



COVID-19 Update #8

December 2, 2020



As the COVID-19 public health emergency continues, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency is committed to support apprentices and trades professionals in their training and journey towards certification. We remain open for business and can be reached by phone (1-800-494-5651), [email \(apprenticeship@novascotia.ca\)](mailto:apprenticeship@novascotia.ca) and through our [online transactions](#).

Given the current rise in COVID-19 cases in Nova Scotia, the Agency wants to take this opportunity to remind our apprentices, employers and partners to follow Public Health restrictions and directives for keeping one another safe.

Examination Sittings Suspended from December 5-12, 2020 Halifax Only

As a result of the new restrictions issued by Public Health in Halifax, we are not able to run any exam sittings from December 5 - December 12, inclusive. This restriction applies to Halifax only and we are monitoring the situation closely to protect the health of our clients and staff.

All clients have been contacted and we will begin rescheduling exams once the restrictions have been lifted. Please note that should the public health gathering restrictions be extended, further cancellations may be possible.

The Agency will continue to update our clients as the situation evolves.

HealthyMindsNS Online Services for Apprentices

Given the recent resurgence of COVID-19, it is timely to remind you of the online offering of mental health services to apprentices through HealthyMindsNS, announced in October. These resources can be accessed free of charge at <https://healthymindsns.ca/>.



These services are to support the ongoing well-being of apprentices over the term of their apprenticeship and may include minor to moderate mental health concerns.

The following mental health services for apprentices are available through HealthyMindsNS:

7 Cups – This service is an online support chat for apprentices who need to talk. Apprentices can connect to supporters locally and from around the world.

TAO Self-Help (Therapy Assistance Online) - This service is an online mental health library with interactive modules to help the apprentice understand and manage how they feel, think and act. This service can be used with the assistance of a counsellor or through a self-help library.

Crisis Text Line Powered by Kid's Help Phone – This service is a Canadian text-based volunteer-support service. Available in English and French. Apprentices are connected to a trained crisis responder.

Good2Talk – This service is a confidential helpline that provides professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions, and well-being.

Kognito – This service provides online training simulations that teach the ability to recognize psychological distress, how to engage in conversation with someone who may be in need of mental health support, and how to make a referral to the appropriate resources. This resource is available for apprentices as well as for faculty, employers, trainers and journeypersons to support apprentices. NSAA is mandating staff and encouraging training providers to participate in this training.

Apprenticeship START Program Expansion

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency is pleased to announce on November 1, 2020, the Apprenticeship START Program has been expanded to include employers who register new or experienced apprentices located anywhere in Nova Scotia (including the Halifax Regional Municipality, Truro, and Sydney). This expansion is in place until October 31, 2021.

The Apprenticeship START program continues to support employers who hire apprentices and enter into an apprenticeship agreement with apprentices from under-represented groups. The hiring incentive and completion bonus are doubled to \$5,000 each if the Nova Scotia employer hires and retains a diverse apprentice. An employer may be eligible for up to \$30,000 in supports.

For more information and the application process for Apprenticeship START, please visit the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency website (<https://nsapprenticeship.ca/agency/forms-publications>).

If you require any further information, email us at apprenticeshipstart@novascotia.ca.

Partner and Youth Engagement

The Agency continues to conduct Trade Advisory Committees (TACS), Atlantic Trade Advisory Committees (ATACs), and other industry meetings using our available online meeting tools such as MS Teams and Zoom. We will continue to use these formats into the new year and will assess in early 2021.

All of our Youth Programs and initiatives have been impacted by COVID-19. Our partners are being innovative by offering youth engagement and experiential learning through remote alternatives:

[Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council](#): Students can talk to a tradesperson virtually and be guided through an interactive experiential skilled trades learning activity.

[Techsploration](#): Skilled trades and technology female mentors will provide a virtual tour of their respected workplaces to grade 9 girls and their teacher. Mentors will provide guided research into respective career paths.

[Skills Canada – Nova Scotia](#): As a result of COVID-19 content will be offered in a digital model. Schools will be able to access the presentations to students, teachers and parents in a pre-recorded series through the skills Canada – Nova Scotia website.

Our three summer sector programs: [Serve it Up!](#) - Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia, [Building Future for Youth](#) - Construction Association of Nova Scotia and [TestDrive](#) - Nova Scotia Automotive Sector Council in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the Nova Scotia Community College, will be offering work placements to high school students under the COVID-19 guidelines. The three programs will be recruiting and engaging with students through promotional videos, pre-recorded and virtual presentations.

We will continue to update you as more information becomes available. Please contact us if you have any questions.