential in this infrastructure investment, and Online Licensing and Permitting could be a good starting point to make it happen.