

# START Program

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The Apprenticeship START program encourages employers to register and employ apprentices and support them as they complete their apprenticeship program.

### 1) Who is eligible?

**Answer:** Apprenticeship START is available to eligible employers who:

- register an apprentice to their company anywhere in Nova Scotia where the population is less than 20,000.
- Employers operating in urban areas where populations exceed 20,000 (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 an equity-deserving group.

Note: an eligible small and medium sized enterprises (SME) is a company with 499 employees or less.

### 2) Which equity-deserving groups are eligible for START?

**Answer:**

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

### 3) Which trades are eligible for Apprenticeship START funding?

**Answer:** All skilled trades occupations that are designated under the Nova Scotia *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act* for certification and/or apprenticeship are eligible for funding.

### 4) What are the responsibilities of the employer?

**Answer:**

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 within 24 months of signing an apprenticeship agreement, the employer will be removed from the START program.
- if an apprentice registers in a second trade while working for the same employer, the employer will not be eligible for the hiring incentive for the second trade. However, the employer may be eligible to receive progression incentives for levels the apprentice completes while under their employ.
- they must be willing to provide apprentices with 35 hours or more per week unless the apprentice is attending technical training.
- they must be registered, in good standing and have an active membership with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks.
- they are required to return any payments made in error or that they were not entitled to receive within 60 calendar days of receipt of the first email notification from the Agency. If the funds are not returned within the specified timeframe, an overpayment will be established, and the Agency will begin recovery efforts and deduct any outstanding balances from future START funding owed to the employer. The employer may be deemed ineligible to receive future funding from the Agency and any employer with an unpaid balance after 90 days and who has not made payment arrangements with the Agency may be referred to Collections for payment recovery.

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 an Industry Training Consultant (ITC) 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.

## 5) How much is the Financial Incentive?

**Answer:** Eligible employers who hire and retain an apprentice throughout their apprenticeship journey anywhere in Nova Scotia where the population is 20,000 or less could receive up to \$25,000 per apprentice:

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 hire and retain an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies, at the time of registration, as belonging to an equity group anywhere in the province of Nova Scotia and retains them throughout their apprenticeship journey can receive up to \$30,000 per apprentice:

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: owners or co-owners of the company cannot register themselves as an apprentice to receive the START funding.

## 6) How does an employer apply and if eligible, how will they receive the incentive?

**Answer:** Employers do not need to apply for funding. Once an apprenticeship agreement is signed between the employer and the apprentice, the apprenticeship agreement will be assessed and if eligible, funding will be dispersed to the employer.

## 7) Why is this funding being offered?

**Answer:** SMEs often have limited access to human resources, financial supports, and administrative staff to help manage an apprenticeship program. In addition, employers who

hire and train apprentices must provide a supervising journey person and incur a short-term productivity loss, which can be challenging.

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 rural 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 all of Nova Scotia to register and employ equity-deserving apprentices who self-identify, at the time of registration, as belonging to an equity group and support them as they progress through their apprenticeship program.

### **8) What if my apprentice leaves my company while enrolled in the START program?**

**Answer:** Employers must notify an Industry Training Consultant 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.

### **9) Who can I contact regarding the Apprenticeship START Program?**

**Answer:** Email [ApprenticeshipStart@novascotia.ca](mailto:ApprenticeshipStart@novascotia.ca).