



# Accountability Report 2019–20

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Labour and Advanced Education



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Accountability Report 2019–2020

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## 1. Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education for the year ended March 31, 2020 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 2019-2020 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

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Hon. Labi Kousoulis  
Minister

Original signed by:

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Duff Montgomerie  
Deputy Minister

## 2. Message from Minister and Deputy Minister

We are pleased to highlight the many accomplishments achieved by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education throughout 2019-2020.

LAE has remained focused on key areas such as post-secondary education, skills and training, workplace health and safety, and labour services. Our department's top priority is to foster a safe and fair workplace that is representative and inclusive of our diverse communities which will in turn create a strong economy for all.

Some of the achievements over the past year include:

- New legislation expanding WCB coverage to include mandatory coverage for all municipal volunteer firefighters.
- Amendments to the *Labour Standards Code* to help narrow the gender wage gap and move towards ensuring there is equal pay for equal work. These amendments prohibit employers from inquiring about the wage history of a job applicant or employee, and barring employees from disclosing their own or other employees' wages.
- On April 1 Nova Scotia's minimum wage rate increase by \$1 an hour, to \$12.55 per hour, making it the largest increase to minimum wage in a decade.
- LAE has continued to take the lead on connecting young people to the workplace, especially those from underrepresented groups with jobs. The Graduate to Opportunity and Innovate to Opportunity programs provide a 10 per cent added incentive to hire individuals from under-represented groups. More than 300 GTO and ITO graduates have been hired with the support of the diversity bonus to date.
- Last fall we signed our fifth Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Nova Scotia Universities. As part of the MOU we are providing:
  - An annual increase of 1% to the operating grant for each year of the agreement.
  - \$600,000 per year to support the HealthyMindsNS e-mental health supports and services for students, \$470,000 per year for sexual violence prevention on campuses and \$1.685 million per year, through the Post-Secondary Innovation Team, to promote innovation.
- Accumulated deferred maintenance on campus infrastructure is an ongoing concern for the universities. In recognition of this, in 2019-20, the Province provided one-time funding of \$20 million to the universities to address deferred maintenance.
- In our continued effort to connect Nova Scotians to the skilled trades, the number of active apprentices continues to climb. We have invested one million dollars in the Apprenticeship Award Trust, which provides financial support to eligible apprentices as they progress through and complete their apprenticeship program.

It has been a year of great momentum. None of these achievements would be possible without the dedication and tireless efforts of the entire team at Labour and Advanced Education and our devoted

partners. I want to thank everyone involved for their commitment to ensuring Nova Scotians have equal access to fair, inclusive, safe and productive environments where they can learn, work and live.

Original signed by:

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Hon. Labi Kousoulis  
Minister

Original signed by:

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Duff Montgomerie  
Deputy Minister

### 3. Financial Results

	2019-2020 Estimate	2019-2020 Actual	2019-2020 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	(\$thousands)		
<b>Department Expenses:</b>			
Administration	734	718	(16)
Corporate Policy and Services	3,914	3,622	(292)
Safety	15,661	14,588	(1,073)
Labour Services	8,118	6,701	(1,417)
Skills and Learning	143,105	145,185	2,080
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency	18,389	18,372	(17)
Higher Education	55,332	61,697	6,365
School Cap Amortization	5,280	5,283	3
Community College Grants	145,676	145,676	-
<b>Total Departmental Expenses Labour &amp; Advanced Education – Note 1</b>	<b>396,209</b>	<b>401,842</b>	<b>5,633</b>
<b>Total Departmental Expenses Assistance to Universities – Note 1</b>	<b>427,782</b>	<b>448,042</b>	<b>20,260</b>
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses</b>	<b>823,991</b>	<b>849,884</b>	<b>25,893</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenues	10,633	10,672	39
Fees and Other Charges	1,041	1,025	(16)
Ordinary Recoveries	142,863	143,595	732
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Labour &amp; Advanced Education – Note 2</b>	<b>154,537</b>	<b>155,292</b>	<b>755</b>
Ordinary Recoveries	9,508	9,736	228
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Assistance to Universities – Note 2</b>	<b>9,508</b>	<b>9,736</b>	<b>228</b>
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries</b>	<b>164,045</b>	<b>165,028</b>	<b>983</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements – Note 3	-	6,591	6,591
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) – Note 4	266.2	242.2	(24.0)

#### Note 1 – Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education expenses were \$5.6 million or 1.4% higher than estimate primarily due to \$2.7 million for Student Assistance loan provision (bad debt), \$2.2 million in additional grants to students with disabilities, \$1.7 million operating expenses related to NSCC Marconi campus relocation project, \$1 million for Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency Progression Awards partially offset by \$1.9 million lower than expected utilization in Youth Initiatives.

Assistance to Universities expenses were \$20.3 million or 4.7% higher than estimate primarily due to an investment of one-time \$20 million for deferred maintenance initiatives.

#### Note 2 – Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education revenue, fees and recoveries were \$755 thousand or 0.5% higher than estimate, which is immaterial.

Assistance to Universities recoveries were \$228 thousand or 2.4% higher than estimate, which is immaterial.

**Note 3 – TCA Purchase Requirement Variance Explanation:**

TCA Purchase requirements were \$6.6 million or 100% higher than budget due to the advancement of the Nova Scotia Community College Marconi Campus relocation project.

**Note 4 – Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

Funded staff were 24.0 lower than budget due to temporary staff vacancies.



## 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.

### **The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency**

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA), established July 2014, is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system. It is an agent of the Crown and has developed its own Business Plan for 2019-20. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency publishes an Annual Report that reports on its commitments and it is available at [www.nsapprenticeship.ca](http://www.nsapprenticeship.ca).

### LAE's Strategic Actions:

#### **Work on improving workplace and technical safety, while reducing unnecessary regulatory burden.**

- Labour and Advanced Education continued to work cooperatively with other jurisdictions at the national level and within the Atlantic region to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers. National and regional agreements were signed to support alignment and mutual recognition of requirements affecting aspects of technical safety regulation. Stakeholder consultations were completed to support the modernization and harmonization of Nova Scotia's workplace first aid requirements.

#### **Strengthen the positive relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board within a renewed partnership framework.**

- Labour and Advanced Education and the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) consulted with firefighters and subsequently amended the *Workers' Compensation Act* to require WCB coverage for all volunteer firefighters and allow federal firefighters to access the cancer related presumption under the Act. Work will continue in 2020 on jointly consulting firefighters around expanding the number of cancers available for the presumption.
- With the outbreak of the pandemic late in fiscal 2019-20, joint LAE-WCB social marketing efforts shifted to focus on workplace prevention of COVID-19.

#### **Work across departments, and in partnership with the research community and particularly the universities and NSCC, to strengthen and expand the innovation agenda.**

- The Province created Research Nova Scotia (RNS) to provide a coordinated approach to provincial research funding. The Department works closely with RNS to support their efforts in research and innovation.

- The Post-Secondary Innovation Team works to find collaborative, post-secondary institution-led, approaches that enhance the post-secondary sector while supporting innovative ways to advance provincial priorities.

**Focus attention on start-up supports, such as the Nova Scotia Sandboxes, to spur economic growth and create jobs for young Nova Scotians.**

- Sandboxes are collaborative spaces hosted by Nova Scotia universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) that bring together students, mentors and advisers to develop an entrepreneurial mindset to bring into any work environment. They focus on fostering an enthusiasm and capacity for innovation and entrepreneurship amongst Nova Scotia post-secondary education students.

**Collaborate with employers and industry sectors to improve the workforce and workplace.**

- New regulations were created under the *Trade Union Act General Regulations* requiring certification applications within the construction sector to be made on Monday to Friday, when a more representative number of employees tend to be on a worksite. The Labour Board will now consider certification applications submitted on Saturday, Sunday or a holiday to be submitted on the next business day. As 50% of employees working on the date of a certification application can trigger unionization, this will ensure that a typically smaller group of employees working on a weekend cannot trigger the unionization of the larger workforce.
- The partial hour rule under the Minimum Wage Order (General) was repealed effective April 1, 2020. Prior to this date, the partial hour rule required employers to round up time worked by employees. More specifically, if an employee worked for 15 to 30 minutes, the employee had to be paid for a half hour; and if an employee worked for 31 to 60 minutes, the employee had to be paid for a full hour. The partial hour rule applied to employees who earn minimum wage, as well as employees who earn slightly more than minimum wage. The rule and its administration created a significant regulatory burden for Nova Scotia businesses.

**Sector Council Capacity Building**

Enhancing industry sector councils' capacity to address key workforce opportunities and challenges is a key priority. In 2019-2020, more than \$10 million was invested in 14 industry sector councils representing key economic sectors in the province. Highlights include:

- \$2.7M to support the Association of Industry Sector Councils, in developing a strategic plan to provide a more effective and strategic level of support to individual industry sector councils, including an ability to proactively gather and analyze labour market information to address key workforce opportunities and challenges;
- \$1.7M to support the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resources Sector Council and the Fisheries Sector Councils in implementing strategies and measures to address the unique workforce challenges and opportunities of seasonal operations, including exploring innovative season-extension; and
- \$1.3M to build sector-specific landing pages and custom content for the SkillsOnlineNS including sector specific training packages for employers and employees. This work will enhance industry's ability to generate interest from key, target demographics (e.g. youth), to better align with future workforce needs and will cost-effectively deliver critical workforce training while providing Nova Scotians digital records of their learning. As part of this investment, more than \$120,000 is dedicated to the development and customization of courses and content for a diversity of cultures and backgrounds.

**Forestry Workforce Transition Team (Skills and Learning)**

Due to the closure of Northern Pulp and to support the Forestry Transition team, LAE established a Forestry Workforce Transition Committee in February of 2020. Some of the committee's key objectives are to:

- Coordinate and direct the deployment and delivery of appropriate and/or additional support to facilitate forestry sector workforce transition;
  - Develop and offer advice and information to the Forestry Transition Team on short-term interventions that have potential for significant impact for affected workers and businesses in the forestry sector, and
  - Support the Forestry Transition Team in identifying future labour market requirements that align with the future vision for the sector.
- Government is moving forward with several infrastructure projects in Cape Breton in the range of a billion-dollar investment over the next several years – in healthcare facilities, schools, a new Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) campus and wastewater treatment facilities. Together, they will create jobs, support training and business development and strengthen Cape Breton’s overall economic picture. Efforts are being made to coordinate and deliver the projects in ways that will have the greatest long-term impact in this region and LAE is working with a cross-government committee to advance employment in Cape Breton with a focus on underrepresented groups through training, apprenticeship and jobs. The committee intends to leverage procurement policy to build a stronger province with specific apprenticeship targets and a clear focus on diversity and inclusion to address work force needs related to the construction projects. In partnership with the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council, the committee has identified the workforce and training needs that will ensure that all communities in Cape Breton can take advantage of the opportunities.

**Help recent graduates connect with jobs in Nova Scotia through the Graduate to Opportunity and Innovate to Opportunity programs.**

- The Youth Employment Programs have been growing. In 2015-16 a commitment was made to hire 1,200 post-secondary graduates through the Graduate to Opportunity Program over the next four years. Program accumulative, 1357 graduates have been supported between February 2015 – May 2020.
- More employers are hiring members of diversity groups. In 2018-19, 94 employers hired 94 graduates from diversity groups. In 2019-20, 84 employers hired 106 new graduates from diversity groups. Ten (10) graduates from diversity groups were hired in the first two months of 2020-21. To date, 236 employers have hired from diverse groups.
- In February 2018, the Innovate to Opportunity was launched, to help recent post-secondary graduates with advanced degrees to start their careers in Nova Scotia. Since April 2019, 14 post-secondary graduates have been placed in full-time roles with employers in Nova Scotia. Three (3) positions have been filled to date in 2020-2021.

**Deliver consistent, timely, inclusive and accessible Nova Scotia Works Employment Assistance Services so that Nova Scotians can better understand, prepare for and fill the needs of the province’s job market, and so that employers can find, hire, manage, develop, and retain the talent they need to be more productive in a global economy.**

- In January 2020 Employment Nova Scotia entered into three-year service delivery agreements with enhanced performance requirements and accountabilities that support the delivery of the mission of ensuring they are focused on supporting Nova Scotians that are most in need of employment services, including outreach and partnership with underrepresented communities and persons in the labour market in Nova Scotia.
- The employment services system supported the job search and career development of over 14,000 individuals across the Nova Scotia during 2019-20.

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

- Skills Development Program helps unemployed Nova Scotians who are having trouble getting a job and needing to develop new skills. Individuals work with a career practitioner on a career plan and receive funding for training through adult learning programs and post-secondary education. The Province has

made changes to the Program to help more Nova Scotians who are underrepresented in the workforce upgrade their skills and become job ready. The changes provide quicker access to training for these unemployed Nova Scotians looking for a job.

- Government hiring programs are helping more diverse young people enter the workforce. In 2019, the Province implemented a diversity bonus to two popular programs for university and college students, the Cooperative Education Incentive and the Student Summer Skills Incentive. The diversity bonus applies to female students in a non-traditional occupation, people who self-identify as racially visible, Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, a person with a disability or an international graduate. Employers receive an additional \$1 an hour under the Student Summer Skills Incentive and \$1.50 an hour through the Co-op Education Incentive.
- The New Opportunities for Work (NOW) program, delivered through the Nova Scotia Centre for Employment Innovation at St. Francis Xavier University, helped 177 Nova Scotians from underrepresented groups access long-term employment and supports.

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

- An all of government youth structure remains in place to support a coordinated effort and collaboration to support youth (18-34) employment. Senior Officials from across government are working collaboratively on removing employment barriers and joint efforts and priority areas include: working with community to improve African Nova Scotian (ANS) youth employment, providing underserved youth with the skills, training and support to connect to careers in the IT sector, newcomer youth, youth engagement, amplifying education and providing government work experience for youth facing barriers.

Supporting Measures: LAE Mandate

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2019-20 YEAR DATA		
		2019-20 Target	Status Update	2020-21 Target
# of clients receiving employment services, education and training supports	13,924	14,400	14,496	16,000
# 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)	700 students	719 students	700 students 375 employers
# of post-secondary students and Nova Scotia employers participating in the SKILL program supports	712 placements 560 employers	800 placements	850 placements 509 employers	800 placements 510 employers
# of Private Career Colleges programs with experiential learning components	Approx. 90%	96%	94%	95%
# of individuals / students recruited for the Sandboxes	3,015	Increase	16,205 (2018-19 academic year) <sup>1</sup>	Increase
# of programming and training activities with Sandboxes that foster an entrepreneurial mindset and job ready skills	289	Increase	336 (2018-19 academic year) <sup>2</sup>	Increase
Value of funds leveraged (federal and private) for research	N/A	RNS to expand and increase	\$2,387,950 leveraged on \$768,400 of provincial research funding	Increase

Supporting Measures: Youth Mandate<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2019-2020 data will be available October 2020.

<sup>2</sup> 2019-2020 data will be available October 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Measures related to underrepresented youth in the labour market reported on by Statistics Canada every five years. Next reporting period 2020-2021. Measures to be reassessed for 2021-2022 reporting year.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2019-20 YEAR DATA		
		2019-20 Target	Status Update	2020-21 Target
Unemployment rate among youth 15-34	10.8% (2016 NS Average) 9.3% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate	9.8% (NS 2019) 7.7% (Canada 2019)	N/A
Unemployment rate of youth ages 15-24	10.9% (2016 NS Average) 13.1% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or below national rate	13.2% (NS 2019) 11.0% (Canada 2019)	N/A
Employment rate of youth ages 15-34	66.3% (2016 NS Average) 68.6% (2016 National Average)	NS rate at or above national rate	70.9% (NS 2019) 70.6% (Canada 2019)	N/A
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	N/A <sup>4</sup>	N/A
Net gain of youth aged 15-34	68 (2016)	Continued gain	703 (2019)	N/A
% of international students who graduate from NS post-secondary institutions become permanent residents *One Nova Scotia Commission 10-year target	5.8% (2016)	10%	12.8%	Continue to exceed the target of 10%

<sup>4</sup> Employment rate of First Nations and African Nova Scotian youth ages 15-34 data reported by Statistics Canada every five years. Next reporting period 2020-2021.

### Safe Workplaces and Campuses

#### Support E-Mental Health tools

- Post-secondary students now have easier access to mental health supports with the launch of the HealthyMindsNS website on January 16, 2020. The site provides access to a suite of online mental health supports and services that are free to students and complement the in-person counselling services available on campuses. The supports are available 24/7.
- The HealthyMindsNS suite of services currently includes: Kognito, TAO, 7 Cups, Crisis Text Line and Good 2 Talk. Each university and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) can select the programs that best complement their current on-campus service offerings. Online services can play an important role in providing students with a variety of support options that can be accessed at anytime and anywhere.
- Kognito was introduced as part of the suite of services within HealthyMindsNS to provide mental health literacy training for students, faculty and staff. This training can assist faculty and staff to practice and prepare for conversations with students to refer them to the supports they need.

#### NSCC Marconi Campus Relocation

- Moving NSCC's Marconi campus to the Sydney waterfront will help revitalize the downtown, bringing in more students, creating more community-access space, and creating a destination campus in Cape Breton's busiest centre.
- The majority of the land for the waterfront campus has been acquired and the detailed design and costing is substantially complete. Site preparation, including demolition and environmental assessments, have commenced.
- Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) has engaged Nova Scotia Lands to start planning for the future of the old campus once the NSCC moves to the new campus.
- The new campus will be designed and built in accordance with accessibility standards and guidelines following the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification Program and Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) environmental standards. LEED is one of the most widely used green building certification programs in the world.

#### Continue to Support Sexual Violence Prevention on Campuses

- In 2019-20, LAE created the *Nova Scotia Universities and Nova Scotia Community College Sexual Violence Prevention Grant*. A total of \$470,000 was provided to the universities and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to support collaborative sexual violence prevention initiatives that focus on capacity building and primary prevention on campuses.
- In October 2019, the Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee released its report titled: *Guidelines for Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College: Development of Survivor-Centric Sexual Violence Policies and Responses*. This report will act as a resource for the universities and the NSCC as they continually review and update their sexual violence policies and procedures.
- The Provincial Sexual Violence Prevention Committee continues to meet and share best practices between post-secondary institutions and community groups specializing in sexual violence prevention.
- The Sexual Violence Prevention Coordinator continues to work with and support the universities and the NSCC as they implement the recommendations from the *Changing the Culture of Acceptance* (2017) report, as well as utilize the guidelines in the Provincial Sexual Violence Committee's 2019 report.

### **Support the Health Workplace Safety Action Plan**

- Labour and Advanced Education continued to engage with and support the lead Department of Health and Wellness and other partner departments and organizations such as the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and AWARE-NS in advancing the Health and Community Services Workplace Safety Action Plan. To support management, implementation and evaluation of the Action Plan, LAE and WCB jointly contributed \$593 thousand in calendar 2019 and agreed to a joint budget of \$680 thousand for calendar 2020.
- Labour and Advanced Education began work in partnership with the sector safety association AWARE-NS to formulate an inspection strategy for the long-term care sector.

## **Strong Systems to Support Workforce**

### **Implement the Atlantic Student Tracking System (ASTS)**

- A recommendation was made to the Council of Atlantic Ministers of Education and Training (CAMET) Board to use Statistics Canada's Education and Labour Market Longitudinal Platform (ELMLP) to link public education student data with university and community college data. The Board has requested a new business case in order to evaluate the recommendation.

### **Harmonize trades training**

- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) continues to be an active participant on harmonization initiatives at the national level and in the Atlantic region to provide greater consistency in apprenticeship training and improve apprentice mobility across the country.
- New harmonized training programs, including the development of curriculum and examinations, were developed in collaboration with employers, tradespersons and instructors in the Atlantic region for the Automotive Service Technician, Industrial Mechanic (Millwright), and Sprinkler Fitter trades. Level 1 of the three new programs was implemented this training year.
- Work has already begun to develop new harmonized training programs for the Insulator (Heat and Frost) and Sheet Metal Worker trades. At the national level, Nova Scotia industry representatives and instructors participated in national workshops to develop occupational standards and examination banks for 12 Red Seal trades.

### **Continue strengthening our relationship with the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)**

- Labour and Advanced Education and the Workers' Compensation Board continued to collaborate closely to jointly plan and implement initiatives within a partnership framework. In 2019-20, joint initiatives included social marketing projects, sponsorships for safety associations, conferences and symposia, and other projects. Some prominent examples were:
  - continuing support for the Fishing Safety Association and Fishing Sector Council in delivery of the Fishing Safety Now action plan;
  - continuation of the "Workplace Injuries Hurt the Most at Home" social marketing campaign;
  - prevention awareness campaigns and outreach targeting residential construction, roadway construction, and youth workers;
  - raising public awareness of North American Occupational Safety and Health Week and the Day of Mourning;
  - a three-year partnership with the Discovery Centre to implement an interactive "science on the spot" feature combining learning about safety practices with learning about science; and
  - refocusing of joint social marketing efforts to address COVID-19 prevention in the workplace.
- The total shared cost of joint initiatives in calendar 2019 was approximately \$1.48 million, of which the Department contributed \$735 thousand (this included the Department's share of funding for the Health and Community Services Workplace Safety Action Plan, together with other initiatives). A joint budget of \$950 thousand was agreed for calendar 2020.



- Labour and Advanced Education and the Workers' Compensation Board consulted with firefighters prior to October 2019 legislative amendments that will ensure that all volunteer firefighters serving within the territory of any Nova Scotia municipality are covered as workers under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. Coming into force in October 2020, the amendments will also allow federal firefighters to access the cancer-related presumption provided in the Act.

#### **Continue to minimize regulatory barriers**

- Labour and Advanced Education continued to work cooperatively with other jurisdictions at the national level and within the Atlantic region to reduce unnecessary regulatory barriers while prioritizing workplace and technical safety.
- In July 2019 Nova Scotia signed a national Reconciliation Agreement to facilitate national trade in pressure equipment (boilers, pressure vessels and fittings) through the mutual recognition of jurisdictional regulatory requirements and administrative processes related to the issuance of Canadian Registration Numbers (CRNs).
- Work toward aligning technical safety regulatory requirements across the Atlantic region continued, supported by the drafting of an Agreement in Principle (signed by Nova Scotia in early 2020).
- Stakeholder consultations were completed in support of ongoing work to modernize and harmonize regulations governing workplace first aid in Nova Scotia. This work includes the adoption of new, nationally consistent CSA standards for first aid kits and training.
- While responses to the COVID-19 pandemic took priority late in 2019-20, work to implement the first aid regulatory changes and to prepare for further initiatives in areas such as fall protection will continue into 2020-21.

## **Educational Attainment**

#### **Implement recommendations from Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) Review**

- The Department has defined program categories for the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning and has developed a plan to scale up essential skills programming. An iteration of a new funding model has been developed and mapping common processes has begun. The Department will continue to engage with stakeholders to ensure support and collaboration.

#### **Create additional Nurse Practitioner Education Seats at Dalhousie**

- The Province continues to work collaboratively with Dalhousie university to implement additional Nurse Practitioner Education Seat. The initiative has been highly successful with the first graduates working in rural Nova Scotia as intended with this seat expansion.

#### **Promoting the Enhanced Student Assistance Loan Forgiveness Program**

- Student Assistance developed a promotion campaign focused on raising public awareness of the Loan Forgiveness Program and the elimination of the \$28,560 minimum debt threshold for eligibility. The campaign features print and online ads for campus newspapers as well as ads in several social media and other online services, such as Spotify. An additional promotion campaign was developed in the winter 2020, comprising a comprehensive social media plan and a number of other targeted channels that varied from campus to campus, to promote the pending Budget 2020 measures to expand program eligibility to diploma and certificate programs at Nova Scotia universities and NSCC.

#### **Develop a new five-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with province's universities**

- Government and Nova Scotia universities will continue to work together to provide high-quality, accessible education through a five-year memorandum of understanding (MOU). The Province had extensive discussions while drafting the agreement with universities, other government departments and students. The MOU was signed in September 2019 and is the fifth MOU between the Province of Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia universities. It runs from 2019-20 to 2023-24.
- The annual increase to tuition for Nova Scotia students enrolled in undergraduate programs is capped at three per cent per year. The total operating grant to be provided to universities in 2019-20 was \$365

million which is an increase of one per cent or \$3.6 million from 2018-19. The MOU provides a 1% annual increase to the operating grant for each year of the agreement.

- The Province is providing additional annual funding over the next five years of \$600,000 to support e-mental health and \$1.685 million, through the Post-Secondary Innovation Team, to promote innovation.
- The Province is also providing annual funding of \$470,000 over the five years of this MOU to support sexual violence prevention. Additionally, the Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Program will continue to provide a tuition reduction of at least \$1,283 for Nova Scotia students studying in Nova Scotia, based on a full course load.
- As per the MOU, Outcome Agreements have been signed with all ten universities. The first reporting period under the Outcome Agreements was February 15, 2020 - analysis of their contents has been completed and all institutions have met the reporting requirements.

## **Employment Participation, Attachment, and Retention**

### **Support an industry-led apprenticeship system**

- Industry participation in the trade program development is essential to the continued relevancy and responsiveness of the apprenticeship system. The Agency continued to seek and incorporate industry's voice to increase the quality of the system through the Apprenticeship Board, Trade Advisory Committees, an Annual General Meeting, and numerous other engagements.
- This year, industry actively participated in 14 Trade Advisory Committees, 12 Atlantic Trade Advisory Committee workshops, 27 Red Seal workshops and 4 national webinars to support the development of provincial and Red Seal standards, examinations and trade harmonization.

### **Advancing LAE's interests nationally and regionally**

- Through the federal-provincial Workforce Development Agreement (WDA), Post-Secondary Accessibility Services (PSAS) funds several third-party programs designed to introduce and attach learners with disabilities to the workforce. These programs reach high school graduates, post-secondary students, post-secondary graduates, and adult learners and are delivered in a variety of formats including pre-vocational training, career exploration, work-integrated learning, and wage subsidies for employers.
- In November 2019, the Council of Atlantic Ministers in Education and Training (CAMET) held its third annual Atlantic Canada Career Week, with the theme of experiential learning.
- CAMET has developed a Career Competencies Framework, which will be launched in 2020-21, that will ensure Atlantic Canadians are prepared to participate in a world of rapid and complex change.
- The Associate Deputy Ministers' Committee on Post-Secondary Education provides support to the Advisory Committee of Deputy Ministers of Education and the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, by addressing issues related to the complex links between higher education and public policy.
- The Provincial/Territorial Consultative Committee on Education-Related International Activities (PTCCERIA) advances provincial interests in international education and engagement by supporting policy development and strategic planning.
- The work of the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC) enhances the post-secondary learning environment through its main duties of quality assurance, data and information, programs, and services, while considering factors that positively contribute to the student experience, such as promoting smooth transitions between learning and work.
- The Atlantic Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources (AACHHR) provides a forum to consider new or modified health education programs and their impact on the labour market, share information to inform strategies to maintain a skilled, adaptable health workforce and strengthen capacity to address labour market and health human resource issues.
- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) is involved in the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) Communications and Stakeholder Relations Committee. The mandate of this committee is to take a strategic approach to external communications and stakeholder engagement activities at a national level. The committee plans the CCDA's annual stakeholder meeting in which

approximately 70 national trades-related organizations are invited to participate in discussions on developing objectives, receive CCDA updates and provide industry-based feedback on apprenticeship and the Red Seal trades.

- In partnership with NL, NB, PE and MB, work continues on the development of a Shared Apprenticeship Management System. This system will provide on-line self-serve functionality to all apprenticeship clients in the five provinces. Through the development of the system, apprenticeship authorities have continued to align systems and processes to facilitate apprentice mobility and completion.

### **Continued youth horizontal collaboration**

- The all of government approach to support youth (ages 18-34) has and continues to strategically focus on removing employment barriers for young Nova Scotians including African Nova Scotian (ANS), Indigenous, Newcomers, Children in Care and youth facing other barriers including but not limited to living in poverty.
- Using a community-led collective impact approach, the ANS Youth Employment Social Innovation Lab remained steadfast in their focus to improve the employment levels for African Nova Scotian youth and close the employment gap. In phase one, the lab engaged over 250 participants including ANS youth, community, employers, government partners and service providers to understand barriers and identify solutions in areas of education, employment supports and entrepreneurship. The Lab is moving through phase two of the work which includes prototyping, testing and evaluating solutions to support the attachment of ANS youth to the labour market. The Lab team and LAE also successfully secured federal funding to support this effort through the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy Program (YESS).
- The Atlantic Workforce Partnership Committee Youth Initiatives Working Group hosted its first Youth Best Practices Workshop in Halifax in September 2019, which brought youth, government provincial and federal partners, and industry experts together. Over 50 participants had the opportunity to hear innovative youth employment solutions from across Atlantic Canada and to learn how to better support youth employment from youth, industry experts and employers.
- A Poverty Reduction Government Initiative was successfully applied for through the youth initiative. In partnership with LAE and EECD, \$158,000 has been provided to the Black Educators Association to co-create a youth education support program that will support positive academic outcomes and ultimately lead to successful transitions from education to higher education, training and into the workforce.
- The youth horizontal approach is also focused on new partnerships secured in 2019-20 that will increase employment for multiple youth cohorts through access to IT training, life skills and other wrap around supports. In 2020-21 youth will be recruited, trained and supported to launch meaningful careers in our Information Technology strategic growth sector.

### **Increased participation of recent graduates in quality, full-time work**

- Participation in the Graduate to Opportunity program (GTO) continues to grow. In the first year, there was a 65% increase in applications year over year. While this trend was not sustainable, the GTO grew 14% between 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, and 16% between 2018-2019 and 2019-2020.
- The Innovate to Opportunity program received 25% more applications in its second year than in 2018-2019.

### **Growing participation of youth from designated groups in work-experience positions**

- Nearly 30% of graduates hired using Graduate to Opportunity, and 92% of those hired using Innovate to Opportunity self-identify as belonging to a designate group.
- A diversity bonus for employers who hire students for positions in the Student Summer Skills Incentive and Cooperative Education Incentive has been developed and will launch in the summer 2020 cohort of student employees.

### **Continue to improve the Nova Scotia Works Employment Services System**

- The employment services system continues to be well positioned with quality services and is a conduit to government-funded labour market programs to assist Nova Scotians find employment and develop their skills for new careers to take both individuals and regions through career, industry and sector transitions. Nova Scotia Works continues to provide employment services and support to Nova Scotians. As of March 31, 2020, 14,496 individuals received support.
- The Department has successfully conducted two (2) rounds of user testing – with Nova Scotians and Career Practitioners - around the tools proposed for the Digital Channel that would be included in Release 1 of the digital services for Nova Scotia Works.

### **Expand Nova Scotians awareness of training and attachment programs**

- Dissemination of updated marketing materials through community-based employment services providers across the province who act as a direct conduit to many of the programs.
- Established performance measures for employment services that naturally encourage the promotion and referral to programs.
- Employer Engagement Specialists through Nova Scotia Works continue to increase the promotion of attachment programs for employers.
- Developed a targeting system in partnership with the federal government that been designed and built by the Department to enable direct marketing of employment service and programs to specific cohorts of Nova Scotians at the time of the establishment of an Employment Insurance (EI) claim.

### **Invest in employment innovations and research**

- Enhancement of NS Works outreach and services for underrepresented persons in the labour market through the NS Works Diversity and Inclusion Program. The NS Works employment services system is intentionally focused on creating a workforce and services reflective of the communities it serves. A first phase of this work will support 15 African Nova Scotians/Persons of African Descent in employment and training in the career development field with NSW employers. The program was developed through first-person leadership within the NS Works system and hiring will occur in 2020-21.

### **Support SHIFT Action Plan**

- Nova Scotia Works Centres have a menu of service delivery for employment services that was evolved in 2019 to include a mandate to provide specific and targeted program offerings in their local communities to meet the demographic needs of their community.
- Career Practitioners are also supported by training by the Nova Scotia Career Development Association to ensure they understand and consider the unique needs of older workers in their career development.

### **Improving processes and programs under the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI)**

- The Department has updated guidance to businesses applying for WIPSI by clarifying program eligibility guidelines and the LaMPSS application instructions (March 1, 2020). Other program changes that support increased access include:
  - A \$100,000 approval cap for individual businesses to ensure a fair distribution among Nova Scotia businesses;
  - Financial Statements are no longer required;
  - Clarity around the program objectives to support growth and business activity outside of Nova Scotia; and
  - Diversity and inclusion training highlighted as an eligible program activity to increase inclusive and welcoming workplaces.

### **Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA) legislative review and program evaluation**

- The Department has completed the review *Fair Registration Practices Act* (FRPA) and will be planning next steps for 2020.

### **Strengthen partnerships through the Science and Industry Pathway Program (delivered by Mitacs)**

- Labour and Advanced Education 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. Government supported 391 research internships in 2019-20.

### **Continue support for Post-Secondary Education Sandboxes**

- Sandboxes continue to develop and deliver programming that provide job readiness skills. In the fall semester of the 2019-20 academic year, 8,471 students were recruited for the Sandboxes and 237 programming and training activities took place.
- The new Pulse Sandbox, hosted by Dalhousie University, became active as of April 1, 2020. The Pulse Sandbox is focussed on innovation in the areas of health technologies and life sciences, the delivery of primary care, care for mental health and addictions, and continuing care. A formal launch is planned later in 2020. Pulse is the tenth sandbox hosted by Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions and supported by the Province of Nova Scotia.

### **Implement experiential learning opportunities**

- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) provides over \$1.5 million per year in experiential opportunities for youth in the skilled trades working with partner organizations. Over 20,000 youth were reached through partnerships with Education and Early Childhood Development (EECD), Construction Sector Council, Skills Canada-Nova Scotia and Techsploration.
- In partnership with EECD, the Agency ran three paid summer youth programs for High School Students in: Building Futures for Youth (Construction); TestDrive (Motive Power); Serve It Up (Service -Cook trade). Over 100 students gained experiences through employment with 92 employers.
- In partnership with the Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey (MK - Aboriginal School Board), over 80 Indigenous youth gained awareness in the construction trades at the Trades Exhibition Hall and in partnership with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and MK, delivered three four-day boot camps in the welding trade for Indigenous youth aged 12-15 at three Nova Scotia Community Colleges (NSCC) campuses across the province.
- Under the Poverty Reduction Strategy, provided nine one-day camps at the Trades Exhibition Hall for over 190 youth aged seven (7) years up and their caregivers/parents to experience fourteen (14) construction trades.
- In partnership with African Nova Scotia Affairs and the Black Business Initiative (BBI), hosted two conferences for African Nova Scotia youth to learn about apprenticeship and careers in the skilled trades. Conferences were held in Cape Breton and Truro attracting approximately 100 youth and over 200 attendees.
- A highlight of the year included the hosting of the national skills competitions by our partner Skills Canada-Nova Scotia, which brought competitors from across the country to vie for gold, silver and bronze as well as thousands of junior and senior high school students to explore potential careers. Exhibition Park was taken over by tools, materials and equipment in the competition areas, exhibitors and hands-on displays were scattered throughout and the new Mobile Construction Experience, launched by the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council, was parked impressively in the entrance area.
- Workplace Initiatives, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, invested \$300,000 in the delivery and expanded reach of the Mobile Construction Experience through the Nova Scotia Construction Sector Council. This 53-foot, mobile trailer with ten (10) interactive construction trades participated in 17 different events, including visits to schools and the Skills Canada Competition, and was visited by 730 people (mostly youth) in 2019-2020.

### **Increase participation in the apprenticeship system of underrepresented groups**

- The number of apprentices from underrepresented groups has tripled over the last five years bringing the total number of self-reported apprentices to 1110 or 15.3% of total apprentices. The number of female apprentices also increased over the last five years with a 57% increase since 2015-2016. There are now 539 women (7.4% overall) registered as apprentices 403 of these women are apprentices in non-traditional trades. A combination of direct outreach to unengaged employers, Apprenticeship START incentives for employers and efforts under the Diversity and Inclusion Framework have contributed to these increases.
- The Women in Trades (WIT) Office is newly established within the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) as a result of two federally funded initiatives. The focus of both initiatives is to recruit, retain and advance women in the skilled trades where they are underrepresented, and to provide women with a more successful apprenticeship pathway. Two hundred and ninety-one women are being supported through the Office and eighteen new women have been identified to participate in projects. An Atlantic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed and signed by the Ministers in the Atlantic Provinces to provide opportunities for women in construction across the Atlantic Provinces.
- Through the Apprenticeship START Incentive \$2,992,500 was distributed to employers who progressed and completed their apprentices. As of March 31, 2020, there are 1190 active apprentices and 1058 employers participating in the Apprenticeship START Program. Twenty-nine per cent (29%) of apprentices are diverse and eleven per cent (11%) are women.

## **Strategic Sector Growth – Research & Development and Innovation**

### **Continued support for the Post-Secondary Innovation Team and its Working Groups**

- The Post-Secondary Innovation Team (Innovation Team) works to find collaborative, post-secondary institution-led, approaches that enhance the post-secondary sector while supporting and advancing provincial priorities, including the One Nova Scotia Commission's goals.
- The Innovation Team identifies key areas of focus and forms working groups to support provincial priorities.
- During 2019-20, the following five working groups were supported by the Innovation Team:
  - Student Recruitment and Retention
  - Entrepreneurship and Experiential Learning
  - Social Equity
  - Cultural Innovation
  - Health Innovation

### **Support Research Nova Scotia (RNS)**

- The Department continues to support RNS through annual funding and provides leadership support through membership on the Board of Directors.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2019-20 YEAR DATA		
		2019-20 Target	Status Update	2020-21 Target
# of youth and immigrant matches connected with NS employers through Connector Program	444 Connectees 109 Connectors (2014-15)	400 Connectees 125 Connectors	711 118	600 125
# of youth and immigrant matches employed with NS employers through Connector Program	151 employed	150 employed	243	150
# of recent post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employers in NS through Graduate to Opportunity	104 (2015-16)	250	337	250
# of Graduate to Opportunity employers that hire members of diversity groups	14	90	84	90
# of post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employers in NS through the Innovate to Opportunity program	N/A	15	14	15
# of participants in NOW (New Opportunities for Work) program	110 (November 2017)	150	177	Program Finishing this year
# of employers who hired a job seeker through the START program	578	600	571	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	2614 employers 6221 employees	1700 employers 8000 employees
# of internship placements in Mitacs program	176 total (116+60 special placements)	250 placements	391 placements	250
% of apprentices who represent diverse populations (not including women)	10.4%	15%	15.3%	16.0%
% of female apprentices	6%	8%	7.4%	8.5%
# of students using the Loan Forgiveness program	1,151 <sup>5</sup>	Approximately 1,100 students are expected to be eligible annually	1,197 (~ \$9.9M in loans forgiven)	Approximately 1,500 students are estimated to be eligible in 2020-21.

<sup>5</sup> Note that Nova Scotia Student Assistance systems do not differentiate between the Loan Forgiveness and Debt Cap programs: some of these students are in receipt of Debt Cap support.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2019-20 YEAR DATA		
		2019-20 Target	Status Update	2020-21 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	Given the permanent nature of the increased weekly allowance the ongoing cost will be approximately \$2.2M	Weekly maximum student assistance was not increased in 2019-20.	Maintain \$200/week.  Analyse opportunities to increase the maximum.
# of organizations/employers participating in the Job Creation Partnership program	70	50	119	70
# of Skills Development participants who complete a training program	1,077	900	875	600
% of Skills Development participants reached for follow-up employed 24-weeks (6months) after completing the program	88%	88%	86%	88%
Pass rate for GED program	78% (2016 NS Average) 74.1% (2016 National Average)	Meet or exceed national average	"77% (2019) National Pass rate 74% (2019)"	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 (2019)	400
# of apprentices	6167	7000	7254	7300
# of new apprentices	1416	1500	1480	1400
# of employers who have hired an apprentice	2131	2500	2317	2500
# of new employers in the apprenticeship system	260	220	224	200
# of apprentices that attend technical training	2169	2600	2337	2500



## 5. Supplemental Information and Appendices

### *Key/interesting facts about LAE*

- The One Journey Initiative provides skill development and employment opportunities to unemployed or underemployed Nova Scotians where there is an identified industry labour shortage. This program invested more than \$2.4 million in the delivery of support to 14 different cohorts across the province in 2019-2020. Sectors targeted included healthcare, food and beverage, and trucking. The investment supported 153 participants attaching to jobs with more than 50 employers.
- Employers across the province are discovering how hiring skilled young workers can benefit their business through the Graduate to Opportunity program. More than 1,000 new graduates have been hired in their chosen fields since the program launched in 2015 and 585 Nova Scotia employers have used program funding.
- The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning offers a variety of free educational programs for adults across the province. In 2019, 448 Nova Scotians received their high school diploma. In 2019, the pass rate for GED test takers in Nova Scotia was 77% while the national pass rate was 74%.
- Participation of employers and apprentices, including diverse apprentices, in the apprenticeship system continued to grow in 2019-2020. At year end, there were 2317 active employers, of which 224 were new participants. The number of registered apprentices (7254) increased by 5.3% over last year. All 4 sectors of the apprenticeship system showed an increase in the number of registered apprentices: the construction sector at a 3.9% increase (4303), the industrial/manufacturing sector at 4.3% (1164), the motive power sector at 9.8% (1468), and the service sector at 8.1% (319).
- In response to the closure of Northern Pulp, the Agency and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) created the Forestry Sector Apprenticeship Initiative, which is available to Northern Pulp employees and other workers in the sector who are interested in pursuing apprenticeship in a skilled trade and/or to achieve trade certification. To date, the Initiative has supported 82 individuals.
- The Atlantic Trades Business Seal program helps skilled trades workers who have a certificate of qualification prepare for managerial roles, starting their own business or enhancing their skills to bring their business to the next level. On September 28, 2019, Nova Scotia's first all-Indigenous and all-journeypersons class graduated from the Atlantic Trades Business Seal program. This continuing education program gave seven (7) graduates the skills, confidence and tools they need to take on managerial roles and start their own company.
- The Labour Standards Division provided valuable support to the forestry sector. The Division received, triaged and responded to approximately 643 front line calls from employees, business and the public for several months following the closure of Northern Pulp.
- In the 2019-20 academic year, approximately 59,000 students were enrolled at Nova Scotia universities and the NSCC. Over the last few years there has been a steady increase in the number of international students enrolled in Nova Scotia's post-secondary institutions. More than 12,000 international students choose to study at our universities and the NSCC from 155 different countries.

## 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 2019-2020
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A