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## START Program Q&A

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The Apprenticeship START program encourages employers to register and employ apprentices and support them as they complete their apprenticeship program.

### Who is eligible?

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 as belonging to an equity-deserving group.

*Note:* an eligible SME is a company with 499 employees or less.

### Which equity-deserving groups are eligible for START?

- 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

### Which trades are eligible for Apprenticeship START funding?

- All skilled trades occupations that are designated under the *Nova Scotia Apprenticeship and Trades Qualification Act* for certification and/or apprenticeship are eligible for funding.

### What are the responsibilities of the employer?

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.
- employers must be willing to provide apprentices with 35 hours or more per week unless the apprentice is attending technical training.

- all employers must be registered, in good standing and have an active membership with the Registry of Joint Stocks.

### 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 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.

### How much is the Financial Incentive?

Eligible employers who hire and retain an apprentice throughout their apprenticeship journey anywhere in Nova Scotia where the population is 20,000 or less could receive **up to \$25,000 per apprentice:**

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 hire and retain an equity-deserving apprentice who self-identifies as belonging to an equity group anywhere in the province of Nova Scotia and retains them throughout their apprenticeship journey can receive **up to \$30,000 per apprentice:**

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.

### How does an employer apply and if eligible, how will they receive the incentive?

Employers do not need to apply for funding. Once an apprenticeship agreement is signed between the employer and the apprentice, the apprenticeship agreement will be assessed and if eligible, funding will be dispersed to the employer.

### Why is this funding being offered?

SMEs often have limited access to human resources, financial supports, and administrative staff to help manage an apprenticeship program. In addition, employers who hire and train apprentices must provide a supervising journey person and incur a short-term productivity loss, which can be challenging.

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 rural 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 all of 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.

### What if my apprentice leaves my company while enrolled in the START program?

Employers must notify an Industry Training Consultant 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.

### Who can I contact regarding the Apprenticeship START Program?

Email [ApprenticeshipStart@novascotia.ca](mailto:ApprenticeshipStart@novascotia.ca)

### What other supports are available for employers?

The Canadian Apprenticeship Service (CAS) Program complements the Apprenticeship START program, which also provides employer incentives for hiring and progressing apprentices, including added incentives for hiring individuals from equity-deserving groups. Employers in Nova Scotia are eligible for blended funding through both programs. For more information on CAS please visit <https://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/CanadianApprenticeshipService>