

SUR MESURE POUR L'EMPLOI



Une approche intégrée du développement de compétences

***Training and Skills Development for Adults
in Nova Scotia:
Inventory of Government Strategies, Policies
and Programs***

Adult Education and Training – Apprenticeship – Vocational Training - Employability

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Overview

In Nova Scotia, the main agency responsible for adult training and employability development is the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Within this department, the Skills and Learning Branch oversees several divisions (adult education and employment, among others) that are more directly concerned with adult skills development.

With regard to adult education, a government entity is specifically dedicated to coordinating programs and funding: the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL). This super-structure was designed to ensure a holistic and rational approach to service delivery in this field.

Literacy programs are offered by community groups. As for academic upgrading, it is handled by the Adult Learning Program (ALP), through four different levels. Adults can attend courses in various settings (community organizations, Community College, Université Sainte-Anne). However, it must be noted that the first level is not provided in French, and that the fourth level is only delivered by the Community College.

Outside the scope of the Adult Education Division, skills development among the unemployed and those who are seeking employment is supervised by programs administered by the Employment Division (essentially). Several programs are adapted to individuals' status and needs.

Links could be established between the two divisions, as they pursue some of the same objectives. For example, the Adult Education Division recently initiated a reflection on the recognition of employability skills. This could improve access to programs that are currently delivered through Employment Nova Scotia. Furthermore, it could increase participation of job seekers in adult education programs.

The Department of Community Services also provides support and training opportunities to Income Assistance recipients. These services mainly focus on enabling individuals to integrate academic upgrading programs offered across the province.

A. Adult Training

1. Government entity that provides support and guidance related to adult education: the Department of Labour and Advanced Education

Department of Labour and Advanced Education: <http://novascotia.ca/lae/>

Within the **Skills and Learning Branch**, the Adult Education Division is responsible for funding, programming (curricula), coordinating programs, training, support to practitioners, and research to service providers as well as the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. It also oversees recognition of prior learning and labour mobility.

Another division of the Skills and Learning Branch was involved until 2014, the Apprenticeship Division. In July 2014, a new agency was created, which returned apprenticeship to the realm of industry. The Ministry retains responsibility for this area but is no longer as directly involved.

1.1. Government agency in charge of services: the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning

DESCRIPTION: The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning ([NSSAL](#)) was formed in 2001 to coordinate adult learning programs across the province. The NSSAL was created under the *Adult Learning Act of 2010*. The NSSAL is administered through the Adult Education Division, Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education. Programs range from basic literacy to high school completion. The NSSAL also administers the General Educational Development (GED) testing series.

NSSAL objectives are as follow:

- Coordinate tuition-free programs, in English and French, and ensure that these programs meet the needs of adult learners who wish to take courses, ranging from basic literacy to high school completion. The NSSAL supports formal and non-formal adult education leading to a high school diploma.
- Broaden its target audiences.
- Ensure that learnings are recognized and transferable from one program to another and from one province to another.
- Deliver a high school diploma to adult graduates enabling them to access further education, training, and employment..
- Ensure that adults from several diverse communities throughout the province benefit from opportunities to obtain the programming they require to meet their needs.
- (...)
- Contribute to a competitive and competent workforce in Nova Scotia.

The NSSAL coordinates the following programs:

Adult Literacy / Improve your reading, writing and maths

Service providers: community learning organizations. To participate, individuals must be at least 19 years of age and have been out of the public schools system for a year or more.

Adult Learning Program

Same eligibility criteria as above.

The Adult Learning Program (ALP) consists of four levels of courses:

Level 1 corresponds to grade 6. Service provider: community learning organizations. This service is not provided in French. English-speaking organizations are the only ones to offer it.

Level 2 corresponds to grade 8. Service provider: community learning organizations.

Level 3 corresponds to grade 10. Service providers: community learning organizations and the Community College.

Level 4 corresponds to grade 11 or 12. It allows an individual to earn high school credentials, therefore providing access to post-secondary institutions or programs, or improving his employability. These courses may lead to credits toward earning a Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. Service provider: Community College.

For more information about this program, see this [PDF document](#).

For Francophones, this program is called Formation générale des adultes (FGA), and is offered by Université Sainte-Anne.

High School Diploma for Adults

To earn this diploma, an adult must obtain 12 credits. There are several ways to go about it: through the Adult Learning Program, level 4 (delivered by the Community College); through Adult High Schools (see following page, Section 2.2); through correspondence courses (with the Department of Education), or a combination of these three mechanisms. To apply, an individual must be at least 19 years of age and have been out of the public school system for at least one year. This diploma is delivered by the Community College, the Université Sainte-Anne and Adult High Schools.

For more information, see this [PDF document](#).

GED

The General Educational Development (GED) test can lead to credentials for a high school diploma. To take the GED test, individuals need to be at least 19 years of age on the date of the test, not have received a grade 12 graduation certificate from any institution, and have been out of the public school system for at least one year.

The GED series includes five tests related to writing, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies. The test will soon be entirely computer-based.

Recognition of Prior Learning

It is important to note that a skill-recognition project is underway: this pilot project is called *Record of Achievement* and seems geared to adults with lower skill levels, aiming to recognize their employability competencies. Five venues are currently testing this approach.

2. Structure for delivering adult education services in the field

2.1) Community Learning Organizations (French equivalent: Équipe d'Alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse)

Community groups deliver literacy services and the first levels of the Adult Learning Program (1, 2 and 3)... Some of these organizations also offer programs that focus on preparation for the GED test.

2.2) Adult High Schools

Adult high schools are under the responsibility of both the Department of Labour and Higher Education and the Department of Education and Early Childhood (through regional school boards under this ministry). They provide full-time programs, with terms beginning in September, November, January, and March. Some schools offer evening programs. Registration takes place twice a year, in September and January.

2.3) Nova Scotia Community College

DESCRIPTION: The Nova Scotia Community College ([NSCC](#)) delivers programs in several venues. There are a total of 13 campuses (including Darmouth, Yarmouth and Shelburne) and six community learning centres. Educating over 25,000 students a year, the NSCC provides most of the technical and apprenticeship training in the province. It was established in 2006 to centralize the administration, funding and organization of specialized and vocational training. Before its creation, these programs were scattered across various institutes, creating program duplication. The NSCC also offers continuing education courses.

The Community College can also provide online and workplace education.

Programs are offered on a part-time or full-time basis.

Adult Learning Program

The NSCC offers academic upgrading courses at level 3 (corresponding to grade 10) and level 4 (corresponding to grade 11 or 12). Individuals can earn their high school credentials, which enables them to enter a postsecondary institution or program, or to improve their employability. These courses may also be credited toward earning a Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults. Service provider: Community College.

Technical and Vocational Training Programs

Offered on a part-time or full-time basis, these technical-trade programs are available at all 13 campuses, although training programs may differ from one campus to another. Program development is organized through partnerships with the labour market, with 92% of graduates finding employment after their training.

In addition, there are four specialized schools: the School of Business, the School of Health and Human Services, the School of Applied Arts and New Media, and the School of Trades and Technology. There is also the School of Access that delivers the following programs:

⤴ African Canadian Transition Concentration:

This program is designed for African Nova Scotians who left high school before earning a diploma and who wish to obtain it within an “Africentric” program. For more information about this program, see [this page](#) or [this brochure](#).

⤴ Academic and Career Connections Program – ([see website](#))

One year of training leading to a Certificate that delivers credits to enter other College courses. Individuals must have a high school graduation diploma or equivalent. The program is available on a part-time basis. Courses include: Science for Health (Practical Nursing, Dental Assistant, Pharmacy Technician, etc.) or Science for Technology (electronic engineering, construction management, etc.). The program also offers credits in mathematics, chemistry, biology, etc.

Apprenticeship Programs

More than 60 different trades are recognized within this framework, most of them being designated as Red Seal Trades ([see a list of trades](#)).

Apprenticeship is intended for individuals who completed high school, or for individuals who possess an “acceptable combination of equivalent” experience and education. Duration: three to four years.

See information on [How to become an apprentice](#).

2.4) Université Sainte-Anne

The Université Sainte-Anne (U-SA) offers the Adult Learning Program (Formation générale des adultes) to Francophones. In addition to providing post-secondary education, the U-SA’s mandate includes providing “post-secondary education, professional and technical training, adult basic education and continuing education services” in order to “enhance the economic and social well-being of the Acadian and Francophone population” (Section 4.1 of the Université Sainte-Anne - Collège de l'Acadie Act). The U-SA just developed a welding program, which is the first trade-program offered in French.

It should be noted that an Acadian or Francophone may attend a French-speaking public school (administered by the Acadian school board) to take courses and earn credits from the Adult Learning Program of the Université Sainte-Anne.

3. Support s structures for adult education

3.1) Literacy Nova Scotia

Literacy Nova Scotia (LNS) is a provincial umbrella organization that brings together literacy organizations. Established in 1992, it promotes literacy and skills development, networking, etc. Since 2010, their mandate includes workforce and workplace Literacy and Essential Skills (LES). LNS also offers a training and certification program for practitioners and provides scholarships and bursaries for adult learners (two scholarships of \$1,500 and three bursaries of \$500).

<http://www.ns.literacy.ca/>

3.2) Nova Scotia's Apprenticeship Agency

Following in the path of the Apprenticeship Training Division of the Department of Labour and Higher Education, a new agency was created in July 2014, which returns apprenticeship to the realm of industry.

For more information, visit the [Agency's website](#).

- ⤴ Apprentices can receive employment insurance and/or financial support to cover costs related to their training.

A few of the incentives (financial support) for future apprentices and employers:

- [Apprenticeship Job Creation Tax Credit](#) – for employers
- [Tradesperson's Tools Deduction](#) - \$500
- [Youth Apprentices](#) are exempted from registration fees.
- [Apprenticeship Incentive Grant](#) - \$1,000 (for all [Red Seal](#) trades)
- [Apprentice Progression Award](#) - \$750 (for all [designated trades](#))
- [Apprenticeship Completion Grant](#) - \$2,000 (for all [Red Seal](#) trades)
- [Apprentice Completion Award](#) - \$2,000 (for all [non-Red Seal](#) trades)

Source: <http://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/about/financial-assistance>

4. Legislation related to adult learning

- [Adult Learning Act](#) (December 2010)
- [Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act](#) (2003)
- [Université Sainte-Anne – Collège de l'Acadie Act](#) (2002)
- [Community Colleges Act](#) (1995-96)
- [Education Act](#) (1995-96)

B. Employability Development

1. Government entities that support employability development

1. The main player is the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Two divisions are involved within the Skill Development Branch:

- Employment Nova Scotia (programs described below)
 - The Workplace Initiatives Division, with its workplace education initiatives (described below)
2. The Department of Community Services provides training evaluation and support services to Income Assistance recipients (see below).
 3. The Department of Economic and Rural Development also provides support services to employers (see below).

On June 30th 2014, Nova Scotia and the federal government signed the Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement. The province will receive 13.4 million per year, for six years, to develop training and employability services, through three different funding streams. The Agreement aims to allow unemployed Nova Scotians and workers with low skill levels to benefit from services that are adapted to their needs. For the first year, the province chose to continue existing programs, while adjusting them to the new funding. Later on, other programs may be created, particularly under the third funding stream called Employment Services and Supports. Several groups depend on this component, among which literacy organizations.

For more information, [see this page](#).

2. Employability development programs

2.1) Employment Nova Scotia Programs

See their website at [Employment Nova Scotia](#)

Skills Development Program

Skills Development is an employment program that provides financial assistance to unemployed eligible participants who need to learn additional basic to advanced skills development training to find work. Target population: unemployed individuals. Objective: foster skills development (from basic to advanced) in order to enter the workforce. Participants should be those who lack marketable skills and need new or additional occupational skills

in order to improve their employment prospects but are otherwise job ready. This is determined by a case manager who basically assesses an individual's motivation (to take courses, find a job, etc.) and the feasibility of his proposed project: determined on a case-by-case basis. Those who wish to participate in the program must attend full-time training provided by a public or private institution. Therefore, this

INFO: In 2008, a pilot program was field-tested (partnership NSSAL-NSCC-federal), aiming to link adult learners to employment (continuing care assistant). [See PDF document](#) .

program can fund training aimed at completing high school or attending a university program. The training must end with a certificate that leads to employment. A large proportion of applicants want to attend College. There is also a large demand for training related to trades. The program is available to individuals for whom an unemployment benefit period has been established or has ended within three years prior to the date of requesting assistance; or for whom a benefit period that included a maternity or parental claim has been established within five years prior to the date of requesting assistance, after which the individual remained out of the labour market. Other criteria may apply. Participants in the program are required to make a financial contribution towards the cost of their training. Employment Nova Scotia must approve the application before a person can begin the training. The application includes a *Return to Work Action Plan*, developed with a case manager from Careers Nova Scotia.

Skill Development is the most active program among all those offered by Employment Nova Scotia. Approximately 3,000 individuals participate annually. *This program is the most readily adaptable to the requirements of an integrated approach.*

Skills Up! Program

Skills Up! is an employment program managed by Employment Nova Scotia that provides financial assistance to eligible African Nova Scotians to help them acquire the skills training they need for employment. Skills development training can range from basic literacy/numeracy to advanced skill development (may include part-time training). Eligible participants may acquire skills training while working, provided they do not have a high school diploma or the skills required to find a "good job". The Labour Market Agreement (LMA) funds the program. It is intended for African Nova Scotians who are non-EI eligible and who have been out of school for a least one year. The program only funds training related to a specific job (such as those offered by Community Colleges), or courses/general upgrading offered by the School for Adult Learning. Participants are expected to make a financial contribution. Employment Nova Scotia's agreement with an individual can last anywhere from a couple of weeks to three years, depending on Employment Nova Scotia's local business plan and the participant's *Return to Work Action Plan* (identical to the above). Linked to LMA. This program continues through funding under the new Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement (third stream).

Seasonal or Temporarily Unemployed Workers Program

Feepayer Support is a program of Employment Nova Scotia that allows seasonal or temporarily unemployed workers to invest in their own training, if they choose, and continue to draw out their regular Employment Insurance benefits while in training. Since these workers will not receive additional financial support for their training-related costs, they are referred to as "feepayers". Under this program, training must increase a worker's overall employability but does not need to be directly linked to the worker's current employment. However, training must not interfere with the individual's return to work. For the application to be eligible, the training must not normally be provided or funded by the employer. Eligible training includes short-term professional development, customized training, upgrading or work-related training. To participate in this program, it is not necessary to write a *Return to Work Action Plan*.

Job Creation Partnerships

Job Creation Partnerships is an employment program supporting projects that provide eligible individuals with work experience leading to enhanced employment-related skills. The program aims to improve individuals' employment prospects. Project activities must also benefit the community so program beneficiaries include both individuals and organizations (community organizations, businesses, municipalities, band councils, educational or health institutions, etc.). Individuals are funded for a short period (maximum contract duration of about six months). Remuneration comes from Employment Insurance. This program is mostly used by non-profit organizations (e.g. organization of a summer festival, etc.)

For more information on Employment Nova Scotia programs, visit their [website](#).

Works for You Program

Supports provincial projects that foster job readiness among people targeted by the LMA. These projects must help individuals integrate the workforce (enter or re-enter sustainable and insurable employment). Continuation of this program is funded through the new Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement (third stream). Seems quite interesting.

Note: To benefit from these programs and services, job seekers must meet with a case manager in one of the Careers Nova Scotia Centres (CNSC).

2.2) Service delivery in the field

Service delivery in the field is managed by Careers Nova Scotia Centres. Employment Nova Scotia funds 50 employment centres, two of them providing French-language services. The department subcontracts these services to organizations, businesses, municipalities, and educational institutions that are responsible for hiring employment counsellors.

Career Centre infrastructures are funded through the Careers Nova Scotia Centres Management Program.

A majority of these career centres provide complementary services such as workshops (writing a resume, job searching techniques, etc.), through funding from the Careers Nova Scotia Centres Services Program (CNSCS).

In addition, a third program, the Careers Nova Scotia Centres Work Activity Program (CNSCW) provides operational funding for employment-related activities and support to assist Nova Scotians experiencing barriers to employment. Six organizations are funded through this program: Horizon Achievement Work Activity Program, Futureworx Work Activity Program, Solutions Learning Center Work Activity Program, Metroworks Activity Program, Peopleworx Work Activity Program and the South Shore Work Activity Program.

For more information, visit this [website](#).

2.3) Programs offered by the Department of Community Services

Assessment Services

Employability assessment

Aims to confirm whether individuals can participate in employability activities: involves an assessment of assets and barriers that may affect return to work or training, identification of other assessments that should be conducted and writing a global action plan related to employability.

Prior Learning Recognition

Aims to help individuals identify their skills, in order to prepare them for future job interviews, work, volunteer activities or other life experiences.

Going to School

Allows individuals to receive Income Assistance while attending school, under one of the following circumstances: getting a grade 12 or more; taking training programs to acquire the skills needed for a specific job; attending a post-secondary program that lasts two years or less; attending a post-secondary program that lasts more than two years and being a member of the [Career Seek program](#).

To benefit from this program, the individual and his caseworker must agree to a plan (...).

Educate to Work Program

The program allows people who receive Income Assistance to take core programs at the Nova Scotia Community College. The government pays for tuition and books. The learner's action plan must show that returning to school will help him find work. An individual must still be accepted by the College, depending on his journey.

For more information, see [this page](#).

See also other programs offered by the Department of Community Services:

http://novascotia.ca/coms/employment/employment_services/EmployabilityRelatedExpen.html

3. Programs for Employers

3.1) Employment Nova Scotia Program

START Program

[START Program](#): this new program encourages employers to hire Nova Scotians requiring work experience. It also supports hiring apprentices. The program helps businesses who wish to hire ready-to-work individuals. To meet eligibility criteria, an individual must be:

- Unemployed; or
- A potential apprentice in an under-represented category such as women in non-traditional occupations, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginals or a person with disabilities; or
- A potential apprentice living in a rural area; or
- An international graduate who meets the eligibility criteria.

The START program targets SMEs. Individuals must write a *Return to Work Action Plan*.

NOTE: The program is managed by Employment Nova Scotia but the Workplace Initiatives Division is responsible for promoting it. The program is now funded through the new Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement (second stream).

3.2) Workplace Initiatives Programs

Workplace Education Initiative

The initiative promotes learning in the workplace and supports workforce development by enhancing skills. A team of coordinators spread across the province offer advice related to assessing training needs, writing a funding application, etc.

** The site insists on the fact that programs implemented via these initiatives are closely linked to employee and business needs. It provides examples of possible training areas: how to use documents, communication, computers, team building, problem solving, reading, writing, mathematics. Based on essential skills.

[See online](#)

One Journey Work and Learn

One Journey Work and Learn is a partnership between Labour and Advanced Education, industry and community. This program provides skill development and employment opportunities to unemployed or underemployed Nova Scotians where there is an identified industry labour shortage. The partnership began in 1999. Since then, sectors where projects were developed include hospitality, flooring installation, automotive, continuing care, customer service, contact and support center, special needs assistant and trucking.

Procedure: the sector identifies a skill shortage and agrees to employ all eligible candidates who successfully complete the program. Individuals who receive Income Assistance must have a completed an employability assessment¹ and an action plan. The program is now funded through the new Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement (second stream).

For more information on this program, see this [web page](#).

More programs at: <http://www.nsworkplaceeducation.ca/>

3.3) Program offered by the Department of Economic and Rural Development

Workplace Innovation and Productivity Incentive ([WIPSI](#)): this program is a funding incentive designed to encourage employers to invest in employee and manager skills through training to improve productivity and innovation. Eligible candidates include businesses, industry associations, and private sector unions. However, businesses primarily involved in wholesale, retail, and accommodations and food services are excluded. Eligible projects: purchase of training from a formal training institution or qualified external or internal training provider; registration, tuition or course fees; international training; skills development training leading to certification; training that supports workplace diversity; other. This program is now funded through the new Canada-Nova Scotia Job Fund Agreement (first stream).

3.4) Other

Sector Council Programs, Workplace Initiatives Division

This program provides funding to sector councils and sector council-like organizations in order to support an industry-led approach to **human resource development, attraction and retention and training**. In particular, the program will ensure that small- and medium-sized businesses in Nova Scotia have increased access to expertise, resources and support in the area of human resources. Successful sectors will be eligible for a three year partnership/funding agreement with the Department. Objective: address labour market challenges in a way that will make a long-term, positive, and quantifiable impact. The program focuses on three priorities:

1 Part of a range of assessments offered to Income Assistance recipients. Conducted by Career Assessment Technicians, who use both formal and informal tools. Employability assessment (NSEA) is compulsory when seeking employment services. More information [here](#).

- ⤴ **HR Planning:** examples of activities include creation and dissemination of labour market information to support human resources supply and demand forecasting, research to identify promising practices, preparing industry for change and innovation.
- ⤴ **Attraction and retention:** examples include attraction and retention activities targeting under-represented groups, activities related to the creation of workplace learning cultures and enhancing industry's ability to recruit and retain skilled workers. Other activities: increasing apprenticeship opportunities, career planning, youth attraction, and prior learning recognition.
- ⤴ **Training:** essential skills training and skills upgrading, management/leadership training, health and safety as well as marketing and communication.

For more information, visit this [web page](#).

4. Support Structures in the area of employability

Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Ecosse

“The Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDÉNEÉ) is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing economic well-being and quality of life among Nova Scotia’s Acadians and Francophones. As a result of our innovative leadership in economic development and employability, the Acadian and Francophone community builds on its strong cultural and linguistic heritage to achieve its full economic potential.” [free translation]

C. Policies and Strategies

- [Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development Strategic Plan 2009-2013](#)
- [Weaving the Threads: A Lasting Social Fabric – Our Framework for Social Prosperity \(2010\)](#) is a social prosperity policy recognizing that high-quality education is critical to achieving and maintaining sustainable prosperity; it intends to create opportunities for Nova Scotians to gain “useful skills, knowledge, and experience that contribute to their personal growth throughout their lives” (drawn from Baril p. 46).
- *JobsHere* is the strategy to grow the economy of Nova Scotia. It is an economic development policy “focused on learning with a view to foster adequacy between workforce skills and jobs. This orientation is defined by measures creating learning opportunities and encouraging investment in training” (drawn from Baril p. 48). The government invested 200 million dollars in this initiative: it is the “the cornerstone of economic development under the last New Democratic Government” (M. Hope-Simpson). For an overview of funds allocated to various priorities (Learning the right skills for good jobs, Growing the economy through innovation and Helping businesses be more competitive globally), read this press release from the [Department of Finance](#) at that time.
- *Innovative Nova Scotia*: innovation development framework “focused on human resource development”(drawn from Baril p. 48).
- [Nova Scotia’s Workforce Strategy](#) stems from the jobsHere/emplois Ici strategy. The last page of the document identifies initiatives and strategies, most of which still exist.
- [Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity](#): a policy focused on economic prosperity that emphasizes the importance of supporting skills development in business (drawn from Baril p. 48).
- [Nova Scotia Community Development Policy](#)

D. Sources and Documents

[Department of Labour and Advanced Education](#)
[Department of Economic and Rural Development](#)
[Department of Education](#)
[Department of Community Services](#)
[Nova Scotia School for Adult Learners](#)
[Nova Scotia Community College](#)

The Development of Education - Reports for Canada: The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (2008) – [PDF document](#)

Suggested reading

[Annual Accountability Report for the Fiscal Year 2012-2013](#) to see results relating to various performance indicators, many of which are part of the Workforce Development Strategy.

[Enhancing Program Quality: Standards for Community-Based Adult Literacy Programs](#) prepared by Jo-Ann Campbell for the Quality Standards Committee, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition and the Adult Education Section of the Department of Education. Ed: Nova Scotia Provincial Literacy Coalition.