

Nova Scotia's Apprenticeship Agency

Discussion Paper

Department of Labour and Advanced Education

January 2014



Enhancing the Apprenticeship System in Nova Scotia

Nova Scotia's apprenticeship system plays a critical role in building a well-educated and highly skilled workforce—the workforce we need for our businesses and communities to prosper. While the current system has its strengths, we see opportunities for improvement.

Working with employers and industry, we will modernize the apprenticeship system. This will create more jobs for apprentices and give better access to training. These changes will help us keep our skilled workers in Nova Scotia.

We want to hear from you. Where do you think we need to focus our efforts to achieve success?

Apprenticeship in Nova Scotia

As of January 2014,

- More than 6000 Nova Scotians are registered in the apprenticeship system
- 1700 employers across the province provide training to Nova Scotian apprentices
- Nova Scotia recognizes 66 trades
- Most of these recognized trades are part of the Interprovincial Red Seal program, meaning that certification in the trade is recognized across Canada
- Nova Scotian apprentices are enrolled in over 30 trades
- About 2000 Nova Scotians are enrolled in the pre-apprenticeship trades program through the Nova Scotia Community College
- Apprenticeship programs, like those offered by the Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association, help to strengthen our traditional industries and better position us in the global market
- Youth apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship placements offered through industry sectors give high school students the opportunity to explore careers in the skilled trades and begin the journey to certification

What we heard

During the review of the current apprenticeship system, the following concerns were raised by industry and training providers:

- More Nova Scotians need to see apprenticeship as a post-secondary option
- Industry needs to be involved in decisions about funding, program design, pre-apprenticeship, technical training, and program entrance requirements
- Pre-apprenticeship training—currently the main pathway to apprenticeship—needs to align with labour demands
- Technical training needs to better match the expectations of the trade
- All designated trades need a pathway to apprenticeship
- More resources are needed to support the delivery of required in-class technical training so apprentices have more timely access and are able to complete their certification more quickly
- More employers need to be engaged in apprenticeship so that apprentices can get the skills and experience they need to complete their journey and achieve certification

Time for Action

After connecting with hundreds of apprentices, employers, and industry members to identify solutions, a panel and reference group has recommended significant changes to the apprenticeship system.

Industries and Organizations Represented on the Apprenticeship Panel and Reference Group

Advisory Council on the Status of Women

Blaikie's Dodge/Atlantic Dodge

Carpenters, Millwrights & Allied Workers

Colebuilt

Hypatia Association / Women Unlimited

IBEW, Local 625

Irving Shipbuilding Inc.

J.W. Lindsay Enterprises Limited
Landscape Nova Scotia
L.E. Cruickshanks Sheet Metal Ltd.
Merit Contractors Association of Nova Scotia
Michelin (Granton Plant)
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board
Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association (NSBA)
Nova Scotia Community College
Nova Scotia Federation of Labour
Port Hawkesbury Paper
Sheet Metal Workers and Roofers International Association,
Local 56 (Cape Breton Island)
Techtronics Machine Works Ltd.
Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia
UA Local 56
UA Local 682 Apprenticeship Training Committee
Unama'ki Economic Benefits Office

The most significant change involves developing a new industry-led and industry-driven apprenticeship agency. This agency will give industry a greater voice in apprenticeship and improve employer participation.

For too long we've seen Nova Scotians move out west for work. This needs to change. We want to make the system more effective, more efficient, and open to more Nova Scotians and their workplaces.

This starts with better informing apprentices and employers about how the system works. For instance, the counting of hours earned out of province is a complex and sometimes confusing issue. Because of this confusion, apprentices' hours are sometimes not being recognized by employers. We will address this by working more closely with employers and industry through the new agency.

Industry told us that key decisions like ratios need to be made at the trade level. Giving greater authority to industry through this new agency will result in decisions that are more responsive to the needs of each trade.

Together with industry, we will modernize the apprenticeship system, creating more jobs for apprentices, and giving better access to training so we can keep our skilled workers in Nova Scotia.

A New Agency – What does this look like?

Proposed Vision

An industry-led apprenticeship system that builds and maintains a highly skilled and diverse workforce, contributing to the economic success of Nova Scotia through changing economic times.

Proposed Mandate

Under proposed changes to the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act* and the creation of an operating charter, Nova Scotia's new apprenticeship agency will steward and operate a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led skilled trades training and certification system.

Proposed Framework

This framework includes a reconstructed board and trade advisory committees. These advisory committees will help the system be more responsive to the demands and labour market needs of each trade. The agency will also deliver a range of programs to encourage greater participation by youth, under-represented groups, and employers, and support individuals in their journey from pre-apprenticeship to post-journey person certification.

What are the proposed changes?

- Move apprenticeship training from a division of Labour and Advanced Education to an agency that reports directly to the Deputy Minister
- Recruit an agency board, predominantly nominated by industry representatives, that reports to the Minister
- Form a network of trade committees with expanded mandates and influence to develop human resource plans for their trade, contribute to pre-screening tools, and improve technical and pre-apprenticeship training content, delivery, capacity, and quality
- Establish approaches to improve employer engagement

- Mandate business plans and performance reports that make the agency board accountable to stakeholders
- Get a commitment from government to reallocate current resources within the training system to ensure apprentices are not delayed in their journey
- Engage employers, grow apprenticeship, and expand the range and variety of options available to Nova Scotians who wish to pursue a career in the skilled trades

What's Next?

Setting up the Agency

To establish the agency, the following activities will be undertaken:

- Provide opportunities for industry input and engagement in the planning of the agency
- Gather stakeholder input through a satisfaction survey on the current system
- Develop trade profiles with current labour-market information
- Establish the agency through an operating charter and amended legislation
- Recruit chief executive officer and board members
- Develop a high-level strategic plan that responds to industry priorities and demonstrates accountability to industry

The first six months and beyond

Once the agency has been established, work will begin in the following areas:

- Develop an industry-led strategy by sector or trade that defines employer roles and responsibilities, and engages employers and industry associations to create new apprenticeship opportunities
- Improve online access for active employers and apprentices, including registration and enrolment into technical training
- Work with NSCC and other training partners to better match trades training with workforce demands and industry needs

- Adopt service delivery standards and monitor performance to ensure industry and apprentice needs are being met, and improvements are made where needed
- Promote career opportunities in the skilled trades and the pathways to achieve certification, including youth apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship training, and formal apprenticeship
- Develop a plan to attract more under-represented individuals into apprenticeship
- Continue to improve online resources for active employers and apprentices
- Hold annual stakeholder accountability and planning sessions

We want to hear from you

The success of this work—and apprenticeship as a whole—depends on you. Government announced the move to establish an agency for apprenticeship in July 2013. Changes to the current system are being made to better support industry needs and to expand apprenticeship opportunities in the province. We are now looking for your feedback on what the work of this new agency should be.

Tell us what you think:

1. Are the priorities outlined above on track with what you feel is needed for Nova Scotia, our workforce and our businesses? Why or why not?
2. What other priorities should be considered within the first 6 months of the agency's mandate?
3. What longer-term priorities should the proposed agency consider in 6 months to 2 years? In 2 years and beyond?

Tell us about yourself:

1. Are you interested in being a future board member or trade advisory committee member?
2. In what other ways would you be interested in participating in the proposed agency?

3. How many apprentices do you currently employ?
4. How many apprentices do you plan to employ in the coming year?

Please give your sector and trade area:

Sector:

Trade:

For more information on apprenticeship in Nova Scotia and the proposed changes to the system, please visit www.nsapprenticeship.ca

All feedback received by March 21 will be reviewed and prepared for consideration by the Minister. Feedback may be submitted via:

Email: LAEPOLICY@gov.ns.ca

Fax: (902) 428-2203

Mail: Apprenticeship c/o Policy and Planning

Arrangements can be made to provide comments by phone at (902) 424-6254

Labour and Advanced Education

PO Box 697

5151 Terminal Road

Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2T8

Please be advised that any information provided to the Department will be held in confidence and only disclosed in keeping with the provisions of the *Nova Scotia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Any questions pertaining to the collection, use, disclosure or correction of personal information may be directed to the departmental Information Access and Privacy Manager by email at LAEaccess@gov.ns.ca or phone at (902) 424-8472.