

LMA Narrative Report 08-09

**Canada-Nova Scotia
Labour Market Agreement
Report**

2008-2009

Background

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement (LMA) is a six-year bilateral agreement through which the federal government provides funds for Nova Scotia's labour market programs and services. This agreement was signed between Canada and Nova Scotia on June 18th, 2008. Eligibility for LMA-funded programs and services is limited to:

- Unemployed Nova Scotians who are not eligible to receive Employment Insurance benefits; and
- Employed Nova Scotians who do not have a high school diploma or recognized certification or who have low levels of literacy and essential skills.

In addition, the LMA is designed to target specific groups of eligible Nova Scotians who are under-represented in the work force. These groups include Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, immigrants, African Nova Scotians, Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians, older workers, women and Social Assistance recipients.

The LMA is designed to compliment labour market programs and services available to those Nova Scotians who are eligible for Employment Insurance benefits through the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA).

Funding levels for the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement are determined on a per-capita formula based on Statistics Canada population projections made each July. It is expected that Nova Scotia will receive approximately \$14 million per year for the duration of the agreement.

Program Planning Context

An interdepartmental committee comprised of the Departments of Labour and Workforce Development, Community Services, and Economic Development, and the Offices of Immigration, Acadian Affairs, African Nova Scotian Affairs, Aboriginal Affairs and Status of Women provides leadership and planning for LMA investment. Delivery of services is coordinated through the Departments of Labour and Workforce Development, Community Services and the Office of Immigration.

The collaborative approach to LMA priority setting and planning provides the opportunity to better align labour market and labour market-related programs and services to one another. This approach also ensures that the programs and services are implemented in such a way as to directly support both the economic and social plans for Nova Scotia: Opportunities for Sustainable Prosperity and Weaving the Threads, respectively.

Guiding Principles

Funds available under the LMA are an investment opportunity for Nova Scotia. These funds represent an opportunity to begin to address barriers for clients who have few other options in accessing the labour market. Our guiding principles assist in making decisions on how to invest LMA funds:

- Investments will be based on input and evidence from both community and government, and will support the strategic direction of government.
- Programs will be designed in a client-centric approach and will improve services for Nova Scotians.
- Investments will build on existing capacity and assets within community and government.
- An inclusive approach to investments will be taken.
- Decisions and actions will be forward looking.
- Accountability for results must be shared.

Consultation

The 08-09 LMA Annual Plan addresses the period between June 2008 and March 2009. In order to ensure that Nova Scotians began to benefit from the LMA as soon as possible, the interdepartmental LMA committee created the annual plan utilizing multiple sources of consultative information. This included existing labour market information products, specific and non-specific consultations, presentations and meetings with stakeholders, and research and position papers. The consult information was broken down into business, labour, community and clients.

Key Messages from Business

- There is a continued need for training in essential skills and employability issues (including literacy, numeracy, teamwork, etc).
- Government needs to invest training most heavily in areas of occupational skill shortages.
- Supports are needed, particularly for small business lacking HR capacity, if there will really be an adjustment to an “Employer of Choice” approach.
- A more diverse workforce can bring unexpected gains such as language skills that allow new markets to be explored, marketing ideas, etc.
- Supported transition programs (e.g. One Journey) are a significant investment, but have yielded good outcomes like diversity, worker loyalty, improved moral, etc. Current government programming is too administratively burdensome, and needs to be

streamlined and simplified.

Key Messages from Labour

- The shrinking workforce and population is putting pressure on existing membership - overtime, stress, safety concerns, etc., meaning that a robust workforce is helpful in creating a robust unionized environment.
- Although there is some concern that new types of work arrangements may cause member displacement, unions state that they could play a role as providers of training, services and information.
- Current government programming is too administratively burdensome, it needs to be streamlined and simplified.

Key messages from Community

- Provide services for “gap” clients who are not attached to an income program.
- There is a need to provide longer term supports leading to employment as most services are designed for people close to labour market ready.
- Employers need to adapt as well as clients – client training doesn’t deal with racism, culture, incentives, wages, workplace conditions, adaptive aids, workplace modifications, etc.
- Some tools were designed for the “old” labour market – the current labour market requires more flexible tools that recognize realities like part-time work, mobility, self-employment, etc.
- The system doesn’t do a good job at “matching” clients and opportunities - beyond labour exchange and job development there needs to be facilitated engagement (like the One Journey concept).

Key Messages from Client Groups

- There is a lack of longer term supports leading to employment, most services are designed for
- people close to labour market ready.
- High need and special need clients tend not to function well as part of a generic employment service - there is still some need for specialized services.
- There are "gap" clients who cannot access any direct benefits (e.g. clients not attached to an income program).
- There needs to be more targeted engagement between employers, priority clients and the agencies that support them.
- Language training in all its forms is required.
- There is a need for an apprenticeship strategy that accommodates priority client groups.

Priority Areas

There were four priority areas of investment in 2008-2009:

- Client Access and Service Provision
- Labour Market Skills Development
- Workforce Attachment and Retention, and
- Low Skilled Workers & Workforce Community

In 2008-2009, Nova Scotia invested \$4,536,209.56 in LMA activities, with over \$4,457,284.33 going to third parties to support direct benefits to clients. Over 80 projects were funded across the province from Sydney to Yarmouth.

Allocations/Investments by Priority

Priority	Investment (\$)	Clients Served
Client Access and Service Provision Objective(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve equity of access to clients regardless of income attachment • To address system and program shortfalls associated with high-demand areas • To ensure integration of new programs and ability to support and measure client outcomes. 	\$171,360.00	22
Labour Market Skills Development Objective(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase the essential and occupational skills capacities of individuals and the system to support better transition readiness for clients. 	\$1,997,683.33	406
Workforce Attachment and Retention Objective(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To actively facilitate the attachment and retention of that attachment for labour market participants to workforce activity through employer associated engagement programs. 	\$1,502,092.00	130
Workforce Development Objective(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop the skills of low-skilled workers already in the workforce and the capacity of the workforce community to support those workers. 	\$786,249.00	177
Total Program Expenditure	\$4,457,284.33	805
Admin Expenditure	\$78,925.03	
Total LMA Expenditure	\$4,536,209.56	

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Examples of investments in these priority areas include:

Immigrant Women Enterprise Training Project

A \$69,000-investment, arranged by the Office of Immigration, provided a dedicated business client services coordinator at Metro Immigrant Settlement Association (MISA), who advises up to 15 immigrant women entrepreneurs as they developed business plans, built marketing networks and arranged commercial financing. As well, MISA expected to use some Labour Market Agreement funding to develop business development products that will be available online.

Annapolis Job Finding Clubs/PeopleWorx

A \$16,000-investment, coordinated by the Department of Community Services, helped up to 16 job-ready people learn how to write a resume and cover letter, and how to succeed in an interview. Similar programs were offered in other communities.

Collaborative Partnership Network

A \$600,000 investment provided job coaching, employment maintenance counselling, and vocational supports to more than 150 people with disabilities across the province, preparing them for sustainable employment.

Halifax Immigrant Learning Centre

Aimed at newcomers who have a job or who are self-employed, this \$99,000-investment helped clients improve their work-related English language skills – customer service terminology; communicating with co-workers and supervisors; pronunciation; presentation skills; writing e-mail, report and letters; Canadian workplace culture; etc. Instructors went to the client's workplace to help newcomers learn the language skills they need to do their job better. Training was be one-on-one or through online distance learning. 51 interventions (average is 13-weeks of instruction) but no client numbers provided.

One Journey Work and Learn

A labour market attachment model that matches unemployed individuals with employers experiencing a skills shortage through the provision of a customized essential skills training program. The employer is involved in the design of the training model and selection of participants. The provision of practical training opportunities results in a direct link to viable employment with the employer upon successful completion of the program.

Looking Forward

The Province faced some significant challenges in the first year of the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement. The agreement was signed in mid-June, at which point several departments and government agencies formed working committee to identify projects that would benefit from LMA funding, and that had the capacity to deliver the programming quickly. The departments and agencies relied on their long-standing relationships and the requests they had received from stakeholders. The departments and the community-based agencies engaged to deliver the programming were successful in addressing the needs of clients in all four funding priorities from across Nova Scotia.

As a result of the worldwide economic downturn, the Government of Canada developed its Economic Action Plan. This stimulus package, to be invested over a two-year period, provided additional Labour Market Agreement funding to Nova Scotia. In early May 2009, the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia jointly announced an additional \$8 million in each of the two years.

The 09-10 Annual Plan was developed through the same collaborative, interdepartmental process as the previous year. In addition, a wider array of formal, targeted consultations were undertaken with community groups, service providers and clients.