



# START

Program Guidelines

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Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

## 1. Introduction

The Apprenticeship START Program is administered by the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (the Agency). The objective of the Apprenticeship START program is to:

- encourage small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nova Scotia to register and employ apprentices and to encourage employers to support those apprentices as they progress through their apprenticeship program.
- encourage SMEs in Nova Scotia to register and employ equity-deserving apprentices who self-identify as belonging to an equity group and support them as they progress through their apprenticeship program.

### Expected Results

- Successful matches made between employers and employees, resulting in ongoing employment and gained work experience.
- Apprentices will progress through their apprenticeship programs and achieve certification with support from Nova Scotia employers.
- Apprentices will acquire professional skills, knowledge and work experiences that will benefit both themselves and the employer, resulting in sustainable labour market attachment for employers.

## 2. Eligibility

Eligibility is determined at the time of registration. An eligible employer is defined as any small or medium sized (SME) business who:

- has 499 employees or less,
- has 15 apprentices or less,
- is a not-for-profit organization,
- has a physical location in the province,
- is in good standing and has an active membership with the NS Registry of Joint Stocks,
- is a social enterprise (business or organization operated for the purpose of addressing social, economic, or environmental challenges),
- is otherwise deemed eligible by the Chief Operating Officer.

Apprenticeship START is available to eligible employers who:

- register an apprentice to their company anywhere in Nova Scotia where the population is less than 20,000.

Employers operating in urban areas where populations exceed 20,000 (Halifax Regional Municipality, Truro, and Sydney) are not eligible unless they are registering an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies, at the time of registration, as belonging to one or more of the following equity groups:

- Newcomers,
- African Nova Scotians,
- Indigenous Peoples,
- Visible minorities,

- Persons with physical disabilities,
- Persons with learning disabilities,
- Women in trades where they are under-represented,
- Gender-diverse individuals who identify as a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

### 3. Funding Amounts (see Funding Chart pg. 4)

Eligible employers who register an apprentice to their company anywhere in Nova Scotia where the population is less than 20,000 will receive:

1. \$2500 hiring incentive for the registration of a new apprentice,
2. \$5000 payment for each level the apprentice completes, and
3. \$2500 when the apprentice completes their apprenticeship program.

Eligible employers who register an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies as belonging to an eligible equity group anywhere in the province of Nova Scotia will receive:

1. \$5000 hiring incentive for the registration of an equity-deserving apprentice,
2. \$5000 payment for each level the apprentice completes, and
3. \$5000 when the apprentice completes their apprenticeship program.

**Note:** An employer is only eligible for a progression incentive if their apprentice completes training and examinations for a level while under their employ.

### 4. Employer Roles and Responsibilities

Employers should be aware that:

- they can receive hiring and progression incentives for only 15 apprentices or less at any given time.
- if an apprentice fails to progress within 24 months of signing an apprenticeship agreement, the employer will be removed from the START program.
- if an apprentice registers in a second trade while working for the same employer, the employer will not be eligible for the hiring incentive for the second trade. However, the employer may be eligible to receive progression incentives for levels the apprentice completes while under their employ.
- they must be willing to provide apprentices with 35 hours or more per week unless the apprentice is attending technical training.
- they must be registered, in good standing and have an active membership with the Nova Scotia Registry of Joint Stocks.
- they are required to return any payments made in error or that they were not entitled to receive within 60 calendar days of receipt of the first email notification from the Agency. If the funds are not returned within the specified timeframe, an overpayment will be established and the Agency will begin recovery efforts and deduct any outstanding balances from future START/CAS funding owed to the employer and the employer may be deemed ineligible to receive future funding from the Agency and any employer with an unpaid balance after 90 days

and who has not made payment arrangements with the Agency may be referred to Collections for payment recovery.

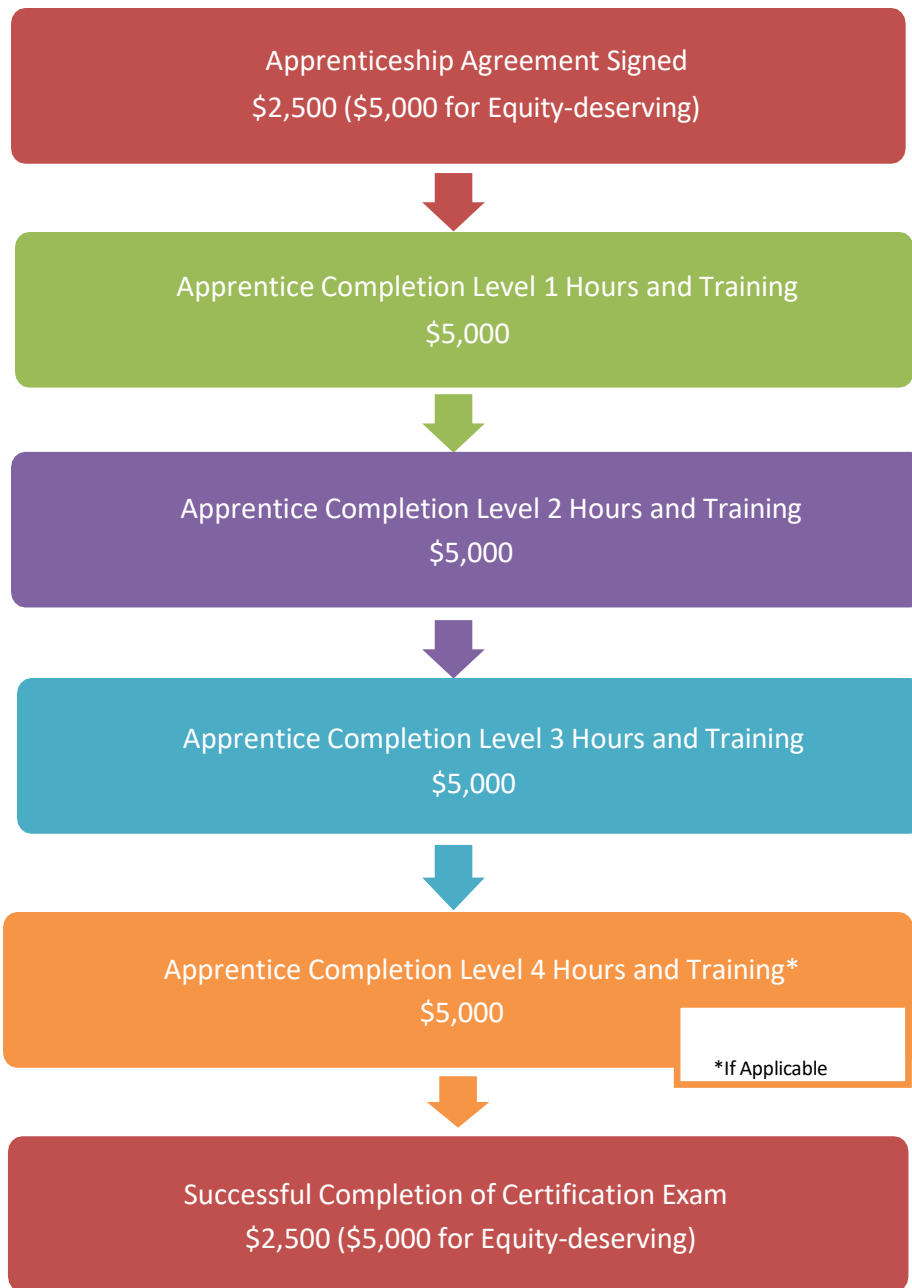
Employers upon signing an apprenticeship agreement agree to:

- develop, supervise, and provide valuable work experiences to the apprentice.
- accurately document the hours of practical experience and verify tasks completed by the apprentice in the apprentice's Record of Occupational Progress Book (logbook).
- allow the apprentice to participate in required technical training, take examinations, and re-employ the apprentice upon completion of training.
- notify an Industry Training Consultant (ITC) in writing within 15 days if the apprentice ceases to be employed, or if they are unable to provide the apprentice with practical experience or allow the apprentice to participate in technical training.

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency can choose to terminate an agreement at any time if it is deemed that an employer:

- is not providing an appropriate work experience;
- is not progressing apprentices through their apprenticeship program;
- is not providing a safe work environment; and/or
- is not using the program for its intent.

Overview of funding for eligible SMEs who hire an apprentice and retain them throughout their apprenticeship journey



Over the course of an apprentices' program, eligible employers could receive up to \$30,000 in START funding.