



## Department of Labour and Advanced Education

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### Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA)

### Labour Market Agreement (LMA)

**2011 – 2012  
Annual Plan**

*Vision: - Fairness, safety and prosperity for all Nova Scotians by living, learning  
and working to our highest potential*

## Summary

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The 2011-2012 LMDA/LMA Annual Plan presents an integrated planning approach to LMDA and LMA programs in an effort to increase efficient use of resources and promote seamless service provision.

Through our LMDA and LMA programs, we seek to help unemployed and low skilled Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and maintain sustainable employment. Efforts are made to better match client training to gainful employment in emerging industries or occupations that have been identified as experiencing labour shortages.

Applying the best available labour market information to our programming ensures that unemployed and /or low skilled Nova Scotians have access to accurate information about available opportunities for employment, and the skills and qualifications needed to compete for these jobs.

Employers, training providers, individuals and government all play a key role in supporting the development of Nova Scotia's labour market. More and better training results in increased productivity, increased economic competitiveness and better livelihoods for Nova Scotians.

This plan presents activities designed to help strengthen Nova Scotia's labour market for the future.

In 2011-2012, Employment Nova Scotia will invest \$80.2 million in LMDA funds to assist EI eligible Nova Scotians and \$20 million in LMA funds to assist non-EI eligible Nova Scotians prepare for, find, and maintain sustainable employment.

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## Introduction

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### Department of Labour and Advanced Education

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education works to provide fairness, safety and prosperity for all Nova Scotians by helping them live, learn and work to their highest potential. The department works to protect the public and maintain and grow a safe and prosperous workforce in Nova Scotia with a strong focus on safety, skill development, regulation, education and building partnerships.

### Employment Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia is a learning province and Employment Nova Scotia (ENS), situated in the Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, is focused on developing a skilled workforce.

Employment Nova Scotia's primary goals are to:

- (i) assist Nova Scotians in preparing for, getting and maintaining employment and
- (ii) support unemployed Nova Scotians in re-attaching to the labour market in a meaningful way.

Employment Nova Scotia is responsible for administering key federal-provincial labour market agreements on behalf of Nova Scotians, including the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) and the Labour Market Agreement (LMA).

Employment Nova Scotia consists of over 100 staff located in 13 service delivery sites around the province. These sites include Sydney, Inverness, Port Hawkesbury, Antigonish, New Glasgow, Truro, Amherst, Halifax, Bridgewater, Shelburne, Digby, Yarmouth and Kentville.

### Strategic Principles

The Department of Labour and Advanced Education considers the following strategic principles in its business planning.

- **Partnerships:** Develop and strengthen policies, processes, structures and relationships to achieve outcomes both internal and external to the department.
- **Shared ownership:** Share responsibility among stakeholders.
- **Innovation:** Foster innovation both within Labour and Advanced Education and among our partners.
- **Protection:** Ensure that businesses/individuals comply with legislation, regulation and best practices.
- **Talent Development:** Develop our people to create a vibrant, healthy workforce.

## Fiscal Reality and Labour Market Challenges

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Nova Scotia's economy is recovering from the impact of the global economic recession that took effect in late 2008. The provincial government is calling upon all departments to live within our means. Nova Scotia will increasingly face financial constraints that require us to achieve both more and better results from our programs with fewer financial resources.

### Nova Scotia's Labour Market Context

#### Current Economy and Labour Market

Nova Scotia's economy retracted slightly in 2009, with real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) declining 0.1%, which hasn't occurred since 1991. A significant increase in investment from the government sector helped offset declining business sector investment, weak consumer spending, and falling exports. Private sector forecasters expect growth will be positive in Nova Scotia, with a consensus forecast for real GDP of 1.8% (2011) and 2.1% (2012).<sup>1</sup>

The recession led to reduced hiring and numerous closures and layoffs, which contributed to an approximate 20% increase in unemployment (affecting youth and prime-age adults, more so than older workers). Areas of manufacturing, retail trade and tourism-related industries were most affected by the downturn, both in Nova Scotia and across Canada.

Newly laid-off workers faced the reality of a change in the labour market. Skills enhancement was required for successful transition to new employment as job opportunities at lower skill levels were diminished. In May, 2009, Canada and Nova Scotia signed an amendment to the LMA, allocating \$16 million to the Province of Nova Scotia over 2 years through the Strategic Training and Transition Fund (STTF). Funds were distributed to support employers and employees affected by economic downturn in efforts to develop Nova Scotia's workforce.

### Nova Scotia Government Priorities

#### Panel 1

The Government of Nova Scotia's core priorities are:

- Living within our means
- Better care sooner
- Creating good jobs and growing the economy

The mandates of the LMDA and LMA are specifically focused on the third priority: creating good jobs and growing the economy. The work of this priority is guided *jobsHere*, the provincial economic development strategy.

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<sup>1</sup> As of February, 2011

Current labour market conditions remain weak, although stable. The unemployment rate is still above its pre-recession level at 9.4% (2010), suggesting a large number of job seekers are still in transition. Fortunately, plant shutdowns and layoffs have moderated – initial E.I. claims fell by 8.9% in 2010<sup>2</sup>. Regionally, employment in Halifax has continued to grow over the past two years, unlike all other economic provincial regions where employment is still below pre-recession levels and unemployment remains elevated.

Many industries and skill areas were, and continue to be unaffected by the recession, and labour/skills shortages remain an issue. For instance, occupations in health, engineering, IT, and certain skilled trades saw fewer layoffs and continue to have good employment prospects across the province.

### **Labour Market Outlook**

Employment in Nova Scotia is expected to grow by 8,500 over 2010 to 2015. The pace of growth (+0.4% annually) is expected to be slower than the average observed over the last ten years (+1.0% annually). Labour force growth will be negligible (+1,300) and would otherwise be negative without continued gains in labour force participation, particularly among females and older workers.

The pace of employment growth will exceed labour force growth, resulting in a decline in unemployment (-7,200) and the unemployment rate reaching 7.9% by 2015. The services-producing sector, compared to the goods-producing sector, will account for the majority of employment growth over the next five years (+7,900 versus +600).

Growth will be seen in health care and social assistance, finance and insurance, information technologies, retail trade, aerospace and defense, shipbuilding, and so on. Some industries are expected to see declines in employment such as construction, educational services, public administration, oil and gas extraction, and food and beverage products manufacturing.

The shrinking labour force, declining birth rate, youth out-migration and increased retirement of older workers, are ongoing challenges for the province. The provincial population is aging rapidly. In 20 years, 40% of Nova Scotia's population will be 55 years or older. With a declining birth rate, there will be fewer workers to replace retirees.

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<sup>2</sup> That is, average monthly initial received employment insurance claims, comparing 2010 with 2009.

Older workers are beginning to leave the labour market at higher rates than younger cohorts are entering. An estimated 45,600 workers will permanently retire from Nova Scotia's workforce in the next five years. Projected retirement rates are highest among managers, skilled administrative workers, health care professionals, and processing/manufacturing supervisors and skilled workers. The demand for labour will be predominantly driven by the need to replace retiring workers, as opposed to new industry growth.

Education, training and essential skills are fundamental determinants of labour market success and yet 1 in 7 Nova Scotian workers have no formal degree, certificate or diploma and 1 in 4 claim they have unmet training needs/wants. Furthermore, more than 1 in 3 adults lack the essential literacy skills needed to work in a knowledge-based economy.

Over 110,000 Nova Scotians aged 19-64 do not have a high school diploma and of these, only 63% are employed.

Census data shows that people who had not graduated from high-school were over-represented in the chronically unemployed population. That is, persons unemployable because of their lack of skills, education, and experience.

The out-migration of youth to provinces in the West where wages are more competitive, regardless of skill levels, further exacerbates our labour force shortage.

While the labour market challenges experienced in Nova Scotia are sector-specific, meeting labour market needs through developing provincial human capital is necessary.

### Key Labour Market Challenges

**Shift to a knowledge-based economy:** Technology is changing the way we work across all sectors of the economy, from agriculture to healthcare to retail trade. Investment in new technologies and equipment will be the key to our future economic success, but it requires a skilled and adaptable workforce to make it happen.

Many existing workers require additional training and skills upgrading to remain employable, while our youth entering the workforce must graduate with the right technical and essential skills sought by employers in a modern economy.

**Priority groups in the labour market:** Many groups of individuals face barriers significant in the labour market, including low education and gaps in employable skills, limiting their employment and financial success.

**Low labour productivity:** Nova Scotia currently has lower labour productivity than many other provinces and the rate of growth has slowed in the past decade. With a shrinking labour force, future economic growth will need to come from productivity gains. Labour productivity is dependent upon factors such as education and training, investment in machinery and equipment, innovation, managerial skills, and so on.

Productivity in terms of better jobs, more participation in the workforce and growth in industry are all crucial for sustained provincial socio-economic growth (also see Panel 2, pg 9).

Better labour market information can highlight gaps/demand in sectors so that fields needing workers can be marketed to Nova Scotians retraining or entering the workforce for the first time.

Programs delivered under the LMDA and LMA help workers train or retrain for new job opportunities and develop the skills required for the modern workplace in an increasingly knowledge-based economy.

Increasing labour market participation of under-represented groups is one means of addressing shortages, as is immigration and adult education to address skills gaps experienced by workers seeking new employment.

Increasing employability for members of these groups and providing supports to increase their likelihood of gainful employment is in line with our departmental and provincial strategies to increase participation of all Nova Scotians in a healthy and vibrant workforce.

### **jobsHere and Nova Scotia's Workforce Strategy**

Nova Scotia's government is committed to leading edge programming, research and policy, to support strategic and sustainable labour market growth for a globally competitive workforce, through skill and productivity enhancement. **jobsHere** is Nova Scotia's plan to grow a stronger and more sustainable economy.

The plan coordinates efforts and scarce resources in the service of a singular growth strategy made up of three interrelated priorities:

1. Learning the right skills for good jobs
2. Growing the economy through innovation
3. Helping businesses be more competitive globally

Nova Scotia's workforce strategy aligns workforce development with economic growth, addressing the first priority identified in the **jobsHere** plan. The size and skills of the labour force are key drivers of economic growth. The province's workforce strategy helps workers: build new skills, learn new technologies, maximize their career opportunities and earning potential, and better understand their employment options (*see Panels 2 & 3 for more information*).

Significant new investment in resources and programs through the **jobsHere** plan and workforce strategy will be used to:

- Recruit, connect and retain a diverse, talented, educated and sustainable workforce
- Provide training opportunities for workers and employers to increase skills and productivity
- Build skills to adopt new technology and drive innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship.

**Priorities of the NS Labour Market** (and common to both LMA and LMDA) include:

- Access for Nova Scotians to programs and services that meet labour market development needs
- Increased capacity of provincial labour market to get and retain jobs requiring higher literacy and numeracy in an increasingly knowledge based economy
- Competitive sustainable jobs in a growing and global economy

As well, in recognizing that all Nova Scotians are important to sustain economic growth, the LMA programs specifically target priority client groups that have shown significant under-representation in the workforce.

#### **Target LMA client groups**

The LMA is designed to target priority groups of eligible Nova Scotians who are under-represented in the workforce.

These groups include: Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, immigrants, African Nova Scotians, Acadian and Francophone Nova Scotians, older workers, women and income assistance recipients.

#### **Nova Scotia Government Priorities *panel 2***

Focusing on the first priority of **JobsHere**, '*learning the right skills for good jobs*', the LMDA and LMA are integral resources for the implementation of the new workforce strategy that will:

- Attract and retain immigrants as skilled workers and entrepreneurs.
- Encourage young people to stay in school and facilitate transitions from high school to post-secondary education (college and university) and the labour force.
- Encourage post-secondary graduates to stay and work in the province.
- Adapt our education and training programs to a changing labour market.
- Retain older workers in the labour force.
- Expand participation in the labour force by members of disadvantaged our marginalized communities.
- Expand access to basic education, high school completion, and skills enhancement programs for adults inside and outside the labour force.

## An Integrated Approach in Nova Scotia

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An integrated approach within the province is increasingly essential to better manage our limited fiscal and human resources.

Integration optimizes resources and improves the streamlining of services and programs offered to clients by multiple government and industry stakeholders.

Our province's needs require transformation in delivery of programs and services throughout all levels of government. Federally funded employment programming delivered through LMDA and LMA will be realigned to better fit provincial realities.

ENS is looking to evolve to better meet the employment needs of Nova Scotians, employers and communities.

Created to support the investment of funds available through the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement and Labour Market Agreement for employment-related programming, ENS has, since its inception several years ago, developed a stable and solid foundation on which to grow and enhance its delivery capability. It's time to begin client-centric transformation activities in support of growth, efficiency, and the alignment of programs and services in keeping with labour market requirements and client needs.

Through its Transformation Initiative, ENS is focused on three priorities: it is working closely with the Department of Community Services to better align pre-employment and employment support services to create a seamless continuum of employment-related services for Nova Scotians; it is looking at ways to better manage and invest funds available through the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement and Labour Market Agreement to grow and better meet client employment needs; and it is looking at ways to enhance and introduce efficiencies in service delivery.

### Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS)

LaMPSS is an IT-enabled business solution that supports the delivery of labour market programs administered by: all divisions of the Skills and Learning Branch (LAE), Department of Community Services and NS Office of Immigration. Input from stakeholders and staff has been foundational to the design and development of LaMPSS, a system created to fulfill Nova Scotia's commitment to transition from Canada System for Grants and Contributions (CSGC) to LaMPSS by July 2012.

### **Nova Scotia Government Priorities**

#### *Panel 3*

The LMDA and LMA are integral resources for a new workforce strategy to:

- Improve employer investment and employee participation in workforce education and training.
- Enhance entrepreneurship, management, and people skills of our business owners and operators.
- Provide investors, business operators, and citizens with more accurate and up-to-date labour-market information

Stakeholders and staff have participated in validation sessions that take place at each stage of development. System design and implementation is scheduled to occur in two phases over the next several years. Phase 1 - the “Agreement Management Module” - was launched in November 2010. Phase II – the “Case Management Module” - is scheduled for February 2012, and will include an accountability and reporting module.. This integrated and transparent approach to program administration and delivery maximizes efficiencies of staff and financial resources, while enhancing program delivery excellence for clients.

## Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Partnership and stakeholder engagement are key principles identified in the Department of Labour and Advanced Education’s strategic planning for the next four years. Stakeholders include: employers, unions, other government departments and agencies, educators, sector councils and individuals.

The Department is proactive about building the necessary infrastructure to develop and disseminate labour market information to support stakeholders with workforce planning information to make informed choices.

The LMA and LMDA address barriers for clients who have limited options to access the labour market. The success of these programs, however, require targeted efforts to ensure that there are meaningful opportunities for employment for participants in the programs and services delivered to Nova Scotians via these agreements. Stakeholder engagement is essential to successful labour force growth and workforce participation by clients in LMA and LMDA programs.

ENS conducted stakeholder engagement sessions in four regions of the province. The information sessions were conducted with LMDA and LMA agreement holders to discuss ENS current activities and provide an opportunity for input into future directions. Stakeholders provided information on how ENS could support employment service providers in delivering client

### Feedback from Stakeholder Consultation

The stakeholders were enthusiastic about LaMPSS and the opportunities for streamlining and simplifying interaction between government and external service providers.

Key messages shared in feedback were:

- Increased marketing and promotion of LMDA and LMA programs
- Support for workplace training for small businesses
- Longer programs with more post- intervention follow-up

Employer Engagement was also a primary concern. Sector councils were suggested as useful in changing employer’s mindsets and encouraging increased employment (and workplace training) opportunities for LMDA/LMA clients in the face of current and future labour market realities.

services in a changing labour market. The LaMPSS project actively engaged stakeholders through the hiring of two full time Subject Matter Experts from external service providers to the project team and the monthly engagement of an EAS focus group. Planned activity for the 2011/2012 year includes significant stakeholder involvement in the review and alignment of the EAS service delivery model, along with continued consultation via the LaMPSS project.

In addition, Employment Nova Scotia supports four “Employability Tables” that are tasked with identifying programs and services that will attach Acadians, African Nova Scotians, Aboriginal Nova Scotians and Persons with Disabilities to the Nova Scotian workforce. The work of these tables facilitates access to publicly-funded employment services and programs for businesses who hire workers from these targeted populations; Creates partnerships within the local, regional; provincial and national networks that have mandates in labour & workforce development; develop targeted communication and awareness strategies by sector and by career; promotes workplaces as learning environments; and ensures delivery of services and programs that fulfill the needs of business owners and clients.

Concerted efforts are currently underway to engage industry sector councils and potential employers to ensure that there will be a demand for the human capital generated through the LMA and LMDA. These ongoing efforts occur in partnership with other departments and levels of government as well as chamber(s) of commerce.

## Overview of LMDA

Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) programs and services are funded under Part II of the Employment Insurance Act. These programs and services (employment benefits and support measures or EBSMs) are designed to assist EI eligible Nova Scotians reconnect with the labour market through the provision of training and work experience. The EBSMs offered via the Canada-Nova Scotia LMDA are:

### **Targeted Wage Subsidy:**

Program helps unemployed eligible individuals to enhance their skills and improve their employability. Targeted Wage Subsidies provide employers with financial assistance towards the wages of eligible individuals whom they hire.

### **Self-Employment Assistance:**

Provided to assist clients start businesses and become self-employed. Services may include entrepreneurship training, individualized coaching and client supports.

### **Job Creation Partnership:**

Employment partnerships with employers and community groups that provide meaningful work experience opportunities that create or reinforce transferable labour market skills, and help develop the community and local economy.

### **Labour Market Partnerships:**

Funding supports for employers, employer/ employee associations, community groups and communities to develop and implement strategies for dealing with labour force adjustments and meeting human resource requirements. The partnerships may be used to assist persons at risk of becoming unemployed, and support employer sponsored training initiatives.

### **Skills Development:**

Program supports for clients to obtain skills necessary for employment through training at a private or publicly funded training institution.

### **Employment Assistance Services:**

Funding supports for sponsoring agencies helping clients to obtain employment and providing other labour market supports to eligible clients. Services may include, but are not limited to: employment counselling, job search supports, and labour market information.

## LMDA Investment Plan

<b>Program</b>	<b>Projected Investment 2011/2012</b>
Targeted Wage Subsidy	\$1,372,000
Job Creation Partnership	\$1,800,000
Self Employment Benefit	\$5,000,000
Skills Development	\$48,094,000
Employment Assistance Services	\$22,000,000
Labour Market Partnership	\$2,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$80,266,000</b>

### Investment Trend - Economic Action Plan Funds

LMDA funding was increased for a two year period as part of the Economic Action Plan.

Over the 09-10 and 10-11 fiscal years, \$31,790,000 in additional training funds were invested in the skill development of Nova Scotians.

The 2011/2012 fiscal year marks the end of the Economic Action Plan and the additional funding connected to it. LMDA programming funding levels reflect this change for the upcoming fiscal year.

## Overview of LMA

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The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement (LMA) is a six-year bilateral agreement signed between Canada and Nova Scotia in June 2008, through which the federal government provides funds for Nova Scotia's labour market programs and services.

The LMA is designed to complement labour market programs and services available to those Nova Scotians who are eligible for Employment Insurance benefits through the LMDA.

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.

### Guiding Principles

Our investment decisions are guided by the following principles:

1. Investments will be based on input from both community and government, and will support the strategic direction of government.
2. Programs will focus on the client and will improve services for Nova Scotians.
3. Investments will build on existing capacity and assets within community and government.
4. An inclusive approach to investments will be taken.
5. Decisions and actions will be forward-looking.
6. Accountability for results must be shared.

### Objectives of the Canada-Nova Scotia LMA

- Increase the participation of Canadians and immigrants in the workforce to address current and future labour market requirements;
- Enhance the quality of skills development;
- Facilitate workforce mobility and provide the information necessary to enable informed labour market choices.

These objectives are congruent with our provincial priorities (*see panel 3, pg 10*)

## LMA Investment Plan

### Investment Trends - Strategic Training and Transition Fund

The strategic training and transition fund (STTF) were allocated via an amendment to the LMA in 2009. \$16 million was added to the Province of Nova Scotia's LMA budget for a 2 year period.

Funds were provided with an overarching objective to support initiatives that simultaneously meet the needs of individuals, employers and/or communities.

The priority areas for the STTF were: (i) Workforce Response Strategy, (ii) Workforce stabilization and Development and, (iii) Labour Market Growth and Development.

The STTF funding period is at an end and LMA funds are back to what they were prior to STTF. This has an impact on programs delivered and targeted spending in the four LMA priority areas.

### Program Areas

LMA has four priority program areas *(for details see Tables on pg 17 to 20)*.

#### Budget Allocation by Program Area

(i) Client Access and Service Provision:	\$ 5,931,503.25	(iii) Workforce Retention and Attraction:	\$ 4,711,054.58
(ii) Skills Development:	\$ 6,161,054.58	(iv) Workforce Development:	\$ 3,211,054.58
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$ 20,014,667.00</b>

For all priority program areas (I – IV) eligible clients include:

First Nations people, persons with disabilities, African Nova Scotians, immigrants, Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians, women, older workers (age 55 plus), income assistance recipients, youth, unemployed individuals who were previously employed, new entrants to the labour market and re-entrants to the labour market.

## N S – LMA Programming Areas (2011-2012)

### **Client Centered Service Provision**

*Continued investments in labour market and business development programs, and services required by non-EI-eligible and low-skilled employed priority client groups.*

- To ensure that eligible Nova Scotians have access to an effective and efficient suite of programs and services that meet their labour market development needs.

#### **Objectives:**

- Improve equity of access to clients regardless of income attachment
- Address system and program shortfalls associated with high demand areas
- Ensure integration of new programs using a strengthened Labour Market Information (LMI) system

#### **Expected Results**

- Better access to benefits and supports for LMA eligible Nova Scotians
- Employment supports for clients who are members of groups traditionally under-represented in the workplace
- Access to services in high demand areas (e.g. Literacy programs)
- Seamless service provision to improve client outcomes

#### **Programs (3)**

- Labour Market Planning
- Business Development & Entrepreneurship counseling
- Employability programs

#### **Planned Activity**

- Collaboration with stakeholders to strengthen quality of LMI quality and coordinate investments for priority groups
- Supports to provision of counseling for client groups considering self-employment as a labour market attachment option
- Programs to increase ease of labour market participation for priority groups

### **Labour Market Skills Development**

*Continued investments in skill development and bridging initiatives (including a range of pre-employment occupational skills training) required by non-EI eligible clients and members of low skills employed priority client groups.*

- To increase the essential and occupational skills capacities of individuals and the system to support better transition readiness for clients.

#### **Objectives:**

- Enhance and expand literacy and essential skills programs
- Increase apprenticeship opportunities
- Introduce new programs aimed at increasing transferable and sector specific skills

#### **Expected Results**

- Increased client participation in programs to increase employability
- Increased essential skill capacities of individuals
- Increased occupational skills capacities of individuals
- Increased system capacity to support better transition readiness for clients

#### **Programs (5)**

- NEW - Skills Up! launched in March 2011
- Works For You
- Job Readiness
- Skills Training
- Language Training Supports
- Adult Learning Initiatives

#### **Planned Activities**

- Supports to career development interventions and skills upgrades for job readiness
- Language training, computer skills training and literacy & essential skills training to improve access to, and retention of, meaningful employment

## **Workforce Attraction and Retention**

*Continued investment in programs and services to help priority client groups attach to the workforce by direct linkage to employment opportunities*

- To actively facilitate the attachment and retention of workers to jobs through employer-associated engagement programs.

### **Objectives:**

- Sustain employer- engagement programs
- Actively facilitate attachment and retention of workers
- Integrate programs (combining literacy, certification and work experience) for priority groups

### **Expected Results**

- Improved human resource capacity employers (particularly SMEs)
- Increased employability for priority groups through on-the-job experience and mentoring
- Successful retention and employment maintenance by members of priority groups (including persons with disabilities)

### **Programs (3)**

- Transferable work skills
- Integrated certification & work experience
- Workplace adjustment

### **Planned Activities**

- Employer awareness initiatives to promote hiring of priority groups
- Employer-partnered skill development programs for priority client groups (such as immigrants) including adult learning, on-the-job training, mentorship and work placements
- Vocational crisis supports for displaced workers including skills enhancement, job coaching and mentorship

## Workforce Development

*Continued investment in services and programs to help Nova Scotians get, keep and maintain their employment.*

- To develop the skills of low-skilled workers already and the capacity of the workforce community to support those workers.
- To optimize workforce productivity through workplace learning initiatives.

### Objectives:

- Optimize workforce productivity through lifelong learning
- Provide workplace education to low-skilled workers and increase capacity of labour market to support them
- Sustain employment of clients with multiple barriers through technical and vocational supports

### Programs (3)

- English in the workplace
- Employer adaptation programs
- Workplace essential skills

### Expected Results

- Increased skills and productivity in Nova Scotia's labour market
- Increased meaningful employment for members of all priority groups
- Increased sustained employment for clients with multiple barriers

### Planned Activities

- Improve English skills for employed and self-employed
- Engage employers through awareness to promote:
  - workforce learning initiatives to increase productivity
  - effective HR practices for healthier workplaces
- Provide workplace essential skills programs

## Future Directions

Nova Scotia's labour market will become increasingly demand-rich due to our shrinking labour force and demographic challenges. Growth and productivity have also slowed in the past decade. Increasing productivity is a key provincial priority highlighted in both the *JobsHere* plan and workforce strategy.

Flexibility in labour market programming to meet the challenges we face is essential. Current Employment Benefit Support Measures (EBSMs) work best in a supply-rich labour market. Two future scenarios exist: fewer skilled workers to fill job vacancies than on the one hand and an increasing supply of unemployed persons with missing skills to fill vacancies in high value jobs on the other.

Refocusing EBSMs to address the shift in paradigm from a supply-rich labour market will improve our ability to address Nova Scotia's labour market needs and support the economic growth identified in *jobsHere* plan and workforce strategy. LMA and LMDA programming should build capacity for successful labour market attachment among members of priority client groups. Skill upgrades for groups currently under-represented in the labour market is a means to increasing employability and likelihood of their sustained employment.

High value workers are a key outcome of labour market supports; but supply is not the only piece of this puzzle. Particularly in the case of immigrants and previously employed workers, recognition of transferrable skills and more strategic investment in training to equip them for our current and emerging economy is required. Employer supports to promote learning at work are also necessary. A learning culture within the workplace maintains productivity levels and adaptability of transferable skills.

Through consultations we have found that employers have a vested interest in successful labour market attachment by members of groups historically underrepresented in the workplace, particularly when they are made aware of our declining labour force.

EBSMs are currently not effectively geared towards increasing employers' human resource capacity to recruit, hire, and retain workers in a demand-rich labour market. It will also become important to raise awareness among employers, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, about the effects of a changing labour market and their need for greater flexibility in requirements when recruiting and retaining workers from LMDA and LMA priority client groups. Nova Scotia will explore new, more effective ways to engage both employers and prospective employees and assist them in meeting their labour market needs.

Nova Scotia plans to embark on a review of the use of EAS and an alignment exercise that will ensure the LMDA resources are used to maximum potential to meet the changing demographic of the citizen, the economy and the employer. Now that the EBSMs have successfully transitioned and stabilized in Nova Scotia, there is a plan to more fully integrate the LMA into the existing model of service delivery, including introducing case management of LMA clients through the EAS provider. Discussions

are also taking place that will see increased provision of service through LAE and the use of LMDA/LMA funded services to those Nova Scotians in receipt of Income Assistance. 2011/2012 is the year of alignment and right-fitting for Nova Scotia. The LMA and LMDA will be significant tools in this activity, and will be used appropriately and proactively to benefit eligible citizens and employers within Nova Scotia.

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