

# Modernization and Innovation

**Year in Review** 2022-2023









# Table of Contents

<b>Message from the Chair</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Message from the Interim CEO</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Modernization and Innovation</b> .....	<b>4</b>
NSAA Mandate .....	5
The Model of Modernization .....	5
Striving to Meet Labour Market Demand .....	7
<b>Attracting Skilled Trades Talent</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Promoting the Skilled Trades .....	10
Reaching Youth .....	12
IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility .....	15
<b>Supporting the Journey to Certification</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Apprentice Learning Support Program .....	21
New Apprenticeship Pathways .....	21
Trade Harmonization .....	22
Technical Training Highlights .....	23
<b>Trade Development Activities</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Fostering a Culture of Workplace Learning</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Annual Industry Meeting .....	27
Post-Certification Training .....	28
Resources for Employers .....	29
<b>Advancing the Value of Certification</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Building Capacity through Collaboration .....	31
Compliance and Enforcement .....	31
<b>Measuring Success</b> .....	<b>32</b>

# Message from the Chair



The 2022-2023 year has been full of incredible transition and success for the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board (Board). The Board experienced significant changes with the appointment of ten new members, a new representative from the Nova Scotia Community College, and the re-appointment of two members, resulting in a new Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

I was very pleased to welcome the following new and returning members:

- Chair – Trent Soholt (*Member-at-Large*)
- Vice-Chair – Carol Dayment (*Industrial Manufacturing sector, Employer representative*)
- Mark Brown (*Member-at-Large*)
- Sarah Cruickshanks (*Construction sector, Employer representative*)
- Ernie Dalton (*Construction sector, Employee representative*)
- Jan Fullerton (*Member-at-Large*)
- David Giles (*Motive Power sector, Employer representative*)
- Michael MacDonald (*Construction sector, Employer representative*)
- Julie Marks (*Service sector, Employer representative*)
- Todd Marsman (*Construction sector, Employee representative*)
- Shawn McKillop (*Industrial/Manufacturing sector, Employee representative*)
- Jill Provoe (*Vice President, Academic, NSCC*)
- Charmaine Roma (*Service Sector, Employee representative*)
- Ann Sylliboy (*Member-At-Large*)

As an inaugural Board member whose final term has expired, I want to thank my fellow inaugural

Board members, whose terms have also expired, for their incredible work throughout their time on the Board: Heather Cruickshanks and Gordon MacLean. These individuals provided invaluable guidance and support to the Board when it was formed in 2014 and assisted with the establishment of the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (Agency).

Marjorie Davison, Agency CEO from 2014-2022, began a new role as Senior Executive Director with the Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration. Marjorie and I worked closely together, and the Agency would not enjoy the success we have today without her dedication and strong leadership. I want to thank her for all her amazing work to make the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia the best in class in Canada.

I also want to recognize Peter Conlon for taking on the role of interim CEO and shepherding the Agency through the search and recruitment of the new CEO. It was a pleasure to work with Peter during this leadership transition.

Even during times of transition, the foundation that grounds the Agency has been our engagement with industry. The Agency was founded in 2014 with the mantra of “Industry-led”. Continued engagement with our industry partners and development of new partnerships, has been and always will be, the cornerstone of a successful apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia.

The shift from virtual meetings to in-person and hybrid meetings with industry provided more opportunities for engagement and input. One of the primary methods of consulting with and receiving feedback from industry representatives is through ad hoc and Trade Advisory Committees (TAC) of the Board. The Board continues to look for new and meaningful ways to engage so it is responsive to the rapidly changing industry needs.

It has been a pleasure to be part of the Board from its inception and serving as Board Chair. There has been an incredible amount of work by so many resulting in steady growth and progress over the years, for which I am honoured to be involved. As the labour market shifts, the Agency continues to adapt; and I am humbled by the amazing work of the Agency staff, the Board, our industry, equity-deserving partners, and training providers. I also want to thank our Minister, the Honourable Jill Balser and Deputy Minister, Ava Czapalay for their strong support, direction, and engagement with the Board. I know the Agency will continue to innovate and change to address the labour market needs and support more opportunities for Nova Scotians to enjoy the benefits of a professional skilled trades career.

I wish the Board and the Agency continued success.

Sincerely,  
*Brad Smith, Board Chair*  
(*member 2014-2023;*  
*Chair September 2019-March 2023*)

# Message from the Interim CEO



Since my arrival as Interim CEO of the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency in November 2022, I have been extremely impressed with the incredible work of the Agency staff, the Board, our training providers and partners and the amount of engagement with industry and equity-deserving organizations who are all dedicated to a strong and responsive apprenticeship system.

I want to thank Marjorie Davison for her leadership of the Agency since its establishment in July 2014. Marjorie has generously provided me with her experience and knowledge of the apprenticeship system. We have worked together to identify strategic links between the Agency and the Skills and Learning Branch of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI).

The Apprenticeship Board is invaluable in providing a strong voice for the skilled trades industries in Nova Scotia to the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration and to the Agency. As a sector-based Board, they enable the Agency to be “industry-led” and engage industry on a formal basis through the establishment of Trade Advisory Committees. The Board has continued to be a strong and stable partner with new voices and perspectives coming from its ten new members, a new Board Chair and Vice-Chair.

I want to thank Brad Smith, who was an inaugural member of the Board and served as Board Chair for two terms, from July 2019 to March 2023. It has been a pleasure working with Brad, especially in the development of the modernization agenda for the Board. The Board accomplished a great deal under his leadership.

This is an exciting time in apprenticeship as the Agency and the Apprenticeship Board have embarked on modernizing the apprenticeship system at a time when the labour market is unlike anything that we have experienced - coming out of COVID-19 with labour shortages and labour mismatches. Although modernization means different things to different people and organizations, we have focused our efforts under the following Modernization Pillars: Attraction; Retention; System Excellence; and Industry Engagement. The Agency has been working to re-imagine our processes and activities and streamlining them to better serve our clients.

In the midst of all these changes, we are experiencing exciting improvements in all areas of the system. The Agency registered just under 1,900 new apprentices, for a total of almost 7,800 apprentices, both of which are the highest numbers to date. In addition, the percentage of

apprentices from diverse and underrepresented populations increased to 20.5% of all apprentices, with an increase of certificates of qualifications issued at 8.9%. The number of women apprentices increased to 8.9% of all apprentices and the percentage of certificates of qualification to women increased to 16%. The Agency also conducted over 1,100 compliance inspections, engaging almost 1,800 apprentices and journeypersons.

In closing, I want to sincerely thank the Honourable Jill Balser, Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration and Ava Czapalay, Deputy Minister, Labour, Skills and Immigration for their strong and continued support of the Agency, the Board, and the apprenticeship system in Nova Scotia.


It has been a privilege to work with such dedicated staff, Board members and partners. Thank you and I wish you all much success in your quest to achieve a modern and innovative apprenticeship and trades qualification system.

All the best,  
*Peter Conlon, Interim CEO*  
(November 2022 - July 2023)

# Modernization and Innovation







**NSAA Mandate** – The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (Agency or NSAA) is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system and improving access to and participation in the system by Indigenous persons, African Nova Scotians, differently-abled persons, immigrants, women, and members of other under-represented groups.

## The Model of Modernization

The Agency and the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board (Board) have been entrusted with modernizing the apprenticeship and trades certification system, as per the mandate of the Honourable Jill Balser, Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration.

To provide a framework for modernization, the Agency and the Board have adopted the following pillars of modernization: Attraction, Retention, System Excellence, and Industry Engagement.

The Agency and the Board have begun the journey to modernize the system. With the assistance of our industry, equity-deserving partners, and training providers we will transform the system to reduce barriers, streamline processes, provide better client services across the trades training system, and meet the labour market challenges facing skilled trade workforce in Nova Scotia.



## Minister's Panel on NSCC Trades Training

As part of Modernizing Apprenticeship, Minister Balser convened a Minister's Panel on NSCC pre-employment and trades training. The Minister's Panel is mandated to advise the Minister of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) on innovative NSCC Trades programming needed to meet the demands of employers while ensuring students receive credit towards their apprenticeship pathways. The Panel is considering ways to ensure prospective students interested in trade sector careers understand and participate successfully in the apprenticeship journey, from student to certified journey person. It is also ensuring that the needs of students, employers, interested departments, partners, equity-deserving groups, and other community members are represented and reflected in the design of innovative NSCC Trades programs that support student participation and success in trades training, and ultimately position the Province to meet growing labour market demand. Co-chaired by Ava Czapalay, Deputy Minister of LSI, and Don Bureaux, President of NSCC, the Panel is comprised of representatives from government, the trades training system, industry, and equity-deserving groups. Other voices will be brought in through key informant working groups. The Panel has met monthly and will present the Minister with recommendations in early July 2023.

## NetZero Workforce Readiness

During this past year NSAA was part of a Net Zero Coalition. This group has plans for developing Road Maps that will help determine training pathways and support in prioritizing required changes to curriculum standards. In addition, the Red Seal Program has created a Green Committee looking at how to inform changes to Occupational Standards.





## Striving to Meet Labour Market Demand

### More Opportunities for Skilled Trades (M.O.S.T.)

In June 2022, Premier Houston and Minister Balser announced the More Opportunities for Skilled Trades (M.O.S.T.) initiative. M.O.S.T. is a tax rebate for those under the age of 30 who are employed and registered as apprentices or certified journeypersons in the designated trades. Those who qualify can apply for a return of their provincial income tax paid on the first \$50,000 of income earned. This initiative supports the attraction and retention of young people in skilled trades industries and was in place for the 2022 tax year.

### Regulatory Amendments

In July 2022, the Province made amendments to the Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act General Regulations (ATQAGR) to modernize apprenticeship training and increase the number of skilled trades workers in Nova Scotia. Amendments to the ATQAGR included:

---

**Increasing the ratio of journeypersons to apprentices from 1:1 to 1:2 for most trades.**

---



---

**Exempting youth apprentices from the journeyperson-to-apprentice ratio to remove barriers to youth apprenticeship while still providing direct supervision.**

---



---

**Adding flexibility for virtual supervision.**

---

Prior to the regulatory changes, NSAA consulted with the skilled trades sectors, where many identified ratio requirements as a barrier to growth and recruitment.



# Attracting Skilled Trades Talent



## Leaders and Learners Camp

NSAA is working to promote awareness of skilled trades careers and apprenticeship pathways with our youth, parents, educators, and communities that are currently under-represented in the system. Timely access to relevant information and opportunities to experience the skilled trades supports informed decision-making about post-secondary options and future careers.



## Meet Dylan MacKenzie

Dylan MacKenzie grew up playing sports and in high school he excelled at math and science. He wanted to design buildings and dreamed of a career where he could incorporate his passion for trades work with his interest in math and science. He thought an engineering degree would encompass all of that, but after his first semester as a university engineering student, struggling with large class sizes and limited access to his professor, Dylan decided to pursue a career in the skilled trades.

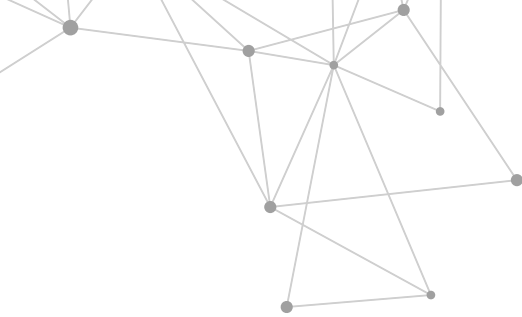
He saw an ad for the Apprenticeship Pathways to Shipbuilding Program, a program that paves the way for Indigenous Peoples to begin a career in the skilled trades, and knew it was something he wanted to pursue. It wasn't long before he was on a fast track, taking courses through the summer to complete a pipefitter program in 18 months – a program that normally takes a student 2 years to complete.

Dylan completed the program with resounding success and when finished, had accumulated 1,800 hours toward an apprenticeship certification as a pipefitter. After college, Dylan found an employer who was willing to hire and train him as an apprentice and is currently registered as a Steamfitter/Pipefitter with Gilson's Construction.



**"I'm very happy to be working with Gilson's Construction. Not only are they a great crew to work with, but they also treat me very well and are providing all the resources that I need to complete my apprenticeship and to become a certified journeyman."**

*- Dylan MacKenzie  
Steamfitter/Pipefitter Apprentice*



## Promoting the Skilled Trades

### Marketing Campaign Results

In 2020, the Agency received approval for a second, three-year awareness raising campaign to promote the skilled trades as a quality training and certification option and showcase apprenticeship and occupations in the skilled trades as inclusive and accessible to everyone. Individuals appearing in the advertisements were actual apprentices and journeypersons, many of whom were from equity-deserving and currently under-represented groups in the skilled trades.

The Awareness Raising Campaign concluded on March 31, 2023, with promotions that included transit ads, television ads (CTV, etc.), social media ads (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), YouTube video ads, Spotify podcasts and more.

The campaign overall was a tremendous success achieving apprenticeship engagement. Advertisements aimed to increase awareness and encourage Nova Scotians to visit the NSAA website to learn more about apprenticeship. There was a significant increase in the number of hits to the NSAA website when comparing April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022, to April 1, 2022, - March 31, 2023. Highlights include:

---

**25%**

increase in unique page views

---

**26%**

increase in visits to the NSAA's website homepage

---

**52%**

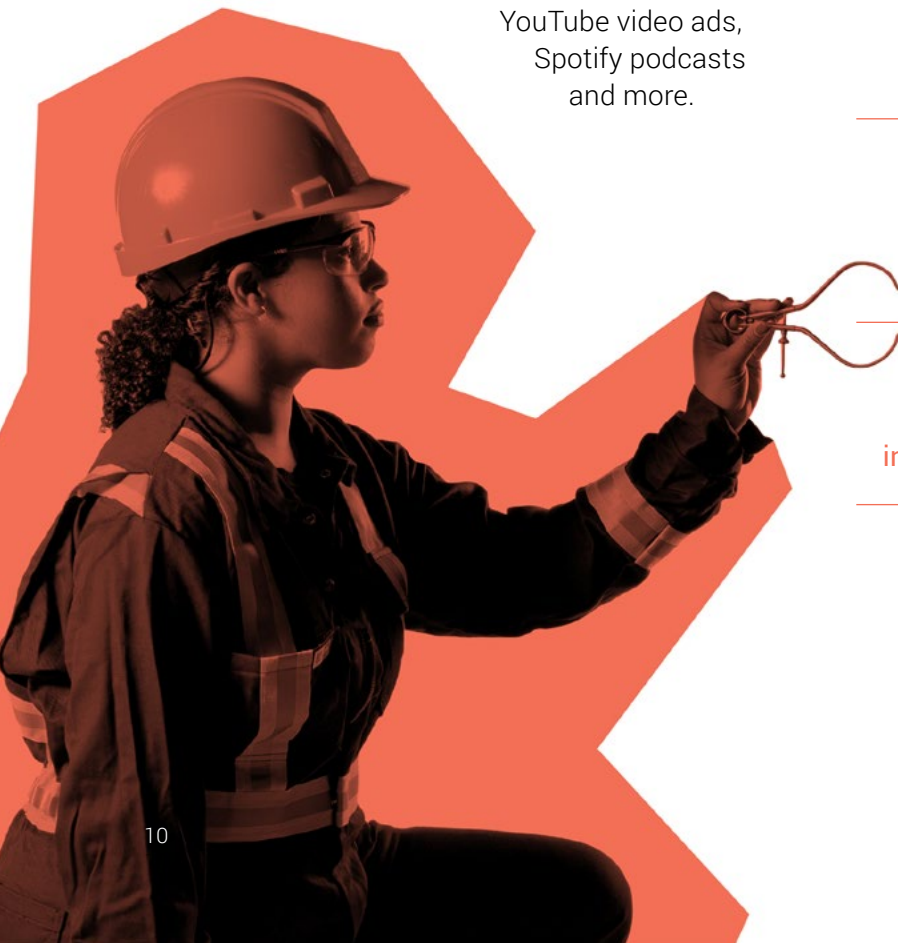
increase in visits to NSAA's "Why Apprenticeship" page

---

**59%**

increase in visits to NSAA's "Trades" page

---







## Changing Perceptions of Skills Trades Careers in Nova Scotia (2022 Omnibus Survey)

The perceptions of the skilled trades have changed significantly in a positive direction over the years.

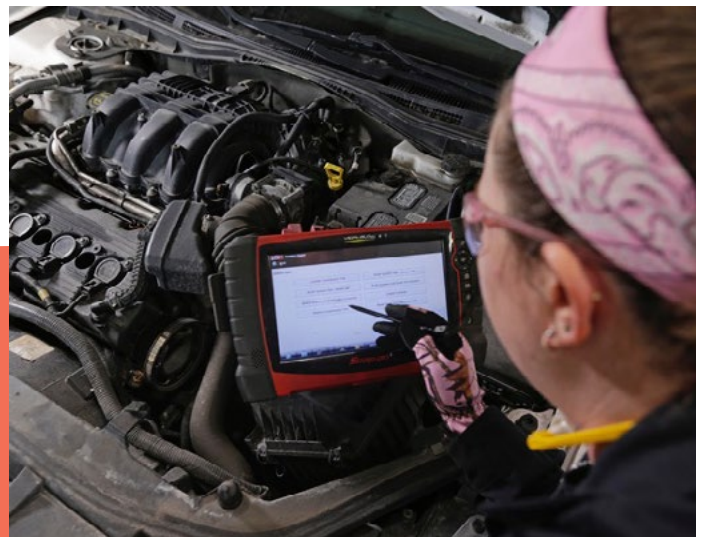
The Agency, alongside Communications Nova Scotia, participated in the Marketquest Omnibus public opinion research entitled MQO Pulse for NSGOV. This survey took place in November to December 2022 and asked questions on the perception of the skilled trades as valuable careers and as a contributor to the economy of Nova Scotia. The results indicate a strong positive perception of the skilled trades as follows:

- 96% of parents or guardians of a child under age 18 would be happy if their child or children chose a career in the skilled trades;
- 92% of Nova Scotians believe that “skilled trades people make a positive contribution to Nova Scotia’s economy”.

*\*The sample size was 400 adult Nova Scotians, and the results are representative of the Nova Scotia population with a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points 19 times out of 20.*

Potential contributing factors to the positive change in perception may be attributed to:

- The Agency’s two successive, three-year marketing campaigns;
- Our funded partners promoting the skilled trades;
- Consistent promotion of skilled trades as quality careers by the Nova Scotia Community College and the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development;
- Changes in the labour market to a significant labour mismatch.





*Leaders and  
Learners Camp  
for African Nova  
Scotian Youth*

## Reaching Youth

NSAA continues to invest \$1.5 million annually to fund experiential learning opportunities for youth to explore the skilled trades as a quality career option. Through our partnerships, industry and equity-deserving communities receive funds to deliver a variety of programs, camps and initiatives to youth.

In 2022-2023, through work with our partners, we reached over 29,000 youth and registered 175 youth apprentices, of which 5.1% were female. This is a 182% increase from the previous year and the highest number of youth apprentices registered to date, exceeding pre-COVID levels.

Nova Scotia youth are diverse, with broad interests and a wide range of skills and talents. For that reason, it is important that NSAA offer as many wide-ranging experiential learning opportunities as possible. The Agency is able

to do so through multiple partnerships that provide ample opportunities ranging from weekly programming to summer camps, to special events and competitions, as well as paid summer hands-on work experience.

Since 2008, NSAA has supported summer youth apprenticeship programs for students in Grades 10 and 11. These programs are delivered in partnership with the Construction Association of Nova Scotia administering **Building Futures for Youth** (construction trades), the Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia administering **TestDrive** (motive power trades), and the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council administering **Serve It Up!** (cook and baker trades). Participants explore the skilled trades through a paid summer work placement combined with some in-class training.





### Our Industry Youth Partners

Automotive Sector Council  
Construction Association of Nova Scotia  
Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council  
Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Council

### Our Education Partners

Black Educators Association of Nova Scotia  
Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial  
Education and Early Childhood Development  
Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey  
Regional Centres for Education

### Our Youth Program Partners

Skills Canada Nova Scotia  
Techsploration

## Increasing Inclusion in Youth Programs

Becoming inclusive starts with attracting more diverse youth to consider careers in the skilled trades. NSAA worked with our funded youth delivery partners to increase the number of participants from under-represented communities. Our Summer Youth Apprenticeship Program partners successfully engaged over 120 high school youth and employers to provide a five-week paid summer work experience in the skilled trades, with a focus on increasing the number of youths from under-represented groups in the program. The following chart demonstrates the number of youth and diverse youth participants in the Summer Youth Apprenticeship Programs.



*Black Educators Association  
Skilled Trades Youth Camp, July 2022*

NSAA partnered with **Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey** (MK) and the Native Council of Nova Scotia (NCNS) to support an Indigenous Youth Trades Fair in addition to summer youth skilled trades camp. The Trades Fair provides youth aged 12-18 the opportunity to engage in 12 or more trades activities at the Trades Exhibition Hall, as well as one-to-one inquiring conversations with skilled trades professionals. The youth camps enable youth to delve into one specific skilled trade for a week. For the last two years, youth have been guided by a Red Seal Endorsed Carpenter and member of Membertou First Nation.

2022-23 also saw a new partnership established to increase engagement with African Nova Scotian youth. The Agency and the **Black Educators Association** offered a *Skilled Trades Youth Camp* to 12 youth who tried their skills in an introductory Welder camp.

The following table shows the participation of individuals from equity-deserving and diverse groups in skilled trades youth programs:

Program	Partner	Youth*	Gender*	Diversity
Building Futures for Youth	Construction Association of NS	94	M = 81 F = 13 Non-Binary = 0	Indigenous = 4 African NS = 6 Persons with Disability = 1 Newcomers = 0
TestDrive	Automotive Sector Council	34	M = 25 F = 8 Non-Binary = 1	Indigenous = 1 African NS = 1 Persons with Disability = 1 Newcomers = 0
Serve It Up!	NS Human Resource Sector Council	18	M = 9 F = 9	Indigenous = 0 African NS = 1 Persons with Disability = 1 Newcomers = 0
Trades Exhibition Hall, Mobile Construction Experience, other activities for youth	Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council	1,906	M = 827 F = 606 Non-Binary = 48	Indigenous = 285 African NS = 220 Persons with Disability = 59 Newcomers = 75
Competitions, Career Showcases, School Tours, Try-a-Trades, Accessibility Services, Skilled Futures, Skills For Success	Skills Canada Nova Scotia	25,176	M = 167 F = 102 Non-Binary = 13 <i>Note: numbers based on competitions only</i>	Indigenous = 8 African NS = 6 Persons with Disability = 16 Newcomers = 23 <i>Note: numbers based on competitions only</i>
Techsploration	Techsploration	850	M = 153 F = 697 Non-Binary = 26	Indigenous = 21 African NS = 21 Equity-Deserving = 128 Newcomers = 26

\*Gender numbers may not equal youth totals as participants may not self-identify their gender.



## IDEA: Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility

NSAA places significant importance on enhancing diversity and inclusion within the apprenticeship system. When the Agency's Operating Charter was established in 2014, one of its primary objectives was to promote greater access and involvement in the system for individuals from under-represented groups, including Indigenous persons, African Nova Scotians, differently-abled individuals, immigrants, women, and others facing representation challenges. The Operating Charter also includes the provision for four member-at-large positions on the Agency Board, ensuring representation beyond specific trade sectors. To support this commitment, the Minister has appointed representatives from diverse and under-represented backgrounds, such as First Nations and Indigenous persons, Women, and African Nova Scotians. This deliberate action has paved the way for the integration of diversity and inclusion principles throughout the Agency.

In 2016, the Agency introduced a Diversity and Inclusion Framework called "Building More Equitable Pathways." This framework was developed collaboratively with various associations representing diverse groups and received endorsement from industry representatives on the Apprenticeship Board. The Framework outlines a comprehensive action plan that emphasizes accountability, the elimination of barriers, and the formation

of partnerships to enhance the participation and success of women and diverse groups in the apprenticeship and trades qualifications system.

Following the success of the initial framework, Building More Equitable Pathways II was launched and reimagined with the following three goals:

---

**Champion Cultural Change**

---

**Lead System Innovation**

---


**Attract and Retain Diverse Skilled Trade Talent**

---

### Champion Cultural Change

The Agency continues to promote a change that is built upon universal design, values and celebrates differences, and works to create an environment that is welcoming and safe, both culturally and psychologically, in all areas of the apprenticeship system. Work has continued on the Trade Places initiative with a focus on two mini-documentaries: "*African Nova Scotians – Legacy in the Trades*" and "*Newcomers in the Trades – Chance, Challenge and Change*". The documentaries will be used to create learning modules for industry that will help create a better understanding and knowledge of the difference that diversity





makes. These documentaries are community-based and are guided by the principle of “Nothing about us without us”.

## Lead System Innovation

NSAA continues to grow and is in the process of reimagining a system that challenges the status quo and continues to successfully support equity-deserving apprentices throughout their journey. Relationships based on trust and reciprocity are key to ensuring success of diverse apprentices. The Agency continues to support the work of the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Advisory Committee and this year, assisted in the official branding of the committee through the development of a logo. At the annual Advancing Aboriginal Apprenticeship conference, held at Digby Pines, the new logo was unveiled. The logo features Mi'kmaw pictographs that mean “telikina'makunenu” or “They will teach us” and were designed by Mi'kmaw graphic artist Cailin Gerrard.



*Cailin Gerrard,  
designer of AAAC Logo*

## Attract and Retain Diverse Skilled Trade Talent

As the Agency continues to foster relationships with partners and stakeholders, we do so with retention in mind. As we attract more diverse groups to the trades, we also have to focus on retention of those entering the system. Community partnerships are essential in ensuring success in the trades.

NSAA has been working closely with the YWCA for the past year to consult with tradeswomen and women-focused organizations regarding the need for, and the development of, a mentorship/allyship network to support women in trades. The collaboration has led to the formation of the Women in Skilled Trades Agency Network (WiSTAN) consisting of Nova Scotian agencies, industry associations and labour organizations that aim to support the successful participation of women working in the skilled trades. The network focuses its efforts on exploring the development of an internet portal, collaborative programming, and a joint annual celebration event to recognize and celebrate the contributions of women in trades.

The Agency has also partnered with NS Works Digby and the Digby Disabilities Partnership to offer a second cohort in a five-week program to introduce persons with disabilities to the construction trades, including Carpenter, Plumber, and Construction Electrician.





The Aboriginal Apprenticeship Advisory Committee's Advancing Aboriginal Apprenticeship conference "Innovations in Challenging Times" saw 78 participants from the Mi'kmaw community, Industry, and government departments come together at Digby Pines in May 2022. The Conference addressed a number of barriers and highlighted the need for continued communication among partners and in particular sharing what opportunities exist for students through Education and Early Childhood Development, Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey, and NSAA.

While we have seen success with the promotion of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) in the skilled trades, we know we have a long way to go and are excited about future possibilities, relationships and partnership with community as we continue on this journey together, creating a skilled workforce that is reflective of the social fabric of our province.

### Work-based Trades Practical Assessment Project

NSAA in collaboration with Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) continue

to provide opportunities for newcomers to Nova Scotia to practice their trades in the province through the Work-based Trades Practical Assessment project. During the year, ISANS received funding support to attach 20 newcomers to employers in their respective trades. The project allows employers to assess the skills and knowledge of individuals attached to them for a period of 12 weeks prior to hiring them as apprentices.

Since the beginning of the project, 136 clients have participated in the project, of which 77 have been registered as apprentices by their employers, 50 are at different levels of completing the technical training, and 6 have completed the Red Seal exam and became journeypersons. To date, 78 employers are participating in the project. Clients in the Work-based Trades Practical Assessment project are in the following trades: Construction Electrician, Carpenter, Welder, Machinist, Automotive Service Technician, Heavy Duty Equipment Technician, Plumber, Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic, Drywall Finisher and Plasterer, and Auto Body and Collision Technician.



# Supporting the Journey to Certification



At the heart of the journey to certification is the relationship between employers, supervising journeypersons and those learning the trade. The role of NSAA is to support the success of this relationship and provide quality trades programs, training opportunities, and learning resources needed to be successful as newly certified practitioners and throughout their careers.



## Meet Paul Duykers

Paul Duykers, now a Red Seal certified carpenter and general manager of construction at Maples Retirement Living in Antigonish, who oversees the construction work of 13 to 15 duplexes each year, remembers the “old school” days of what it was like to be an apprentice. Paul and his employer, Mr. Steve Smith, owner of Maples Retirement Living, offer their apprentices incentives in an effort to attract and retain skilled trade workers.

Paul and Mr. Smith are also reinvesting a portion of the Apprenticeship START funding incentive they receive from NSAA to each new apprentice.

“Folks were just blown away when I told them what they would be getting,” said Paul. “Mr. Smith is giving 25 percent of the funding back to the apprentice throughout their apprenticeship journey. So when an apprentice starts a level of training, they receive \$250. They then receive another \$750 after they complete the level as an incentive to finish, which is \$1,000 total each year.” Mr. Smith also reimburses approximately \$800 to cover the cost of books, \$148 to cover the apprenticeship fee and \$148 to cover any exam fees. After they write and pass their Red Seal certification exam, they get another \$1,000 bonus.

“It’s not easy for apprentices when they are just getting started in their career,” said Mr. Smith. “Books and fees are an added expense and if we can help by covering those costs and by treating them well, we hope that it will show them that they are valued.” Paul said that when he approached Mr. Smith with the idea to reinvest a portion of the Apprenticeship START funding, he didn’t even blink an eye.



**“I had asked if he would consider giving 20 percent of the funding incentive back to the apprentices and he wanted to give 25 percent back instead. That just goes to show how much he values the apprentices who are working here, that he wants to retain them, and his commitment to helping them progress.”**

*- Paul Duykers, Red Seal Carpenter*

## Meet Jessica Arsenault

Jessica Arsenault attended university after high school and completed an English degree. Unable to envision herself in that setting for the rest of her life and feeling like she was “spinning her tires”, she had a pivotal moment while building a deck with her father to pursue a career as a carpenter.

Jessica worked in different areas of construction for 12 years before deciding to pursue Red Seal certification in the trade, beginning her apprenticeship in 2022. Jessica is completing her apprenticeship at Lloyll Prefabs, a company that designs and builds high-end prefab homes inside a warehouse and then ships them across North America.

Jessica wishes she had pursued certification through the apprenticeship pathway earlier, as she has realized that it's important, particularly as a woman, to have those credentials. She is a big advocate for having such programs available to young women and showing them that working in the trades is not only possible, but a viable career choice. It also provides a significant pay increase.

Looking ahead, Jessica is eager to complete her apprenticeship training and become a certified journeyman. Once certified, she will be able to help mentor others throughout their apprenticeship journey.

At the heart of the journey to certification is the relationship between employers, supervising journeymen and those learning the trade. The role of NSAA is to support the success of this relationship and provide quality trades programs, training opportunities, and learning resources needed to be successful as newly certified practitioners and throughout their careers.



**“It can be an intimidating world to get into, where there are so few women. The more women that take this on, the more women are going to be encouraged to do it. This is the only option for me. It’s the only thing I ever want to do.”**

*- Jessica Arsenault, Carpenter Apprentice*

## Apprentice Learning Support Program

In Fall 2022, following the successful partnership with Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification, New Brunswick, the Agency formally adopted its first Apprenticeship Learning Support Program (ALSP) customized for Nova Scotian apprentices. Learning Support Strategists meet with apprentices to better understand their needs and leverage their strengths. The focus is on decreasing systemic barriers to progression and completion through interventions, accommodations, and strategies. Collaboration with training providers, employers, journeypersons, and NSAA staff guide the intake, triage (prioritization), and assessment processes. The small unit of two Learning Support Strategists now support over one hundred apprentices. The Agency is now recruiting trade specific tutors for individual and small group workshops.

## Open House Events

In October 2022, Industry Training Consultants participated in Open House events held at various NSCC campuses across the province. In addition, open houses were held at the Burridge, Marconi, Strait, Lunenburg, Kentville, Truro, Springhill and Pictou campuses. NSAA staff took the opportunity to interact with youth and their parents and provided information about the apprenticeship and

trades qualifications system in Nova Scotia and the professional trades as a viable career option. Staff also participated in an information session organized by the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council (NSCSC) at their premises on Rugged Lake on September 10, 2022. NSAA had a booth and were available to answer questions about the apprenticeship and certification system while giving away trade related souvenirs and apprenticeship literature.

## New Apprenticeship Pathways

In an effort to meet industry demand for highly skilled trade professionals in the construction and finishing trades, and to pave the way for more apprentices to access training in Nova Scotia, NSAA initiated the *"Pathways Project."* This project involves the development of self-directed study programs, starting with the following eight trades:

---

Cabinetmaker

---

Concrete Finisher

---

Construction Craft Worker

---

Drywall Finisher & Plasterer

---

Floorcovering Installer

---

Lather

---

Painter & Decorator

---

Tilesetter

---





During the 2022-2023 fiscal year, all eight trades opened for registration of apprentices, with the logbook and program of study completed. Online, self-directed training is currently under development and will be available during the 2023-2024 training year. This will provide a flexible pathway to certification that will allow apprentices to study independently without taking time away from work to attend technical training, benefitting the apprentice and their employer.



## Trade Harmonization

NSAA is committed to modernizing and innovating trade harmonization in Red Seal trades at both the national and Atlantic levels. In 2022-2023, Nova Scotia industry representatives and instructors helped to develop and validate occupational standards and examination banks for 19 Red Seal trades at national workshops and 8 Red Seal trades at Atlantic workshops.

The Agency also implemented Atlantic harmonized programs for Auto Body and Collision Technician (level 1), Automotive Service Technician (level 4), Boilermaker (level 3), Heavy Duty Equipment Technician (level 3), Industrial Mechanic (Millwright) (level 4),

Insulator (Heat & Frost) (level 2), Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Mechanic (level 1), Sheet Metal Worker (level 1), and Truck and Transport Mechanic (level 3).

NSAA and its Atlantic partners also finalized the harmonized training programs for Machinist and Powerline Technician, releasing the curriculum standards and logbooks for the 2023-2024 training year.





## Technical Training Highlights

Apprenticeship technical training and exams were delivered in-person without restrictions at NSCC and other training providers. Although the wearing of face masks was encouraged to protect NSCC staff and apprentices, this was not required. NSAA was able to schedule exam sittings for up to 60 clients at a time, thereby allowing for adequate spacing.

The Atlantic Trades Business Seal program continued to grow, and more journeypersons have become interested in taking the course as it is now delivered in a fully remote format. During the year under review, 30 journeypersons registered to take the courses at different times. There were 2,504 apprentices who were scheduled for technical training from September 1, 2022, to August 31, 2023.



## Trade Development Activities 2022-2023

Significant progress was made across a number of trades in 2022-2023. The following chart provides details on the type of work that was undertaken by each trade.

LEGEND	
ATAC	– Atlantic Trade Advisory Committee
CCDA	– Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship, responsible for the Red Seal Program
IB	– Item Bank
NSOS	– Nova Scotia Occupational Standard
POS	– Program of Study
RSOS	– Red Seal Occupational Standard

TRADE	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS (April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023)
<b>Auto Body and Collision Technician</b>	Level 3 & 4 Jurisdictional Review
<b>Baker</b>	RSOS Review completed
<b>Black Beauty Culture Hair Innovator</b>	NSOS / logbook completed; Curriculum Standard draft completed - under review
<b>Boat Builder</b>	Developed a Competency Framework that is currently being applied to this trade
<b>Cabinetmaker</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Communications Technician</b>	Certification exam completed; Draft curriculum standard completed
<b>Concrete Finisher</b>	Logbook completed; Program of Study (POS) completed
<b>Construction Craft Worker</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Construction Electrician</b>	Red Seal Item Bank Workshop
<b>Drywall Finisher and Plasterer</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Elevating Device Mechanic A/B</b>	Draft curriculum standard completed
<b>Farm Technician</b>	NSOS, exam bank workshop, curriculum standard completed
<b>Floorcovering Installer</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Glazier</b>	Curriculum Standard completed
<b>Hairstylist</b>	Second Pilot almost complete; permanent pathway being developed
<b>Heavy Equipment Operator (Excavator)</b>	Draft logbook completed
<b>Industrial Electrician</b>	Red Seal peer review workshop



TRADE	MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS (April 1, 2022 - March 31, 2023)
<b>Industrial Mechanic (Millwright)</b>	Red Seal IB workshop
<b>Insulator (Heat and Frost)</b>	Level 3 & 4 Jurisdictional Review
<b>Lather (Interior Systems Mechanic)</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Machinist</b>	ATAC Levels 1-4 exam banks workshops and Level 1 jurisdictionally reviewed
<b>Oil Heat System Technician (OHST)</b>	OHST ATAC curriculum standard workshop, Level 1-3 exam bank workshops and Level 1 jurisdictional review
<b>Painter and Decorator</b>	Logbook completed, POS completed, Draft Level 1 training submitted
<b>Plumber</b>	Plumber code excerpt vs. codebook work, G7 exam update and new licensing process developed and piloted, RSOS review/validation/weighting workshop, Red Seal IB workshop
<b>Powerline Technician</b>	Level 3 & 4 Jurisdictional Review
<b>Refrigeration &amp; A/C Mechanic</b>	Level 3 & 4 Jurisdictional Review and Host Response Complete
<b>Roofer</b>	Level 3 Jurisdictional Review
<b>Sheet Metal Worker</b>	Level 1, 2, 3 & 4 Jurisdictional Review
<b>Steamfitter/Pipefitter</b>	G7 exam update and new licensing process developed and piloted, Red Seal IB workshop
<b>Tilesetter</b>	Logbook completed; POS completed
<b>Transport Trailer Technician</b>	Red Seal Item Bank Workshop
<b>Truck and Transport Mechanic</b>	Red Seal Item Bank Workshop
<b>Welder</b>	Red Seal peer review workshop, RSOS review/weighting/validation workshop
<b>Institutional Cook</b>	NSOS completed; Draft certification exam completed Logbook completed
<b>Architectural Cladder</b>	Draft NSOS completed
<b>Barber</b>	Draft NSOS completed

# Fostering a Culture of Workplace Learning



The defining element of apprenticeship is that the workplace becomes the primary classroom. When employers embrace their role as the primary trainer, the apprentices benefit more fully. NSAA aims to help employers make their workplace a learning place with structured program resources that support skills acquisition and healthy workplace environments in which to learn. The Agency undertakes actions to contribute to respectful workplaces that value and encourage the learning of all apprentices and journeypersons and strives to be a model of affirming workplace learning culture.

## Annual Industry Meeting

The Annual Industry Meeting - *Empowering an Inclusive Workplace Learning Culture* - took place on October 27, 2022, with approximately 120 participants. NSAA announced the Atlantic Trades Mentoring Program framework that will support journeypersons in becoming effective and inclusive workplace mentors and provide employers with strategies to champion mentorship and succeed in their role as the primary trainer in the apprenticeship system.

A panel discussion on the *Role of Mentorship in Fostering a Culture of Workplace Learning* was moderated by Lisa Frizzell, Senior Education Strategist, NSAA. The panelists included: Joey MacDougall, Red Seal Heavy Duty Equipment Technician and Shop Supervisor, Toromont Cat; Shea Erskine, Apprentice Welder, Irving

Shipbuilding; Matt Burke, Red Seal Welder and Apprenticeship Skills Development Coach at Irving Shipbuilding; Tracy Kittilsen, Manager of Extended Learning, Faculty of Agriculture, Dalhousie University; and Matt Gore, Red Seal Plumber and founder of GoPro Plumbers Inc. The discussion focused on the importance of mentoring skilled tradespersons and recognizing that mentorship is the foundation of apprenticeship.

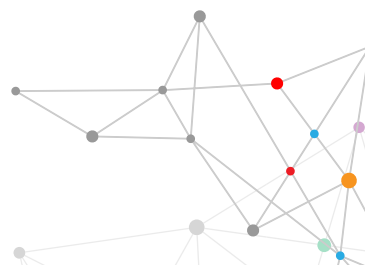
Keynote speaker Mary Van Buren, President of the Canadian Construction Association, addressed the nation-wide shortage of skilled tradespersons, and acknowledged the importance of mentorship and promoting a workplace learning culture to attract and retain skilled tradespersons.



(L-R) Lisa Frizzell (moderator), Matt Gore, Joey MacDougall, Matt Burke, Tracy Kittilsen, Shea Erskine



Mary Van Buren, President, Canadian Construction Assoc.







*(L-R) Jamie Cameron, John Harrington, Lorne MacKinnon, Bill Barrington, Eugene Pace*



*Chad Carrington and Mohja Alia*

### Recognized at the event were five recipients of the Apprenticeship Award of Excellence:

- Jamie Cameron, Manager, Celtic Construction Inc.
- John Harrington, President and Owner, PMC Roofing Ltd.
- Lorne MacKinnon, Welding Inspector, Canadian Welding Bureau
- Bill Barrington, HVAC Manager, Lynk Electric Ltd.
- Eugene Pace, Plumbing/Gas/Cross Connection Control Instructor, UA Local 56

### Also recognized at the event were two recipients of the Apprenticeship Ally Award of Excellence:

- Chad Carrington, Operations Supervisor, Casey PreCast Ltd.
- Mohja Alia, Manager, Employment and Bridging, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia

---

## Post-Certification Training

In 2022-2023, work was completed on an Atlantic Trades Mentoring Program Framework. Development of apprenticeship level mentoring modules has begun with NSCC and are anticipated to be available for implementation during the 2024-2025 training year. Updated mentoring learning outcomes and objectives have been finalized and will be adopted by all Atlantic provinces as part of Atlantic harmonization.

---

## Resources for Employers

### Canadian Apprenticeship Service

NSAA led the implementation of the first year of the Canadian Apprenticeship Service (CAS) program across the Atlantic Region. CAS is a two-year, federally funded program where small and medium-sized businesses can receive funding for hiring new, first-year apprentices in Red Seal trades in the construction and manufacturing industry, with a focus on equity-deserving groups. As part of the program, training will be provided to employers in those sectors to create safe, healthy, and inclusive workplaces.

In 2022-2023, \$1.75M was distributed to employers in Nova Scotia for hiring 513 new apprentices. Of these apprentices, 24 percent were from under-represented groups, including women, Indigenous people, newcomers, persons with disabilities, racialized communities, Black Canadians, and LGBTQ2+.

### Apprenticeship START

The Apprenticeship START program was temporarily expanded to include employers in Sydney, Truro, and Halifax and enable employers who re-hire apprentices who were laid off during the pandemic to continue to receive START funding. Through the incentive program \$5.2M was distributed in 2022-2023 to employers who hired, progressed, and completed their apprentices.

As of March 2023, the employers of 525 apprentices benefited from the expansion, and as of March 31, 2023, there were 3,119 active apprentices and 2,070 employers participating in the program. Of the 3,119 active apprentices, 8 percent are women and 23 percent are from under-represented groups.





# Advancing the Value of Certification





## Building Capacity through Collaboration

### Farm Technician Trade

NSAA in collaboration with Dalhousie University's Agricultural Campus in Truro, organized a refresher course for a second cohort of individuals seeking to be certified in the Farm Technician trade. At the end of March 31, 2023, eight individuals had become certified in the Farm Technician trade. While there are no apprentices registered in the trade as of the reporting period, NSAA staff are developing a plan to tour selected farms of certified individuals to discuss and encourage the registration of apprentices. The Agency is

working with Dalhousie University Agricultural campus to develop and deliver technical training in the winter of 2023.

### Partner Activities

NSAA provided funding support to Landscape Nova Scotia to organize a refresher course with the aim of encouraging members to become certified in the Landscape Horticulturalist trade through the Trade Qualifier process. The refresher followed a successful run of a similar course in 2021 leading to certification in the trade.

## Compliance and Enforcement

### Compliance First

NSAA works to instill pride and confidence in the skills of our certified trades workforce and encourage public investment decisions to incorporate the use of apprentices and certified tradespeople. It seeks to grow the value of compliance by industry with an enforcement approach that is active, visible, and education based. The Agency believes that public valuing of trades certification leads to fair, safe, and equitable workplaces.

For the first time since the Agency's inception, the Compliance and Enforcement team included three compliance officers, and as a direct result NSAA had a record-breaking year. In total, 1,141 sites were inspected, 869 of which were employers with compulsory certified trades. During site visits the Compliance Officers made contact with 543 apprentices and 1,233 journeypersons.

In 2022, Compliance Officers spent more time with the employers, journeypersons and apprentices, concentrating on education and outreach with a 'Compliance First' approach. The efforts proved successful and as a result the compliance rate is the highest ever recorded at 92 percent. There were 49 complaints received, however, only 43 Stop Work Orders were handed out and no Summary Offense Tickets were issued.

In addition to regular inspections and responding to complaints the Compliance Officers also visited the NSCC campuses to give presentations to students in the compulsory certified trades, worked with various partners throughout the province, and carried out a blitz in coordination with Public Works, which resulted in 24 Stop Work Orders issued in the Automotive Service Technician Trade. As a direct result of the actions and work carried out by the Compliance and Enforcement section, 35 apprentices were registered.

# Measuring Success



## Employer Engagement

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

MEASURE	2022-2023 RESULT	STATUS
Net number of new employers in the apprenticeship system	221	Increase
Number of new employers in the apprenticeship system	245	Increase
Compliance rate	92%	Stable

## Inclusiveness

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

MEASURE	2021-2022 RESULT	STATUS
Percentage of apprentices who represent diverse populations	20.5%	Increase
Percentage of women in the apprenticeship system	8.9%	Increase
Percentage of certifications issued to diverse persons	16%	Increase
Percentage of certifications issued to women	7.5%	Increase

## Labour Market Responsiveness

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

MEASURE	2022-2023 RESULT	TARGET	STATUS
Progress on labour market demand - Motive Power Sector	Certifications issued since 2018: 937 (38%)	Certifications required 2026: 2,469	At Risk
Progress on labour market demand - Construction Sector	Certifications issued since 2018: 2,093 (40%)	Certifications required 2026: 5283	At Risk
Progress on labour market demand - Service Sector	Certifications issued since 2018: 143 (6%)	Certifications required 2026: 2405	At Risk
Progress on labour market demand - Industrial/Manufacturing Sector	Certifications issued since 2018: 527 (34%)	Certifications required 2026: 1544	At Risk
Percentage of total programs reviewed training	26.5%	25%	On Track

## 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	2022-2023 RESULT	STATUS
Average time to complete	4.1 years	Stable
Number of certifications issued	814	15% Increase
Current number of active apprentices in the system	7,772	5.5% Increase
Percentage of individuals who successfully pass certification examinations	67%	2% Decrease





[nsapprenticeship.ca](https://nsapprenticeship.ca)  
[apprenticeship@novascotia.ca](mailto:apprenticeship@novascotia.ca)