



Accountability Report

2018–2019

Labour & Advanced Education



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Accountability Report 2018–2019
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Contents

1. Accountability Statement 2

2. Message from Minister and Deputy Minister..... 3

3. Financial Results 5

4. Measuring Our Performance..... 7

5. Supplemental Information and Appendices..... 23

6. Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act 24

1. Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2019 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Labour and Advanced Education Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Labour and Advanced Education management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Labour and Advanced Education management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Labour and Advanced Education 2018-2019 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Hon. Labi Kousoulis
Minister

Original signed by:

Duff Montgomerie
Deputy Minister

2. Message from Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to share with Nova Scotians the activities and accomplishments of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education in 2018-19.

Department staff, along with partners across the province, advanced several key government priorities that help Nova Scotians live, learn and work to their highest potential. Together, we have helped build a more skilled, competitive and innovative workforce, while promoting safe and inclusive workplaces.

LAE has an important role to play in advancing the province's innovation agenda.

In December 2018, the *Research Nova Scotia Act* was proclaimed, creating a single arms-length organization to co-ordinate provincial research investments, attract research funds from other sources, and better support researchers in our universities and colleges. Through the Research Nova Scotia Trust, government invested \$22.3 million to support 64 research projects, leveraging \$50.3 million from other funding sources.

Our department continues to support innovation and foster a culture of entrepreneurship in Nova Scotia. In January 2019, we opened our ninth sandbox – Surge – at Dalhousie University. Since 2014, more than 19,000 young people have participated in sandbox activities. The skills they learn and the connections they make follow them back to their classrooms and communities, and forward into their careers.

We also supported thousands of young people in this province to get work experience and find their first job. More than 700 co-op students gained on-the-job work experience with Nova Scotia employers in 2018-19 with support of the Co-op Education Incentive. Our partnership with Mitacs helped create 250 research internships in areas such as ocean technology, ICT, and agri-food and seafood. Finally, our Graduate to Opportunity program connected 271 recent graduates with a full-time job.

We sharpened our focus in 2018-19 on supporting workers in underrepresented groups. 94 of the graduates hired through Graduate to Opportunity were supported by the program's diversity bonus. Through the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, we supported sixteen people from Mi'kmaw communities in Cape Breton as they pursue their Red Seal carpentry certification. Our department also funded a pilot program that provides on-the-job training to up to 20 Mi'kmaw early childhood educators, incorporating Mi'kmaw language, culture and perspectives.

We made several changes in 2018-19 to support workers in Nova Scotia. We eliminated the eligibility period to qualify for protected pregnancy and parental leave. We also introduced protected leave for victims of domestic violence, including three days of paid leave. We accepted the recommendations of the Minimum Wage Review Committee to increase the minimum wage by approximately 55 cents per year over the next three years. We also made it easier for front-line and emergency response workers with PTSD to access workers' compensation benefits by removing the need to prove that a diagnosis is work-related. Furthermore, following consultations with both employers and labour organizations in the

construction sector, the department introduced amendments to the Trade Union Act General Regulations under the *Trade Union Act*. The new Trade Union Act General Regulations will require certification applications to be made on a Monday to Friday, when a more representative number of employees tend to be on a worksite.

We have made significant headway in 2018-19 toward the goals outlined in this report. We look forward to working with our many partners in the year ahead as we continue to build a safer, more prosperous and vibrant province for all Nova Scotians.

Original signed by:

Hon. Labi Kousoulis
Minister

Original signed by:

Duff Montgomerie
Deputy Minister

3. Financial Results

Labour & Advanced Education	2018-2019 Estimate	2018-2019 Actual	2018-2019 Variance
Program & Service Area	(\$thousands)		
Department Expenses:			
Administration	802	698	-104
Corporate Policy and Services	4,134	3,708	-426
Safety	15,569	14,178	-1,391
Labour Services	7,595	7,088	-507
Skills and Learning	141,350	138,241	-3,109
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency	17,988	16,366	-1,622
Higher Education	57,515	43,947	-13,568
School Cap Amortization	5,572	5,568	-4
Community College Grants	138,848	138,848	-
Total Departmental Expenses Labour & Advanced Education	389,373	368,641	-20,732
Total Departmental Expenses Assistance to Universities	425,272	430,206	4,934
Total: Departmental Expenses	814,645	798,847	-15,798
Additional Information:			
Ordinary Revenues	9,616	11,562	1,946
Fees and Other Charges	1,279	1,056	-223
Ordinary Recoveries	141,262	140,349	-913
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Labour & Advanced Education	152,157	152,967	810
Ordinary Recoveries	20,217	15,323	-4,894
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Assistance to Universities	20,217	15,323	-4,894
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	172,374	168,290	-4,084
TCA Purchase Requirements	0	48	0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	266.20	247.73	-18.47

Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

Department of Labour and Advanced Education expenses were \$20.7 million or 5.3% lower than estimate primarily due to \$15.5 million savings related to a change in estimate methodology impacting the loan provision (bad debt), \$4.3 million in other net operational savings, \$3.5 million due to lower than expected utilization in Youth initiatives and IT project delay. These decreases were partially offset by \$1.5 million in additional grants to students with disabilities, of which \$750,000 is fully recoverable from the Federal Government, and \$1.2 million increased expenses in the Repayment Assistance program.

Assistance to Universities expenses were \$4.9 million or 1.2% higher than estimate primarily due to \$7.1 million in additional operating assistance to St. Francis University, University of Kings College, Cape Breton University and Université Ste-Anne and \$3.6 million for deferred maintenance initiatives. These increases were offset by \$5.3 million in reduced cash flow needs from the Federal Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) and \$530,000 in other operational savings.

Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

Department of Labour and Advanced Education revenue, fees, and recoveries are \$800,000 or 0.5% higher than estimate, which is immaterial and no explanation is required.

Assistance to Universities recoveries were \$4.9 million or 24.2% lower than estimate primarily due to \$5.3 million related to the Federal Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). This decrease was partially offset by \$200,000 in additional Federal SIF funding to the universities and \$200,000 transfer payment from the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission.

TCA Purchase Requirement Variance Explanation:

N / A

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

The -18.47 FTE variance is due to staff turnover.

4. Measuring Our Performance

LAE Mandate: *To provide a fair, equitable, safe, protective, and inclusive environment in which to learn, work, and live*

- Regulatory responsibility for occupational health and safety, technical safety, the Workers' Advisers program, labour relations, and labour standards.
- Improving access among Nova Scotians to labour market information, employment services and learning programs that support their labour market attachment and growth. Strategic action is taken to align the needs of employees with those of employers to help all Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and keep employment.
- Providing opportunities for individuals to advance at home, in the community, or in the workplace through adult learning, literacy and essential skills, and skills development programs.
- Providing funding, services, and support to post-secondary institutions and post-secondary students to ensure high-quality post-secondary education and training remains relevant, accessible and affordable.

LAE's Strategic Actions:

Expand the Graduate to Opportunity program and implement the Innovate to Opportunity program to connect even more recent post-secondary graduates to the workforce, including individuals from underrepresented groups through the diversity bonus offered under both programs.

- The Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) program helped support 271 recent graduates to find full time employment with 190 organizations in 2018-19. This included 94 graduates hired with the support of the diversity bonus. Since its launch in February 2015, GTO has helped more than 500 employers fill new positions with young people within their first year of graduating from a post-secondary institution, resulting in 860 graduates being hired into full-time jobs in Nova Scotia. Of those, more than 150 were supported by the diversity bonus, which supports employers who hire: female graduates in a non-traditional occupation, graduates who self-identify as a person with a disability, racially visible, Aboriginal or an international graduate. The average salary for new graduate employees is slightly more than \$40,000.
- The Innovate to Opportunity program was launched in February 2018 to help well-educated graduates start their careers in Nova Scotia while helping businesses become more innovative and export oriented. The program provides an incentive to hire recent masters and PhD graduates for jobs that are focussed on research and innovation that will help businesses begin, prepare for, or expand exports. Innovate to Opportunity helps reduce business risk while helping companies attract, develop and retain new talent. In 2018-19, 14 Masters and PhD graduates found full-time innovation-related positions with 13 employers.

Continue to work with the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness to reduce regulatory burden.

- There were 17 LAE initiatives which met the requirements of the \$25 million Burden Reduction initiative. Business Impact Assessments for all 17 initiatives have been submitted and reviewed by the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Service Effectiveness. Total net savings to business resulting from LAE initiatives are \$479,000.

Continue to strengthen the positive relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board with a renewed partnership framework.

- LAE continued to work closely and cooperatively with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) in the context of a rolling, three-year Partnership Plan. Initiatives in 2018-19 included ongoing alignment and

coordination of social marketing, joint stakeholder engagements and support for safety conferences and workshops, shared support for implementation of the Health Workplace Safety Action Plan, and collaborative support for individual firms through Joint Workplace Initiatives. LAE and WCB worked collaboratively to develop partnerships and relationships within various sectors to enhance industry-led efforts to improve overall prevention and safety.

Continue to work across departments to strengthen and expand the innovation agenda.

- The Post-Secondary Innovation Team was formed in early 2015, as a collaborative partnership between government and Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions to promote innovation and advance the OneNS Commission's goals. To date, the Province has invested almost \$3.9 million in funding to support projects recommended by its working groups. Building on successes to date, the Innovation Team established new working groups in 2018 to focus on the following themes: Cultural Innovation, Social Equity and Health Innovation.

Continue to foster an entrepreneurial culture through initiatives such as the Nova Scotia Sandbox project, to spur economic growth and create jobs for young Nova Scotians.

- Government is supporting entrepreneurs and creating more space for creative collaboration, with the help of universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), the business community and other key players. The Province supports ten Sandboxes at universities and the NSCC. The newest Sandbox opened at Dalhousie University in January 2019. Since 2014, the Province has contributed \$7.1 million toward the Sandboxes, allowing more than 17,000 post-secondary education students and over 2,000 high-school students to participate in over 830 Sandbox activities. Sandboxes promote a culture of entrepreneurship that now extends beyond the Sandbox walls.

Continue to support quality work integrated learning opportunities for young Nova Scotians by working with post-secondary institutions and by strengthening our partnership with Mitacs to create research work placements.

- LAE continues to partner with Mitacs to create experiential learning opportunities for youth. Mitacs internships are designed to increase research-based innovation in industry, government and academia. LAE introduced \$1 million in permanent annual funding for Mitacs beginning in 2018-19 to support 250 research internships in areas such as ocean technology, ICT, and agri-food and seafood.
- The Co-op Education Incentive helps employers hire post-secondary co-operative education students for work programs. Employers can hire a co-op student for a work term of 12-16 weeks and receive a subsidy of \$7.50 an hour for wages. Last year, more than 1,500 post-secondary students participated in work placements through the Co-op Education Incentive program and the Student Summer Skills Incentive program.

Support efforts to achieve the One Nova Scotia Commission's ten-year targets.

- Goal 3 (Retention of International Students): The gross number of international post-secondary students transitioning to permanent residency has been increasing since 2015 with significant gains in 2016 and 2017. 2018 has matched 2017's strong result with 9.4% of foreign students choosing to stay in Nova Scotia post-graduation.
- Goal 7 (Labour Force Participation): In 2018, Nova Scotia's labour force participation rate for 15-64-year-olds was 76.8%, an improvement over 2017 but lower than the 2012 baseline of 77%.
- Goal 8 (Employment Rates for First Nations and African Nova Scotians): As of 2016, the age-adjusted employment rate for First Nations (44.3%) and African Nova Scotians (50%) lagged the provincial figure

of 55.2%. The gap has increased since 2011 to 10.9 percentage points for First Nations and 5.2 percentage points for African Nova Scotian communities (2016).

- Goal 9 (Youth Employment): In 2018, the youth unemployment rate in Nova Scotia was 15.6% compared to 11.1% nationally. This was down from a rate of 18.6% in Nova Scotia in 2012.
- Goal 10 (Post-Secondary Education and Training): In 2018, the youth unemployment rate in Nova Scotia was 15.6% compared to 11.1% nationally. This was down from a rate of 18.6% in Nova Scotia in 2012.
- Goal 11 (Post-Secondary Education and Training): The latest data shows university only research and development (R&D) in Nova Scotia was at \$182 million in 2016-17, which was the same level as the baseline year of 2011-12.

Continue the work with Research Nova Scotia so that we can better coordinate provincial research efforts and leverage more Federal and private funds for research and development.

- In December 2018 the *Research Nova Scotia Corporation Act* was passed, creating Research Nova Scotia (RNS). RNS will advance world-class research in Nova Scotia by co-ordinating provincial research investments, attracting research funds from other sources, and better supporting Nova Scotia researchers who are developing new technologies and solving real-world problems. The first board of directors was appointed in 2018-19 to provide oversight for RNS and to hire a CEO. Effective March 31, 2019 the existing provincial research funding bodies – the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF) and the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (NSRIT) – transitioned to RNS, which will allow RNS to both streamline and expand the Nova Scotia research landscape.
- In 2017, the Research Nova Scotia Trust was created to provide continuity of provincial research funding while the work to establish RNS was underway. Since the Trust's inception, \$50.3 million has been leveraged from the Federal Government and other funding partners (in cash and in kind) on \$22.3 million in Trust funding for 64 projects. The funded research supports approximately 862 jobs and 2,706 training opportunities in Nova Scotia for undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students, as well as researchers, technicians, research associates and others. On March 31, 2019 the Trust expired and its remaining funding (approximately \$23 million including earned interest income) transferred to RNS.

Continue to take the lead on coordinating youth programming and supports that connect more young people, especially those from underrepresented groups, with jobs.

- The Youth Senior Officials continue to work on a number of interdepartmental projects including but not limited to Research into the Pathways of Youth with Refugee Experience, The Social Innovation Lab on ANS Youth, Premier's Engagement with Young Nova Scotians, Supporting the Atlantic Workforce Partnership, Liaising with the Federal Government on the Canada Youth Summit as well as supporting Social DM's in their effort to improve the long-term outcomes of Children in the Care of the province. The Youth Senior Officials have made supporting youth facing barriers to employment their priority and will continue to work together to remove barriers and help youth connect to the workforce.
- The Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI) at St. Francis Xavier University, in partnership with service providers and communities is working to develop and test new approaches to employment services. CEI strives to ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the core of all its work and is currently delivering and monitoring the outcomes of the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) program. Since its launch in 2017, the NOW program has connected 167 people to about 128 workplaces across the province, surpassing its goal of helping 150 jobseekers. The CEI in partnership with Phoenix Youth and LAE has expanded the NOW program to include a labour market attachment program for multi-barriered youth.

Work collaboratively with the Minister and Ministerial Assistant on Youth to ensure a horizontal government approach.

- The Youth Senior Officials table is chaired by the Youth Executive Lead at LAE. The table includes representatives from Education and Early Childhood Development, the Public Service Commission, the Office of Immigration, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Justice, Communications Nova Scotia, Health and Wellness, Communities, Culture and Heritage, and Business, along with the Office of Strategy Management.
- We are seeing positive results in our effort to attract and retain more young people in Nova Scotia. For the first time in three decades, we are three years strong in keeping more youth in Nova Scotia and must continue building on that momentum. Labour and Advanced Education has continued to take the lead on a horizontal government approach to connect youth, and particularly young Nova Scotians facing barriers to employment, with jobs.
- Premier McNeil and MLA Jessome, the Minister and Ministerial Assistant Responsible for Youth are traveling around the province to hear directly from young Nova Scotians on issues that matter to them. Facilitated engagement sessions have and will continue to take place over the coming months to ensure the Premier and MLA Jessome hear directly from youth within their own communities. The objective is to ensure youth voice informs how we build on the positive results we are seeing in our effort to retain young Nova Scotians.

Supporting Measures: LAE Mandate

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2018-19 YEAR DATA		
		2018-19 Target	Status Update	2019-20 Target
# of clients receiving employment services, education and training supports	13,924	14,400	14,860	14,000
# of post-secondary students and Nova Scotia employers participating in co-op work placements through the Co-op Education Incentive program	560 students 360 employers (2015-16)	600 students	712 students	700 students
# of post-secondary students and Nova Scotia employers participating in the SKILL program	712 placements 560 employers	800 placements	800 placements	800 placements
# of Private Career Colleges programs with experiential learning components	Approx. 90%	92%	96%	96%
# of individuals / students recruited for the Sandboxes	3,015	Increase	10,223 (2017-18 academic year)	Increase
# of programming and training activities with Sandboxes that foster an entrepreneurial mindset and job ready skills	289	Increase	336 (2017-18 academic year)	Increase
Value of funds leveraged (federal and private) for research	N/A	To leverage additional funds	\$50.3 M leveraged on \$22.3 M provincial funding since 2017	RNS to expand and increase

Supporting Measures: Youth Mandate

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2018-19 YEAR DATA		
		2018-19 Target	Status Update	2019-20 Target
Unemployment rate among youth 15-34	10.8% (2016 NS Average) 9.3% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate	10.8% (2018 NS Average) 7.7% (2018 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate
Unemployment rate of youth ages 15-24	10.9% (2016 NS Average) 13.1% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate	15.6% (2018 NS Average) 11.1% (2018 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate
Employment rate of youth ages 15-34	66.3% (2016 NS Average) 68.6% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or above national rate	68.8% (2018 NS Average) 70.0% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or above national rate
Employment rate of First Nations and African Nova Scotian youth ages 15-34	45.7% (First Nations in Nova Scotia) (2016) 53.4% (African Nova Scotian) (2016) 62.7% (NS Average) (2016)	As good as provincial employment rate for youth ages 15-34	45.7% (First Nations in Nova Scotia) (2016) 53.4% (African Nova Scotian) (2016) 62.7% (NS Average) (2016)	As good as provincial employment rate for youth ages 15-34
Net gain of youth aged 15-34	68 (2016)	Continued gain	619 (2018)	Continued gain
% of international students who graduate from NS post-secondary institutions become permanent residents	5.8% (2016)	10%	12.6% (2018)	10%

Safe and Healthy Workplaces and Campuses

Provide Victims of Domestic Violence the Right to Take Time off Work

- Nova Scotia's *Labour Standards Code* was amended so that beginning January 1, 2019, people who have been in their jobs for at least three months are entitled to protected leave if they or their child experience domestic violence. This leave allows them time away from work to seek medical attention, obtain victim services or professional counselling, relocate and seek legal or law enforcement assistance. Employees can access up to 16 continuous weeks of domestic violence leave. As well, an employee can take 10 continuous or intermittent days of protected leave. Up to three days of leave is to be paid by the employer.

Enhanced Leave Protections for Nova Scotia Employees and Their Families

- Changes to the *Labour Standards Code* provide employees with more time to support and care for their families. The changes, which came into effect October 11, 2018, increased both parental leave and combined pregnancy-parental leave from 52 weeks to 77 weeks to ensure eligible employees can take a protected leave from work while accessing federal employment insurance benefits. The changes also created a 16-week critically ill adult care leave.

Eligibility Changes to Pregnancy and Parental Leave

- Government made further changes to support Nova Scotia parents and their families. As of January 1, 2019, government eliminated the eligibility period to qualify for protected pregnancy and parental leave. People are now able to access this leave from the moment they are hired.

Support Sexual Violence Prevention

- In December 2017, the Sexual Violence Prevention Committee released its report, *Changing the culture of acceptance: Recommendations to address sexual violence on university campuses*. The report contained 10 recommendations aimed to reflect primary prevention initiatives, reduce victim blaming, and change the culture in which sexual violence exists to prevent its occurrence on university campuses. During 2018-19, work began to advance all 10 recommendations including the creation of a Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee (PSVPC), with representatives from government, the universities, the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), student groups, community-based organizations and the RCMP. The PSVPC's mandate is to share expertise and resources in the area of sexual violence prevention on Nova Scotia university and NSCC campuses, and to develop policy guidelines to guide the development of stand-alone sexual violence policies for these institutions. The Committee was further tasked to develop recommendations to enhance survivor-centric responses to sexual violence at universities and the NSCC. In September 2018, a Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator was hired to work with universities and the NSCC to foster collaboration and support the institutions in implementing the recommendations of the *Changing the culture of acceptance* report. Government is investing \$470,000 annually for 5 years starting in 2019-20 to advance sexual violence prevention initiatives.

Mental Health Supports for Post-Secondary Students

- In 2018-19, the Province supported the HealthyMindsNS pilot project which launched in October 2018 and provides technology-based mental health interventions to university and community college students in Nova Scotia. The tools do not take the place of in-person health care, but helps bridge the

gap and, in some cases, provides an early intervention for students. The tools include: an online counselling platform that connects students with professional counsellors and trained 'listeners'/peer support for one on one online chat; confidential telephone helpline that provides professional counselling, and information and referral services for mental health and addictions; interactive online training programs to increase the mental health literacy of students, faculty, and staff; and online Cognitive Behavioural Therapy tools meant to be used in conjunction with brief therapy follow up sessions. The HealthyMindsNS pilot project tools are at various stages of implementation across Nova Scotia and will be evaluated on their impact and effectiveness in 2019-20. Government is investing \$600,000 annually for 5 years starting in 2019-20 to support e-mental health initiatives.

Improve Access to Benefits for Front-line and Emergency Response Workers diagnosed with PTSD

- Amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* and regulations have made it easier for front-line and emergency response workers diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to access benefits. The amendments, which came into force in October 2018, ensure covered front-line and emergency response workers no longer have to prove their PTSD diagnosis was caused by a workplace incident, and further clarify the claim process and who can get benefits.
- LAE's Safety Branch continues to work closely with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) to develop a PTSD prevention program for first responders. Work has included looking at how best practices in other jurisdictions, such as BC's First Responders Mental Health Committee, could work in Nova Scotia. LAE has also provided funding over the past two years for the Strategic Resilience Training for First Responders program delivered through the Nova Scotia Community College. Funding has also been provided for peer-to-peer training workshops delivered through the Help the Helpers organization. These training initiatives are directed at employees who are at a higher risk of exposure to traumatic incidents.

Strong Systems to Support Workforce

Strengthen Relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board

- LAE and WCB collaborate closely to jointly plan and implement initiatives within a partnership framework. In 2018-19, joint initiatives included social marketing projects, joint sponsorships for safety associations, conferences and symposia, and other projects. Some prominent examples were:
 - Collaboration with other Atlantic jurisdictions on the media campaign, "Workplace Injuries Hurt the Most at Home".
 - Sponsorship for Discovery Centre's youth-focused "Science on the Spot – Science and Safety" project.
 - Joint sponsorship for the Society for Farm Safety NS.
 - Joint field activities in support of fishing industry safety.
 - Delivery of the Cape Breton Safety Symposium and support for the NS Health and Safety Leadership Conference, the Service Sector Safety Summit, and other conferences and industry safety events.
- LAE and WCB engaged in discussions to determine how to explore future opportunities as WCB approaches a position of full funding.
- LAE and WCB continue to develop partnerships and relationships within various sectors to enhance industry-led initiatives to improve overall prevention and safety.

Advance the Health and Community Services Workplace Safety Action Plan

- LAE continued to engage with and support the lead Department of Health and Wellness and organizations such as the Workers' Compensation Board, the Department of Community Services and AWARE NS in advancing the Workplace Safety Action Plan for Health and Community Services. This work builds on the recommendations contained in the June 2018 report, "*Charting the Course: Workplace Safety for Nova Scotia's Home Care, Long term Care & Disability Support Sectors*". As its share of joint funding with WCB, LAE committed \$250,000 for related first-year activities, of which \$196,000 had been spent at the end of March 2019.

Amendments to the Apprenticeship Act

- Amendments to the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act* were proclaimed in October 2018, giving the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency additional tools and authority to enforce certification requirements in the compulsory certified trades. This will better ensure skilled trades work is performed safely by trained and certified tradespersons. It will also ensure a level playing field for all companies and improve safety for skilled tradespersons.

Educational Attainment

Eliminate Tuition for Apprentices

- Nova Scotia eliminated tuition fees for technical apprenticeship training beginning in September 2017.

Advance the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning Review

- We are in Phase 3 of the review and have completed a program model framework which will guide implementation of innovative programming, a performance evaluation framework and sustainable funding model.

Employment Attachment

Implementation of the Federal-Provincial Labour Market Transfer Agreements

- The Labour Market Development Agreement and the New Workforce Development Agreement were signed with the Federal Government resulting in additional funding and program flexibility to help Nova Scotians become a more skilled, adaptable and inclusive workforce. The new agreements require implementation of a new performance measurement framework by April 1, 2020. Nova Scotia was fully implemented on January 1, 2019.

Implementation of Nova Scotia Works

- Nova Scotia Works provided case management for 14,860 clients to help them get job search skills, career guidance, job specific skills, work experience and employment. Work continues on development a new performance management structure of the Nova Scotia Works organizations. This includes hiring an accounting firm to complete a compliance audit of the 18 organizations.

Nova Scotia Works Digital Service Delivery Channel

- Nova Scotia Works Digital Service Delivery Channel is moving forward. NSW Digital will improve the quality and accessibility of digital employment support services in the province and will fully integrate with the current network of in-person services to reach more clients. The project is in the design and prototyping phase with pilots scheduled for 2020.

Strengthen Partnerships with Mitacs

- LAE continues to partner with Mitacs to create experiential learning opportunities for youth. Mitacs internships are designed to increase research-based innovation in industry, government and academia. LAE introduced \$1 million in permanent annual funding for Mitacs beginning in 2018-19 to support 250 research internships in areas such as ocean technology, ICT, and agri-food and seafood.

Expand the Graduate to Opportunity Program

- The Graduate to Opportunity program (GTO) helped support 269 recent graduates to find full time employment with 190 organizations in 2018-19. This included 94 graduates hired with the support of the diversity bonus. Since its launch in February 2015, GTO has helped more than 500 employers fill new positions with young people within their first year of graduating from a post-secondary institution, resulting in 850 graduates being hired into full-time jobs in Nova Scotia. Of those, more than 120 were supported by the diversity bonus, which supports employers who hire female graduates in a non-traditional occupation, graduates who self-identify as a person with a disability, racially visible, Aboriginal or an international graduate. The average salary for new graduate employees is slightly more than \$40,000.

Apprenticeship START Program

- The Apprenticeship START program encourages employers to register and employ apprentices and encourage employers to support apprentices as they progress through their program. Employers who register an apprentice from a recognized underrepresented group or employers in a rural area are eligible for the Apprenticeship START program. Beginning April 1, 2019, the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency increased the hiring and completion incentives for employers who register a diverse apprentice from \$2,500 to \$5,000. As of May 2019, 953 apprentices, working with 860 employers, were registered in the program. Just over a quarter (26%) of apprentices registered in the program were diverse.

Connector Program

- As of March 2019, there were four Connector programs throughout Nova Scotia, operating in partnership with regional agencies. The Eastern Strait Regional Enterprise Network (REN) and Connector Program closed the end of March 2019. The Colchester County REN is working with the Pictou County and Cumberland County RENs to develop a Connector program application for those areas. In addition, a Connector + App was launched with a well-attended event in March 2019.

Centre for Employment Innovation and NOW Program

- The Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI) at St. Francis Xavier University, in partnership with service providers and communities is working to develop and test new approaches to employment services. CEI strives to ensure that diversity and inclusion are at the core of all its work and is currently delivering and monitoring the outcomes of the New Opportunities for Work (NOW) program. Since its launch in 2017, the NOW program has connected 167 people to about 128 workplaces across the province, surpassing its goal of helping 150 jobseekers. The CEI in partnership with Phoenix Youth and LAE has expanded the NOW program to include a labour market attachment program for multi-barriered youth.

Support for Labour Mobility and Immigration

- The Connector program and Connector + App provide a platform for recent immigrants to build business networks. With the roll-out of the Connector + App more recent immigrants will be able to build their business networks.
- The *Canadian Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act* was proclaimed in fall 2018. Policies and processes are being developed to operationalize the new labour mobility provisions.
- Since 2016, 48 newcomers have participated in a Trades Practical Assessment program where employers are provided a wage subsidy while a practical assessment of trades skills is conducted. To date, 38 newcomers are still working and 7 have taken their first level of technical training.

Support the Co-op Education Incentive Program

- The Co-op Education Incentive helps employers hire post-secondary co-operative education students for work programs. Employers can hire a co-op student for a work term of 12-16 weeks and receive a subsidy of \$7.50 an hour for wages. Last year, more than 1,500 post-secondary students participated in work placements through the Co-op Education Incentive program and the Student Summer Skills Incentive program.

Transition Task Force Report Response

- Work continues on the implementation of each of the 15 recommendations. Some progress highlights include:
 - Parents as Career Coaches (PACC) is expanding its outreach. A partnership with the Black Educators Association will see programs offered in Cape Breton and Bridgewater in 2019-20. A Junior High web-based version of the Parents as Career Coaches program is available in both French and English through SkillsonlineNS. The Entrepreneurship 12 class has been updated using post-secondary and community member feedback, incorporating tools such as videos of young entrepreneurs and Mini-Sandbox kits supporting makerspaces for entrepreneurial learning.
 - A new Citizenship Education 9 social studies course, including a financial literacy component, was rolled out across the education system for the 2018/19 school year.
 - SchoolsPlus is now available in 280 schools across the province and will be available in all schools in the province by 2019-20. Nova Scotia Student Assistance has developed a one-hour workshop which shows students from Grade 8 onward how to record volunteer, athletic, and leadership activities effectively to prepare for scholarship applications. This workshop will be delivered to African Nova Scotian students and Indigenous students in Summer 2019, through four week-long camps delivered through the Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health – Global Health Office. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) worked with the Canadian Welding Bureau Foundation and other partners to hold a Welding Boot Camp for 12 Indigenous youth, ages 12 to 15 years. Other boot camps across the four trades sectors are being explored for 2019.
 - A social innovation lab, sponsored by Community Services and implemented by Common Good Solutions and One North End (ONE), will focus on developing opportunities to support increased employment for African Nova Scotian youth in the Halifax Regional Municipality.
 - Student Assistance's Loan Forgiveness program has been expanded. Eligible borrowers graduating after August 1, 2019 will no longer have to repay their Nova Scotia student loan.

- The New Opportunities for Work program has connected 170 underrepresented people to 104 workplaces in only a few months. The Centre for Employment Innovation at St. FX will monitor and evaluate the program.
- Legislative changes have been made to register pre-apprentices with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency. This change also enables students enrolled in a recognized pre-apprenticeship programs to have a smoother transition to apprenticeship.

Population Growth

Lead Youth Horizontal Collaboration

- The Youth Senior Officials table is chaired by the Youth Executive Lead at LAE. The table includes representatives from Education and Early Childhood Development, the Public Service Commission, the Office of Immigration, the Office of Aboriginal Affairs, Justice, Communications Nova Scotia, Health and Wellness, Communities, Culture and Heritage, and Business, along with the Office of Strategy Management.
- We are seeing positive results in our effort to attract and retain more young people in Nova Scotia. For the first time in three decades, we are three years strong in keeping more youth in Nova Scotia and must continue building on that momentum. Labour and Advanced Education has continued to take the lead on a horizontal government approach to connect youth, and particularly young Nova Scotians facing barriers to employment, with jobs.
- Premier McNeil and MLA Jessome, the Minister and Ministerial Assistant Responsible for Youth are traveling around the province to hear directly from young Nova Scotians on issues that matter to them. Facilitated engagement sessions have and will continue to take place over the coming months to ensure the Premier and MLA Jessome hear directly from youth within their own communities. The objective is to ensure youth voice informs how we build on the positive results we are seeing in our effort to retain young Nova Scotians.

Support SHIFT Action Plan for an Aging Population

- The SHIFT Action Plan continues to be implemented with significant numbers of participants over the age of 55 in the Job Creation Partnership program, the Self Employment Benefit program, the Skills Development program and the Start program. LAE has created a social media post and asked partners to promote the program and to promote it to older workers with the message "Make Your Experience Work for You". In terms of specific programming, One Journey is focusing on attracting older workers, while Skills Online is promoting an age friendly workplace course.

Support the Culture Action Plan

- Initiatives in 2018-19 included:
 - LAE worked with the Tourism Human Resource Sector Council on a research project to identify the effect of seasonality on rural tourism in Cape Breton. As of March 31, 2019, there are 99 culture and tourism organizations, and 1,304 learners registered on SkillsonlineNS.
 - EduNova's Stay in Nova Scotia program is meeting and exceeding its retention targets, with 82% of the first cohort (July 2017 graduation) having remained in Nova Scotia one-year post-graduation and 86% of the second cohort (July 2018 graduation) remaining in the province. The program was re-branded and expanded as the Atlantic Study and Stay program in fall 2018, with programs beginning in Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. Over 200 students will complete the 2018-19 program by July 2019.

- EduNova’s Study and Stay in Nova Scotia program is in retention year two (second year curriculum, 2018-19) which focuses on students’ early career development with concentration on part-time, co-op and summer job support, as well as community engagement, health and wellbeing.
- The Cultural Innovation Working Group is currently working to identify new or enhanced initiatives that support Nova Scotia's creative economy.

Further Implement an Awareness Framework for Temporary Foreign Workers, New Immigrants, Youth and New Employers

- LAE’s Labour Standards Division continued to advance its awareness framework, ensuring accessibility of information and awareness around minimum labour standards for temporary foreign workers, new immigrants, youth, and new employers. Awareness for temporary foreign workers, new immigrants, and youth creates familiarity with labour standards in Nova Scotia, reducing vulnerability for these target groups. Awareness for new employers facilitates the establishment of business in the province.

Strategic Sector Growth – Research & Development

Support Research Nova Scotia

- In December 2018 the *Research Nova Scotia Corporation Act* was passed, creating Research Nova Scotia (RNS). RNS will advance world-class research in Nova Scotia by co-ordinating provincial research investments, attracting research funds from other sources, and better supporting Nova Scotia researchers who are developing new technologies and solving real-world problems. The first board of directors was appointed in 2018-19 to provide oversight for RNS and to hire a CEO. Effective March 31, 2019 the existing provincial research funding bodies – the Nova Scotia Health Research Foundation (NSHRF) and the Nova Scotia Research and Innovation Trust (NSRIT) – transitioned to RNS, which will allow RNS to both streamline and expand the Nova Scotia research landscape.
- In 2017, the Research Nova Scotia Trust was created to provide continuity of provincial research funding while the work to establish RNS was underway. Since the Trust’s inception, \$50.3 million has been leveraged from the Federal Government and other funding partners (in cash and in kind) on \$22.3 million in Trust funding for 64 projects. The funded research supports approximately 862 jobs and 2,706 training opportunities in Nova Scotia for undergraduate, graduate and post-doctoral students, as well as researchers, technicians, research associates and others. On March 31, 2019 the Trust expired and its remaining funding (approximately \$23 million including earned interest income) transferred to RNS.

Maintain Nova Scotia’s Sandboxes

- Government is supporting entrepreneurs and creating more space for creative collaboration, with the help of universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), the business community and other key players. The Province supports ten sandboxes at university and the NSCC. The newest Sandbox opened at Dalhousie University in January 2019. Since 2014, the Province has contributed \$7.1 million toward the Sandboxes, allowing more than 17,000 post-secondary education students and over 2,000 high-school students to participate in over 830 Sandbox events. Sandboxes promote a culture of entrepreneurship that now extends beyond the Sandbox walls.

Innovation Team

- The Post-Secondary Innovation Team was formed in early 2015, as a collaborative partnership between government and Nova Scotia’s post-secondary institutions to promote innovation and advance the

OneNS Commission's goals. To date, the Province has invested almost \$3.9 million in funding to support projects recommended by its working groups. Building on successes to date, the Innovation Team established new working groups in 2018 to focus on the following themes: Cultural Innovation, Social Equity and Health Innovation.

Reduce Red Tape for Businesses

- LAE continued to work with other provinces to make it easier for businesses to work across borders.
 - LAE played a leading role in the development and implementation of the National Occupational Health and Safety Reconciliation Agreement with respect to the recognition of common safety standards for eye and face protection, foot protection, hearing protection, head protection, first aid kit contents and personal floatation devices.
 - The department also worked with its regional counterparts to implement an Atlantic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on Mutual Recognition covering certain types of personal protection equipment and safety training.
 - LAE continued to pursue discussions with its Atlantic counterparts toward regional harmonization of regulatory requirements governing technical safety.
 - Atlantic and national harmonization of the apprenticeship program is continuing. To date, 16 trades representing over 80% of apprentices have been harmonized in the Atlantic Region.

Sector Council Development

- LAE's Sector Council program advances three priority areas: human resource planning, attraction and retention, and training. For the three-year period from April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2019, LAE funded 12 councils across a range of industries. These agreements expired at the end of March. LAE has since entered into agreements with 13 Sector Councils. This year seen an addition of the Agricultural Sector represented by the Federation of Agriculture.

Export Growth

Innovate to Opportunity Program

- The Innovate to Opportunity program was launched in February 2018 to help well-educated graduates start their careers in Nova Scotia while helping businesses become more innovative and export oriented. The program provides an incentive to hire recent masters and PhD graduates for jobs that are focussed on research and innovation that will help businesses begin, prepare for, or expand exports. Innovate to Opportunity helps reduce business risk while helping companies attract, develop and retain new talent. In 2018-19, 15 Masters and PhD graduates found full-time innovation-related positions with 13 employers.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2018-19 YEAR DATA		
		2018-19 Target	Status Update	2019-20 Target
# of youth & immigrant matches with NS employers through the Connector program	323 Connectees 109 Connectors (2014-15)	600 Connectees 200 Connectors	433 181	400 125
# of connections that lead to employment	151 employed	200 employed	222	150
# of recent post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employer in NS through Graduate to Opportunity	120 (2015-16)	250	269	250
# of Graduate to Opportunity employers that hire members of diversity groups	14	70	94	90
# of post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employers in NS through the Innovate to Opportunity program	N/A	15	15	15
# of participants in New Opportunities for Work program	110 (November 2017)	150	177 (includes 10 who are in the Phoenix Youth program)	150
# of employers who hired a job seeker through the START program	578	600	581	600
# of Nova Scotia employers and employees participating in workforce development and training through the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive, and the Workplace Education Initiative	1700 employers 8000 employees (2014-15)	1700 employers 8000 employees	2200 employers 6414 employees	1700 8000
# of internship placements in Mitacs program	176 total (116+60 special placements)	250 placements	410 placements (250 for 2018-19, 160 carried forward from 2017-18)	250 placements
% of apprentices who represent diverse populations (not including women)	10.4%	11%	13.6%	15%
% of female apprentices	6%	Increasing trend	6.7%	8%
# of students using the Loan Forgiveness program	1,151 ¹	1,025	750 (up to June 2019)	Approximately 1,100 students are expected to be eligible annually

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2018-19 YEAR DATA		
		2018-19 Target	Status Update	2019-20 Target
\$ allocated to increasing weekly Student Assistance amounts	Weekly amount from 2013-14 to 2016-17 was \$180 max. Increased to \$200/week in 2017-18	Estimated cost of \$2.2M in 2017-18	Cost of approximately \$2.0M in 2017-18 The lower than expected increase is attributable to a dip in the number of students accessing provincial assistance in 2017-18	Given the permanent nature of the increased weekly allowance the ongoing cost will be approximately \$2.2M
# of organizations/employers participating in the Job Creation Partnership program	70	50	99	50
# of Skills Development participants who complete a training program	1,077	925	928	900
% of Skills Development participants reached for follow-up employed 24-weeks (6months) after completing the program	88%	88%	55% to date	88%
Pass rate for GED	78% (2016 NS Average) 74.1% (2016 National Average)	Meet or exceed national average	No updated data available at this time 2017 – 72.21% (national average was 74.82%)	Meet or exceed national average
# of learners that achieved their high school diploma through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning	541 (2014-15)	450	448	450
# of apprentices	6167	Increasing trend	6888	7000
# of new apprentices	1416	Increasing trend	1490	1500
# of employers who have hired an apprentice	2131	Increasing trend	2341	2500
# of new employers in the apprenticeship system	260	Increasing trend	196	220
# of apprentices that attend technical training	2169	11.5% increase	2581	2600

5. Supplemental Information and Appendices

Key/interesting facts about LAE

- Most employees in Nova Scotia are covered by the provincial *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. In 2016, total employment in the province was 448,000. The provincial Act covered an estimated 346,000 individuals as employees, while a further 61,000 self-employed individuals were covered as employers. Federal jurisdiction covered an estimated 40,000 employees in Nova Scotia.
- Nova Scotia is seeing positive results on our objective to reverse outmigration numbers and attract and retain more youth than those leaving the province. For the third year in a row, more young people came to Nova Scotia than left. Youth aged 25-34 were the biggest source of migration from other provinces.
- Nova Scotia's minimum wage regulations have been amended to update the minimum wage calculation and increase the rate. The changes to the regulations came into effect January 28, 2019. The amendments index the rate to Statistics Canada's Low Income Cut Off threshold based on 1850 hours, which more accurately reflects the number of hours full-time employees work per year. As a result of the changes, the experienced minimum wage rate increased to \$11.55 per hour on April 1, 2019. The rate is expected to increase by approximately 55 cents again each year over the next two years. Then starting on April 1, 2022, the rate is to be adjusted annually with inflation. The inexperienced rate continues to be set at 50 cents less than the experienced rate.
- Updates to regulations clarified when stores are required to close and when employees are eligible to receive holiday pay for Canada Day. Previously there was confusion around when stores should close when Canada Day fell on a Sunday. Retail stores are now required to close on Sunday, July 1. And holiday pay also applies on that day. Previously, stores were required to close – and holiday pay rules applied – on Monday, July 2.
- Nova Scotia Works was launched in 2016-17 to strengthen Nova Scotia's workforce by providing better and more consistent front-line services and support for youth, job seekers and employers. Since then, more than 40,000 Nova Scotians have received employment services at one of the 49 centres across the province.
- The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning offers a variety of free educational programs for adults across the province. Between 2001 and 2018, 8,047 Nova Scotians received their high school diploma.
- Between 2008-09 and 2018-2019, total apprenticeships completed increased by over 50%, from 499 to 762.
- Each year, Nova Scotia's community college and ten universities grant certificates, diplomas and degrees to more than 14,500 people.

6. Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith. Section 18 of the Act states:

Each deputy head shall prepare an annual report of disclosures, including any findings of wrongdoing, recommendations and actions taken and shall make this report available to the public.

The following table is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2018-2019
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing	N/A