



NOVA SCOTIA
APPRENTICESHIP
AGENCY

Business Plan

2019-2020

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Nova Scotia's apprenticeship system plays a unique and critical role in building a well-educated and highly skilled workforce—the workforce the province needs for businesses and communities to prosper. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA/Agency) stewards the system within the parameters of the Agency's Operating Charter and is comprised of the Board, Board Committees, Trade Advisory Committees, the Chief Executive Officer, and the NSAA staff.

The NSAA Board is made up of ten trade sector seats, four member-at-large seats and the Nova Scotia Community College Vice President, Academic. Our vision is an industry-led apprenticeship system that builds and maintains a highly skilled and diverse workforce, contributing to the economic success of Nova Scotia. Currently, through collaboration with industry, the following Trade Advisory Committees are actively engaged:

- Automotive Services Technician
- Bricklayer
- Carpenter
- Construction Electrician
- Cook
- Farm Technician
- Elevating Devices Mechanic
- Hairstylist
- Heavy Duty Equipment Technician
- Industrial Electrician
- Mine Electrician
- Motor Vehicle Insurance Appraiser
- Plumber
- Steamfitter/Pipefitter
- Truck and Transport Mechanic

Operating Environment

The NSAA operates in an environment where birthrates are declining, and many in the existing workforce are planning to retire in the next several years. In Nova Scotia, Aboriginal peoples and African Nova Scotians make up the fastest growing and youngest demographic. This, along with an increased demand for immigration, will help to offset the future demand of the labour force. In order to invite women and diverse apprentices into the apprenticeship system and ensure the success of future apprentices, industry will need to create workplace training environments where all employees feel welcomed and respected.

The system has 70 designated trades, thirteen of which are compulsory certified, requiring that one be an apprentice or hold a certificate of qualification in order to work legally in the trade. Apprenticeship technical training is provided in 34 trades and the remaining trades are certification-only, meaning trades practitioners who meet the requirements may challenge to write the certification exam. There

are Atlantic and national initiatives that are ongoing and provide for harmonization of apprenticeship technical training across jurisdictions and improved mobility for apprentices who need to work in other jurisdictions in order to continue their training. Provincial and Atlantic Trade Advisory Committee participation is critical to the success of this work.

Most of the training takes place on the job site under the supervision of a certified journeyman. The past several years has seen a continual increase in employer participation in apprenticeship training. This creates additional opportunities for new apprentices and increases the prospect for young people to stay and work in Nova Scotia.

The Agency was created by government in response to industry demand to have greater involvement in the strategic and operational decisions required to improve outcomes across the system, from pre-apprenticeship to post-journeyman training.

Strategic Plan

2019-2020 is the final year of the Agency's initial 5-year Strategic Plan. It was developed in partnership with industry, interested stakeholders, board members and Agency staff. It provides direction for the activities of the Agency in five key areas:

- **Changing the Culture: Inclusive, Connected and Industry-led** - We want to create a system that is inclusive of all Nova Scotians, led by industry and accountable to all stakeholders.
- **Changing the Outcome: Apprentice Success** - We strive to create a training system that is designed to be flexible and relevant to ensure apprentice success.
- **Changing the Outcome: Employer Success** - We want to create a system that increases employer engagement and suits the capacity and needs of employers, our key training partners.
- **Strengthening Delivery: Connecting Training and Workplaces** - We want to develop and promote a comprehensive apprenticeship system that enhances program delivery, optimizes resources, and focuses on increasing diversity in the workforce.
- **Making Certification an Economic Driver** - We want a system that is responsive to labour market needs and promotes the importance of certification, while contributing to a fair and safe workplace.

Through the Strategic Plan, the Agency continues to grow the apprenticeship system while maintaining and following six main principles:

- **Partnership-based:** The employer/apprentice relationship is the heart of the trades training system. The employer is the primary trainer and beneficiary; therefore, the system must be industry-led and industry-driven.
- **Regionally and nationally aligned:** Through Atlantic and national partnerships, the Agency maintains high standards, optimizes program delivery and enables training and certificate recognition across the country.
- **Innovative and strategic:** System- and trade-level decisions are based on collaboration with industry, with innovation being a priority, and recognize that one size will never fit all.
- **Diverse and inclusive:** Diverse workforces create innovation leading to an economy where all Nova Scotians can succeed to their full potential. Increased participation in the apprenticeship system by underrepresented groups leads to an enhanced talent pool and industry growth.

- **Flexible and accessible:** The Agency seeks to create a flexible system where supports and training will ensure success, including bridging and essential skills programming.
- **Results-focused and accountable:** The Agency is transparent in its decision making and accountable to drive results through appropriate resource allocation and performance.

The full strategic plan is available at

<http://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/sites/default/files/docs/pubs/Strategic-Plan-2015-2020.pdf>.

The Apprenticeship Board and Agency staff will be working with partners and stakeholders in 2019-2020 with system users and partners to develop a new comprehensive Strategic Plan.

2019-2020 Strategic Directions

The Agency remains committed to working with industry and training partners to ensure the apprenticeship system reflects the needs of the community it serves. The Agency will continue to collaborate with Industry and training providers to ensure all training programs and initiatives are reflective of the labour market.

Employers, journeypersons and apprentices are central to the apprenticeship system. Continued efforts will be made to improve the retention of new and long-standing employers and re-engage those employers who have left the system. Engaged employers help to show the importance of the system and lead to better success for apprentices along their journey. Skilled journeypersons are the key to knowledge transfer in the skilled trades, and the Agency recognizes the importance of this relationship. The system needs to create an atmosphere where journeypersons are developed as mentors with the skills and capacity to train and guide apprentices along their journey. To attract youth to the skilled trades, the Agency will continue to partner with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and others to position apprenticeship as a valued post-secondary option and provide supports along the apprenticeship journey to increase retention rates and success through certification. Flexible training, mentor development, community-based partnerships, and positive relationships amongst apprentices, employers, and Agency staff all help to create an environment that leads to the success of the apprenticeship journey.

A diverse and inclusive workforce benefits industry and all Nova Scotians. A diverse workforce leads to increased creativity, multiple perspectives, and true innovation. It also increases the size of the labour pool which provides industry the opportunity to hire, train, and retain highly skilled employees. The Agency is committed to increase participation in the apprenticeship system by underrepresented groups, including Aboriginal peoples, African Nova Scotians, newcomers, persons with disabilities, and women. We are committed to working with community groups and organizations to create innovative programs and initiatives that ensure all Nova Scotians have the opportunity to succeed in their apprenticeship journey. This year, the Agency will be undergoing new initiatives to increase the participation of women in the trades and develop supports that aim to boost the retention and success of female apprentices.

Business Plan Priorities for 2019-2020

Change the Culture: Inclusive, Connected, and Industry-led

The Agency operates on a common over-arching value of diversity and inclusion and is mandated to improve access to and participation in the system by Aboriginal persons, African Nova Scotians, differently-abled persons, immigrants, women and members of other underrepresented groups. The Agency has experienced success working with organizations like APTEC, BBI, EPEA, ISANS, WU and will leverage new partnerships. The Agency is working with industry to establish apprenticeship as a more comprehensive system encompassing youth-focused information and initiatives, bridging programs, pre-apprenticeship programming, apprenticeship training, and post-journey certification.

- Under the direction of the Apprenticeship Board, consult externally and renew the Agency's Strategic Plan.
- Promote the skilled trades as a viable career option by completing the third year of the *Apprenticeship: Ready When You Are* marketing campaign; developing a new 3-year marketing campaign with Communications Nova Scotia; and continuing to partner with NSCC and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- Continue to work with employers and external partners to advance the Diversity and Inclusion Framework and increase the participation, retention and completion of Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians, persons with disabilities, newcomers and women in the apprenticeship system.
- In collaboration with Women Unlimited and other partners, develop and implement a Women in Trades Strategy that leverages funding opportunities with the Federal Government and facilitates positive workplace culture that supports retention and certification.
- Support quality industry advice through the Trade Advisory Committee network and other mechanisms and renew a recruitment plan, with a focus on attracting diverse candidates.

Changing the Outcome: Apprentice Success

For apprentices to successfully complete, they must obtain the required hours of on-the-job training, attend and successfully complete technical training and level examinations (where applicable), obtain sign-off on skills achieved and pass a certification exam upon completion of training. Supporting apprentices to complete training in a timely manner is related to apprentice success which in turn increases income and productivity in the Nova Scotia labour market.

- Implement business transformation and achieve a higher level of client service through the re-design of the Agency's support model.
- Increase apprenticeship training pathways for certification-only trades, including Communication Technician, Motorcycle Mechanic, Transport Trailer Technician.
- Educate apprenticeship partners on their roles and responsibilities by providing tools such as an online Learning Commons, the Apprenticeship Management System and a mandatory orientation program for apprentices and employers.
- Advance the development and use of outreach/bridging programs, including Apprenticeship 101 and essential skills enhancement, to increase participation and completion in the apprenticeship system by members of diverse groups.

- Implement a mentoring program to enable better skill transference from journeyperson to apprentice through a mentoring endorsement, apprentice orientation and technical training curriculum.

Changing the Outcome: Employer Success

NSAA continues to empower employers through an industry-led apprenticeship system that builds and maintains a highly skilled and diverse workforce contributing to the economic success of employers and Nova Scotia, while remaining flexible and adapting to changing economic and industry conditions.

- Expand the large employer support model to all employers with more than 10 apprentices.
- Investigate innovative ways to promote the Apprenticeship START program, including a focus on diverse groups, to increase participation of employers in the apprenticeship system.
- Implement a Joint Registration Agreement (JRA) Action Plan and renew eight JRA's to enhance success for employers and apprentices.
- Working with NSCC and using the Trade Advisory Committee network, ensure employer and broad labour market needs are met in the design and delivery of pre-apprenticeship programs.
- Working with NSCC and other training providers, explore new opportunities for the Enhanced Direct-entry apprenticeship training framework to support labour market demand.

Strengthening Delivery: Connecting Training and Workplaces

Surveys are carried out every 2 years with apprentices and employers to gather information on satisfaction with technical training and the training received in the workplace. The Agency, through a network of Trade Advisory Committees and collaboration with NSCC through the Joint Stewardship initiative, will continue to provide training opportunities that reflect the needs of industry.

- Review and create an action plan in response to the 2018 Employer and Apprentice Satisfaction Survey results, including improving the quality of technical training delivery by training providers.
- Implement the registration of pre-apprentices in order to help track progression of individuals from pre-apprenticeship to apprenticeship, support decision making and optimize resources.
- Continue Atlantic and national trade harmonization to ensure the continued relevance of industry standards, embed more practical training into technical training and significantly align training in the region and nationally.
- Embed diversity and inclusion learning outcomes into all Agency programs to create awareness about unconscious bias and support affirmative learning environments in the workplace and classroom.
- Promote and offer the Atlantic Trades Business Seal as a regularly scheduled training opportunity within the Agency's training schedule.

Making Certification and Economic Driver

One of the goals of an industry-led apprenticeship system is to build and maintain a highly skilled and diverse workforce that will contribute to the economic success of Nova Scotia through changing economic times. Skilled workers are in demand in Nova Scotia and across the country. A good work ethic, a can-do attitude and a Certificate of Qualification will open the door to exciting career opportunities.

- Fulfill the obligations of the Apprentice Mobility Protocol/Agreement to enable apprentices to complete their apprenticeship training without disruption, regardless of the jurisdiction in which they work.
- Commit to evidenced-based decision making with effective analysis of internal and external data sets and target resources accordingly.
- Standardize and disseminate LMI reports to support career decision making, employer engagement, workforce planning, and succession management.
- Working with the Compliance and Enforcement Advisory Group (CEAG), set priorities for enforcement, educate on the new administrative penalty regime and promote compliance through Ask for the Card campaigns, partner organizations, NSCC classrooms and other avenues.

Key Indicators

SYSTEM INFLUENCE

The system will successfully influence the full continuum of trades training and regulation, including grades P-12, bridging programs, pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, post-journey training, and regulation.

Measure	Benchmark	2019-2020 Target
Percentage of pre-apprentice graduates who register as apprentices in the compulsory trades	Ready in 2019 year	N/A
Employer satisfaction with apprenticeship training	2018: 72.2%	N/A – biannual reporting
Apprentice satisfaction with apprenticeship training	2018: 69.1%	N/A – biannual reporting

EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT

More employers will provide strategic direction to the system, hire more apprentices and engage more purposefully in their training.

Measure	Benchmark	2019-2020 Target
Net number of new employers in the apprenticeship system	116	150
Compliance rate	87.9%	90%

INCLUSIVENESS

The system will successfully attract and retain more individuals from diverse groups.

Measure	Benchmark	2019-2020 Target
Percentage of apprentices who represent diverse populations	11.8%	13%
Percentage of women in the apprenticeship system	6.7%	8%
Certification rate for diverse apprentices	4.9%	6%
Certification rate for women apprentices	3.9%	5%

LABOUR MARKET RESPONSIVENESS

The system will optimize and grow the resources it needs to meet labour market needs.

Measure	Benchmark	Target
Progress on labour market demand – Motive Power Sector	Certifications issued 2018: 271 (11%)	Certifications required 2026: 2469
Progress on labour market demand Construction Sector	Certifications issued 2018: 435 (8%)	Certifications required 2026: 5283
Progress on labour market demand Service Sector	Certifications issued 2018: 34 (1%)	Certifications required 2026: 2405
Progress on labour market demand Industrial/Manufacturing Sector	Certifications issued 2018: 80 (5%)	Certifications required 2026: 1544
Percentage of total programs reviewed	20%	28%
Percentage of apprentices who apply and receive technical training	89%	90%
Percentage of unfilled training seats	31%	20%

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

The system will support apprentices to complete their training in a timely manner, gaining the depth and breadth of the skills employers need.

Measure	Benchmark	2019-2020 Target
Average time to complete	3.43 years	Monitor – met target
Number of certifications issued	716	5% increase
Current number of active apprentices in the system	6888	5% increase
Percentage of individuals who successfully pass certification examinations	63%	65%