



# **START**

## **Program Guidelines**

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Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction..... 3

    Objectives ..... 3

    Expected Results ..... 3

Eligibility..... 3

Funding Amounts ..... 5

Employer Roles and Responsibilities ..... 5

Contact Us..... 6

Appendix A – START Program Funding Chart ..... 7

## Introduction

### Objectives

The Apprenticeship START Program is administered by the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (the Agency). The objective of the Apprenticeship START program is to:

- encourage small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nova Scotia to register and employ apprentices and to encourage employers to support those apprentices as they progress through their apprenticeship program.
- encourage SMEs in Nova Scotia to register and employ equity-deserving apprentices who self-identify as belonging to an equity group and support them as they progress through their apprenticeship program.

### Expected Results

- Successful matches made between employers and employees, resulting in ongoing employment and gained work experience.
- Apprentices will progress through their apprenticeship programs and achieve certification with support from Nova Scotia employers.
- Apprentices will acquire professional skills, knowledge and work experiences that will benefit both themselves and the employer, resulting in sustainable labour market attachment for employers.

### Eligibility

An eligible employer is defined as any small or medium sized (SME) business who:

- has 499 employees or less,
- has 15 active apprentices or less,
- is a not-for-profit organization,
- has a physical location in the province,
- is in good standing and has an active membership with the NS Registry of Joint Stocks,
- is a social enterprise (business or organization operated for the purpose of addressing social, economic, or environmental challenges),
- is otherwise deemed eligible by the Chief Operating Officer.

Note: eligible employers cannot be receiving funding for the same apprentice from other sources and/or government programs and must disclose this information to the Agency at the time of registration.

Apprenticeship START is available to eligible employers who register an apprentice with their company in **rural** Nova Scotia. Employers operating in **urban** areas (Halifax Regional Municipality, the town of Truro, and the town of Sydney) are not eligible unless they are registering an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies, at the time of registration, as belonging to one or more of the following equity groups:

- Newcomers,
- African Nova Scotians,
- Indigenous Peoples,
- Visible minorities,
- Persons with physical disabilities,
- Persons with learning disabilities,
- Women in trades where they are under-represented,
- Individuals who identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

Please note that eligibility is determined based on the legal address listed on the employer's Registry of Joint Stocks account. Owners or co-owners of the company cannot register themselves as an apprentice to receive the START funding.

### [Youth Apprentices / Recent Graduates – Special Exception](#)

If an eligible employer transitions a youth apprentice, recent high school graduate, or recent graduate of a recognized pre-apprenticeship program from part-time to full-time employment, the employer may qualify for START funding.

To confirm eligibility, the employer must notify their Industry Training Consultant (ITC) in writing within 90 days of the apprentice commencing full-time employment. The notification must include confirmation of the change in employment status and the official start date of full-time employment.

### [Definitions](#)

**Youth Apprentice:** Students and youth who are 16 to 19 years of age and employed in a skilled trade while in high school.

**Pre-Apprenticeship Program/Opportunities:** option for high school graduates who want to learn more about the trade before going to work. This includes pre-apprenticeship programs offered through NSCC; high school including Skilled Trades, Co-op; and Summer Sector Employment Programs including Building Futures for Youth, Serve it Up! and TestDrive.

**Full-time employment:** Full-time employment is defined as a position in which an employee is scheduled to work a minimum of 35 hours per week on a regular and ongoing basis.

## Funding Amounts

See [Appendix A – START Program Funding Chart](#) for more information.

Eligible employers who register an apprentice with their company in **rural** Nova Scotia will receive the following:

1. \$2500 hiring incentive for the registration of a new apprentice or transfer,
2. \$5000 payment for each level the apprentice completes, and
3. \$2500 when the apprentice completes their apprenticeship program.

Eligible employers who register an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies as belonging to an eligible equity group **anywhere** in Nova Scotia will receive:

1. \$5000 hiring incentive for the registration of an equity-deserving apprentice,
2. \$5000 payment for each level the apprentice completes, and
3. \$5000 when the apprentice completes their apprenticeship program.

Note: An employer is only eligible for a progression incentive if their apprentice completes training and examinations for a level while under their employ.

## Employer Roles and Responsibilities

Employers should be aware that:

- they can receive hiring and progression incentives for only 15 apprentices or less at any given time.
- if an apprentice fails to progress a level within 24 months, the apprentice will be removed from the START program.
- employers must be willing to provide apprentices with 35 hours or more per week unless the apprentice is attending technical training.
- all employers must be registered, in good standing and have an active membership with the Registry of Joint Stocks.

Employers upon signing an apprenticeship agreement agree to:

- develop, supervise, and provide valuable work experiences to the apprentice.
- accurately document the hours of practical experience and verify tasks completed by the apprentice in the apprentice's Record of Occupational Progress Book (logbook).
- allow the apprentice to participate in required technical training, take examinations, and re-employ the apprentice upon completion of training.
- notify the Chief Operating Officer in writing within 15 days if the apprentice ceases to be employed, or if they are unable to provide the apprentice with practical experience or

allow the apprentice to participate in technical training.

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency can choose to terminate an agreement at any time if it is deemed that an employer:

- is not providing an appropriate work experience.
- is not progressing apprentices through their apprenticeship program.
- is not providing a safe work environment; and/or
- is not using the program for its intent.

## Contact Us

For more information, contact the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency:

 Halifax Office: 902-424-5651

 Toll Free (NS): 1-800-494-5651

 <https://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/employers/employer-supports> or [apprenticeshipstart@novascotia.ca](mailto:apprenticeshipstart@novascotia.ca)

## Appendix A – START Program Funding Chart

Overview of funding for eligible SMEs who hire an apprentice and retain them throughout their apprenticeship journey.



**Over the course of an apprentices' program, eligible employers could receive up to \$30,000 in START funding.**