

Department of Education: Skills and Learning Branch 2006 Highlights



Strength through Skills and Learning

Hard working, highly skilled, resourceful, and dependable are just some of the words used to describe Nova Scotia's workforce.

The innovative businesses and industries of our province depend on this workforce every day to help them meet new challenges and to continue to prosper in the global marketplace.

In recent years, one of the biggest challenges faced by business and industry has been a profound change in their workforce. An aging population will continue to result in the retirement of many skilled workers. As many employers will note, not enough skilled workers have come along behind to fill those now-empty shoes. A new emphasis on immigration means engaging a workforce for whom English may be a second language. Real and impending labour shortages have put a renewed emphasis on employee retention.

Employers are now asking: *How can we attract and keep skilled workers?* And educators and trainers are asking: *How can we ensure the workforce in Nova Scotia meets the province's business needs?* Just as the key to a thriving economy is found in strong partnerships among employees, employers, and the market, the answers to the two questions above are also found in strong partnerships.

And partnership is what the Skills Nova Scotia Framework is all about. A provincial government initiative led by the Department of Education, the Framework brings together provincial departments, business, industry, community organizations and educational institutions to explore issues, design programs and create solutions for Nova Scotians of all ages. The goal is to ensure all Nova Scotians have the skills they need to take full advantage of the opportunities our province has to offer. As a result, business and industry will have the workforce they need to succeed and to help Nova Scotia continue to thrive.

Developed in collaboration with our strategic partners and launched in 2002, the Framework is a blueprint for advancing the province's vision of "a world-class workforce ready to meet the demands of today and the promise of tomorrow." It has three fundamental goals:

- Goal 1: Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market.
- Goal 2: Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians.
- Goal 3: Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities.

Skills Nova Scotia Framework goals:

- Goal 1:** *Meet the skill needs of Nova Scotia's labour market.*
- Goal 2:** *Provide better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians.*
- Goal 3:** *Strengthen Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning opportunities.*

The Framework works in tandem with other provincial strategies, all of which are designed to positively influence Nova Scotia's economy and way of life. Some of these programs are the Department of Health's Nursing Strategy, the Senior's Secretariat Strategy for Positive Aging, Nova Scotia's Immigration Policy, the Aboriginal Labour Market Development Strategy, and the Community Development Policy Initiative, to name a few.

Read on to learn more about the many initiatives underway at the Department of Education to help Nova Scotians develop the skills they need for the jobs they want, and for the jobs that must be filled.



Skilled-trades superstar Mike Holmes worked with us this year in a multimedia campaign to attract youth to the trades and encourage employers to hire apprentices. Find out more on page 3.



Investing in Nova Scotia's youth

Helping young Nova Scotians thrive - in their careers, in their lives and in Nova Scotia

Every day, young Nova Scotians are confronted with tough choices – peer pressure, career decisions, and post-secondary education and training options. We have a range of resources and programs to help them make informed choices about their futures. We also have the Youth Secretariat to help ensure youth voices and input are reflected when programs and policy are developed by government.

Career Information for Nova Scotians

One site. Over 300 careers.

Do you know what kind of career you want? Do you know how to get it? Youth, their parents, adults and career coaches can access a full-service, career-planning website just for Nova

Scotians at novascotiacaareeroptions.ca. This site lets visitors explore more than 300 career choices to learn more about employment requirements, training paths, and work and wage prospects. It also has information about career planning and provincial labour market trends.

The *Nova Scotia Career Guide for Students and Parents* works with the site to give students an overview of career planning and the Nova Scotia labour market. Teachers can use it to support the career component of the Health/Personal Development and Relationships 9 curriculum. All grade 9 students get a personal copy of the guide and it is also available upon request to individuals and groups that provide career-counselling services.



“It’s important to get students thinking about career options before they get to high school. Resources that open their minds to the opportunities that exist, like the grade 9 guide, are very positive. It gets them thinking about what they want and how to get there.”

Lori Welsh-Hawley, guidance counsellor, Fairview Junior High School

▲ Top photo: Dan Britten, an apprentice in the Boat Builder trade, Rosborough Boats.

Parents as Career Coaches

Helping parents become career counsellors

Parents and guardians are a key part of a youth's career decision making. Through the *Parents as Career Coaches* workshop, we help parents and guardians become more effective career counsellors for their children. The workshop helps parents understand the labour market their children are entering and the role they play in guiding and supporting their children as they move from high school to post-secondary education or into the workforce. It offers practical information and strategies and gives parents a chance to share their experiences and concerns with other parents.

Parents as Career Coaches is a partnership between the Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Community College. In the 2006-07 school year, it will be offered to parents of students enrolled in the Options and Opportunities program at 27 schools across the province. In coming years, we hope to expand the initiative and offer the workshop to more parents around the province.

WorkIt! Youth Apprenticeship

Building a new image for the skilled trades

The WorkIt! Youth Apprenticeship Program raises the profile of skilled trades as a viable career choice and encourages more youth to choose a career in the trades. Knowing that friends, parents and educators all have an influence on a youth's career choice, this program also aims to raise awareness of the opportunities in the skilled trades among these influencers.

WorkIt! actively encourages youth to explore various trades through community-based learning options in the public school system, such as co-op placements and community work experience programs. Youth who participate can count all the hours they work during these programs toward their future apprenticeship and trade certification. Once a youth has found a trade and employer that fit, he or she can become a youth apprentice. Youth apprentices can begin earning a wage and learning their trade while still completing high school.

In 2005-06, a total of 13 youth apprentices were registered.

Dan Britten (featured on page 2) started on the path to youth apprenticeship while in grade 12. One of his co-op work placements was with Rosborough Boats, a Nova Scotia boat building company. He immediately liked the hands-on aspect of the Boat Builder trade and when his co-op placement was complete, he became a youth apprentice at Rosborough Boats. After graduating from school, Dan became a full-time apprentice and is well on his way to a rewarding career with Rosborough Boats in the Boat Builder trade.

Youth Advisory Council

Adding youth's voice to program development

Who better to provide government with ideas on how to improve youth programs and services than youth themselves? This council meets four times a year to do just that. The provincial government appoints members to the council, which is composed of up to 15 young people, between the ages of 15 and 24, from across the province. Most recently, the council was used as a focus group for the development of the NovaKnowledge Report Card. It has also offered support to the Taskforce on Safer Communities and sits on the Roundtable for Youth Sexual Health.

Mike Holmes, Canada's top celebrity home renovator, worked with the Skills and Learning Branch to spread the message of our shared commitment to building the skilled trades. TV, radio and print ads encouraged Nova Scotians to join the skilled trades, or to hire an apprentice. The general public was encouraged to ask for credentials from the tradespeople they hire at home. And youth and their parents were informed of the many career opportunities in the skilled trades and encouraged to take advantage of public school programs that help students make informed career decisions. Go to www.workitns.ca for more.

WorkItNS.ca

Want a Career with Plenty of Opportunity? Think About the Skilled Trades

Skilled tradespeople are in demand. It is projected that up to 4000 new tradespeople are needed in Nova Scotia right away.

Nova Scotia's education and apprenticeship system can help you get the training and experience you need to become a professional, skilled tradesperson who enjoys a great career. If you're in high school getting ready to make the big decision about what to do with your life, or already out working but want to make a change, this is your opportunity to turn your talents and your passion into success.

Just go to WorkItNS.ca for more information about youth apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and other programs that will get you on the path to an exciting future.

"Being a skilled tradesperson isn't just what I do. It's who I am." — Mike Holmes

NOVA SCOTIA
Education
Skills and Learning Branch

STAYING AHEAD THROUGH
Skills Learning



Members of the Youth Advisory Council from left to right: Ty Walsh, Mat Whycott, James Mosher.

Provincial Student Education Council

Getting youth's input on education

This council advises the Minister of Education on matters related to the secondary school system. It also supports leadership development opportunities that will help make a student's transition from school to further education, training, or work as smooth and successful as possible. In the past year, the council looked at a bullying-in-schools program, provided comment on the Nova Scotia School Food and Nutrition Policy, and looked at ways to grow leadership within the youth sector.

Federal-Provincial Committee on Youth

Helping youth get to work

Co-chaired by Service Canada, this committee sets priorities for youth employment-related programs that are funded through the Canada-Nova Scotia Protocol on Youth. The protocol is mainly focused on youth facing social and economic disadvantages. This year the committee is revisiting its policy direction to ensure its efforts reflect the reality youth face today. It is also working to improve communication with regional Youth Action Teams.

“As a member of the Youth Advisory Council, I want to help youth have their voice and potential recognized by those who can be helpful and resourceful.” Tori Kellner, member of the Youth Advisory Council



Investing in Nova Scotia's skilled tradespeople

Enhancing and adding to the skills of a vital workforce

Industry sectors that employ skilled tradespeople are feeling the effects of the global labour shortage. As a result, there are many opportunities for experienced, educated, skilled tradespeople in Nova Scotia. We are working with a number of partners to ensure Nova Scotians have the technical skills, the business smarts, and the support they need to take advantage of opportunities in the skilled trades and enjoy challenging, satisfying careers in our province.

Apprenticeship Essential Skills

Building a skills base for apprenticeship training

Some apprentices are entering their training without experience in some of the more essential skills of their trade. To help them successfully complete their apprenticeship studies, we have introduced several new learning options:

- The Learning Plan Development Process is available to apprentices to determine training needs. This leads to the development of an individualized learning plan.
- Informal Assessment Tools are used to measure the essential skills needs of apprentices based on the trade they have chosen.
- Access to Learning Supports makes essential skills training available free of charge.

- The Math Refresher and Document Use Refresher courses are free of charge for apprentices and offered on a part-time basis at Nova Scotia Community College campuses.
- An Additional Review course allows apprentices to combine the theories they have learned and prepare a study plan for their certification exam.

Essential skills – Skills that people use in their jobs and in their lives every day. Essential skills include reading text, working with others, problem solving, continuous learning, written communication, oral communication, document use, numeracy and computer use.

Document Use Refresher for Apprentices

Retraining an already skilled workforce

As industry changes, so do the skills employers require in their workforce. Often times, employees need to refresh their skills or learn new skills to continue to be productive. That is why we launched the Document Use Refresher Program in 2006. Employers, unions, and industry across Canada identified the lack of document literacy skills as one of the reasons people have difficulty completing apprenticeship technical training. This resource will help tradespeople effectively use

▲ Top photo: NSCC students Shauna Bottomley and Myles Tonner, carpentry yard, NSCC IT campus.

documents to understand and communicate specific requirements of their jobs.

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

Experience counts

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) is a way of identifying, assessing and recognizing the skills, knowledge, or competencies a person has acquired through work or life experience.

PLAR is not a new concept in the skilled trades; the Apprenticeship Training Program has provided PLAR opportunities for more than 65 years. Any person who wishes to receive certification in one of Nova Scotia's designated trades and has previously achieved certification through another jurisdiction, or has current, relevant training and/or experience in that trade, can apply for assessment and recognition.

In 2005, a task team was created to assist with researching PLAR policies and practices in other jurisdictions and organizations, and reviewing the process for challenging a certification examination. In addition, a PLAR coordinator has been hired to implement a comprehensive review of all PLAR programs and to ensure the evaluation processes are documented, clearly articulated and made available to the public.



NSCC student Robert Spear in the Aircraft Maintenance program, NSCC campus in Shearwater.

Business Competencies for Journeypersons

Skilled in trades – and in business

For skilled tradespeople, learning does not end when they receive their certification. They need continuing access to learning opportunities to help them manage new technologies, trade skills, regulation and globalization.

A new business competencies program is in development to meet this need. Certified journeypersons with business competencies would have a better understanding of a business owner's challenges. They would also possess the skills they need to open their own businesses.

We are working with industry and education partners to identify complementary business competencies and relevant training. The Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act is also being amended to give the Department of Education the ability to add endorsements, like business competencies, to the Certificate of Qualification.

Fast facts – Apprenticeship Training System (2005-2006)

- 55 designated trades
- 4,097 active apprentices
- Over 3,400 employers participate in the Apprenticeship Program
- 759 Certificates of Qualification issued
- 664 Interprovincial Red Seals issued
- 1,016 new apprentices and improvers registered
- 88% of new registrants complete post-secondary education programs

Student, Graphic Design competition, 2006 Canadian Skills Competition in Halifax.





Investing in Nova Scotia's adults

Encouraging lifelong learning and reducing barriers to workforce participation

The working world of today is far different from that of just one generation ago. With global competition and technological advances, skills that once met minimum requirements now fall below the mark.

New members of this workforce must possess a higher level of education and more developed skills. Current employees, with their years of valuable experience, may need to sharpen and hone their skill set. And everyone should be prepared to keep learning throughout their lives, because the world keeps changing.

Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning

Learning skills. Gaining confidence.

The Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2006. Since its inception, over 20,000 Nova Scotians have enrolled in the school's 170-plus programs, which are tuition-free and range from basic literacy and math skills to high school completion.

In 2005-06, more than 500 adult learners across the province received the *Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults* thanks to support from NSSAL. Dennis Purcell is one of them.

As Dennis says, he was never very interested in academics, but as he watched his friends move from school into the workforce, he realized he needed to further his education so he could reach his employment goals. That's when he enrolled in the NSSAL program at the Flexible Learning and Education Centre in Bedford, NS.

Now that he has received his diploma, he is feeling much more confident about the future. "I have gained the knowledge necessary to enter the workplace and be successful in all my career endeavours," says Dennis. "I believe this program has shown me the many opportunities that exist in today's work environment."

This year, Premier Rodney MacDonald awarded another NSSAL student, Jason Dykens, with the Council of the Federation Literacy Award for outstanding achievement in literacy and his contributions to school, workplace and the community. Jason, a married father of three who used to work for minimum wage, decided to continue his education to secure a higher-paying job



▲ Top photo: Dennis Purcell, 2005 graduate of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning.

for his family. While his new skills have greatly improved his employment opportunities, Jason feels the greatest benefit is the influence his experience had on his children. "My children are getting more interested in learning," he says.

NSSAL is funded by the Department of Education, the Department of Community Services, and Human Resources and Social Development Canada. Partners include the Nova Scotia Community College, Université Sainte-Anne, school boards, adult high schools and community-based literacy organizations.

Fast facts – NSSAL

- The year 2005-06 marks NSSAL's fifth anniversary and the graduation of 2,000 adults with the Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults.
- Over 22,000 adults have been enrolled in NSSAL programs since 2001.
- More than 500 adult learners received their diploma in 2005-06.
- NSSAL programs are offered at more than 170 sites across the province.
- NSSAL works in partnership with the Nova Scotia Community College, regional school boards, Université Sainte-Anne and community-based learning organizations.

Age Advantage Program: Older Worker Pilot Project Initiative

Reducing barriers to the workforce

Some unemployed older workers (ages 55-65) have identified age as a barrier to employment. The Age Advantage Program, which is a partnership between the Department of Education and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, works directly with these workers to overcome barriers.

This year, funding for the project was used to hire 15 Older Worker Client Navigators in career resources centres across the province. In addition to delivering the Age Advantage Program, a Basic Computer Program was also delivered to groups in North Sydney, Glace Bay, Truro and Bridgewater. The Glace Bay group considers their experience in the program to be an exceptional success. Out of 10 participants, eight found part-time or full-time employment.

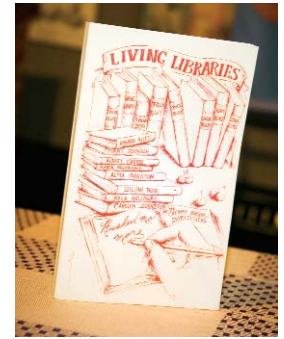
Seniors' Literacy and Learning Initiative

New skills for every age

In this initiative, we partner with the Seniors' Secretariat to provide small grants to non-profit literacy organizations to deliver literacy and learning programs that help Nova Scotian seniors address basic learning needs.

A number of senior learners participated in four separate projects to enhance their reading, writing and math skills. Topics included: fitness and healthful eating; gardening and patchworking; storytelling; and journal writing.

Senior learners from the Cherry Brook Senior Citizens' group will soon become published authors thanks to their participation in the project. Their learning activities focused on oral and written storytelling and their stories about life in their community, titled *Living Libraries*, were published this year.



Living Libraries, a collection of stories written by members of the Cherry Brook Senior Citizens' group.



Senior learners from the Cherry Brook Senior Citizens' group. From left to right: Merlin Riley, Howard Riley, Alma Johnston, Karen Drummond, Evelyn Riley, Lillian Ross.

"IT skills are fundamental skills required to enter the workforce. This program helps women see the opportunities that are available and prepares them to take advantage of those opportunities." Carla Harder, IT Works for Women.

Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework

Helping all Nova Scotians reach their full potential

Through the Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework (CNSSLF), the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia are working together to develop workplace skills and increase employment opportunities for all Nova Scotians. The Labour Market Development Secretariat, housed in the Department of Education, supports both levels of government to help them meet these goals.

A CNSSLF committee composed of federal and provincial partners review proposals for funding for projects and initiatives across the province. The IT Works for Women project was one of these proposals. Sponsored by the WEE Society and funded by the Department of Community Services since 2003, the program focuses on employability through the development of practical technology skills. To date, over 750 women in the Halifax Regional Municipality and in Colchester County have participated in the program. According to Carla Harder of IT Works for Women, many have entered the workplace, pursued some form of post-secondary education or completed their GED.

The IT Works for Women project is just one example of the many valuable initiatives happening across the province to help Nova Scotians develop workplace skills and take advantage of employment opportunities in Nova Scotia.

Career Information for Adults

Planning or changing careers starts here

Nova Scotians embarking on their first career, or making a change to a new one, can find all the information they need with one click of a mouse on novascotiacaareeroptions.ca. More than 300 career choices are detailed, along with their employment requirements, training paths, and employment and wage prospects. The site's companion guide, the *Nova Scotia Career Guide for Adults*, discusses opportunities in the Nova Scotia labour market, the steps involved in career planning, and how to upgrade educational qualifications.

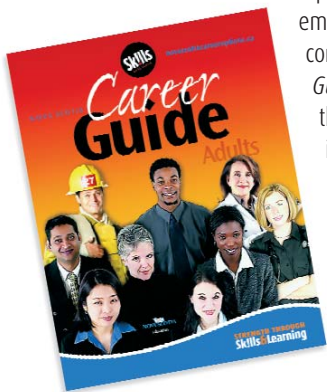
Family Literacy Projects

Making learning a family affair

Through our partnerships, we are supporting parents and their children by launching new initiatives to raise awareness of the importance of literacy and to encourage a love of reading. These pilot projects address adult literacy within the context of family learning.

One of the pilots, the Guysborough Family Literacy Project, held workshops for parents of pre-school- and elementary-aged children. Parents discussed the importance of developing reading and writing skills in the home and the need to become familiar with school routines and activities. They were guided on how to contact the appropriate school staff and community-based adult learning program for help and received learning kits that were tailored to meet the specific needs of their families.

Becky Dauphnee, a participant in the West Hants Family Literacy Pilot Project, enjoyed the experience so much she went back to school to get her credentials to become an Educational Assistant. Becky became involved because she wanted to help her own son improve his reading skills. As part of "The Reading Giants" group, Becky learned many strategies to help others improve their literacy and developed a new appreciation for what teachers do. Becky went from being a group participant, to being a volunteer, to having a full-time job helping students with special needs in the classroom. "(The program) opened my eyes to the school system," says Becky. "It's beneficial, especially if you have children, to see what happens in school."





Investing in Nova Scotia's employers and industry

Having access to the right people at the right time

What will the jobs of the future look like? What skills will Nova Scotians need to fill these jobs? No crystal ball is needed to answer those questions. Industries and businesses in all sectors from service to manufacturing can tell you the future is now. They know their needs are changing rapidly as they move into a global, more technically advanced era. They know what skills they need in their workers – and they need those skills right now.

We are partnering with employers and industry to ensure Nova Scotians have the skills to help Nova Scotia's businesses continue to succeed and thrive in Nova Scotia.

Workplace Education Initiative

Helping the current workforce stay current

When standards, technology and processes change, a business's workforce also has to change. That does not mean the business needs a whole new workforce – but it does need to upgrade the skills of the workforce it already has. When an employer invests in training its existing workforce, it is investing in its own success. The Workplace Education Initiative helps by providing funding for workplace training programs, such as employee literacy and essential skills development.

This initiative is a partnership between government and a wide range of workplace partners. Each workplace education program starts with a comprehensive assessment to ensure it meets the requirements of all of those partners – not just one – and is then customized according to individual requirements. It is this flexibility that makes this initiative so valuable to all Nova Scotia businesses, industries and employers.

The Prince George Hotel in Halifax faces steep competition from other hotels and conference facilities. Having a workforce that can deliver world-calibre service to an international clientele is key to its success.

The Prince George has a well-established training culture. Since 1995, it has partnered with us to provide cost-effective essential skills training to employees, most of whom are immigrants originating from countries such as Zimbabwe, China, Lebanon, Yugoslavia and Spain. Workplace education programs include academic upgrading, leadership, workplace communications and English as a Second Language.

Did you know? In 2005-06, the Department of Education delivered 123 workplace education programs at 96 sites province-wide. Business and industry contributed more than \$493,355.87 to support these programs.

▲ Top photo: Doris Tarawally, employee of the Prince George Hotel and participant in workplace education programs.

The Prince George's commitment to workplace education has significantly improved employees' reading, writing and language skills. Other benefits include increased employee confidence, morale, loyalty and productivity. As a result, a number of participants have been promoted.

This partnership earned recognition from the Conference Board of Canada in 2005, and has strengthened the hotel's commitment to investing in its workforce.

Invest In Youth

Building the workforce of the future

Achieving the balance between running a business today and planning for tomorrow is a challenge every employer faces. Planning for new markets, new products and new innovations requires a renewable workforce.

However, many employers in Nova Scotia are facing a shrinking workforce due to upcoming retirements, or growth plans that will overwhelm current staffing levels. For the future workforce, today's youth are their greatest resource.

To raise awareness among Nova Scotia employers of this potential resource, we launched a new initiative called Invest in Youth. This initiative invites employers to share their knowledge and skills with youth aged 15-24, who are eager to be part of the workforce. This experience, in turn, allows students to explore their career options and identify the exciting career possibilities that exist right here, in Nova Scotia.

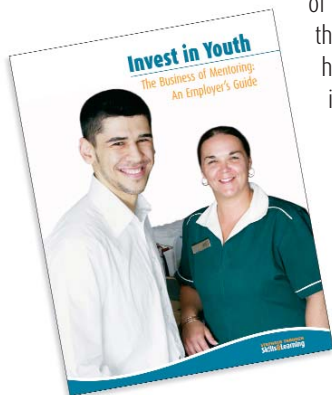
Employers can invest in youth in many different ways, including:

- Visiting a school on career day
- Participating in a career fair
- Hosting workplace tours and job shadows
- Hosting a co-op student
- Participating in the new Options and Opportunities program www.ednet.ns.ca/O2
- Hiring a youth apprentice www.workitns.ca

Many supports were developed for employers as part of the initiative, including a website www.investinyouth.ca, regional information sessions, and a detailed 16-page guide called *The Business of Mentoring: An Employer's Guide*. This guide details all

of the ways employers can get involved with the initiative and offers practical advice on how to host a student, the responsibilities involved in mentoring, how to give constructive feedback and more.

Karrie Scribner, Recreation Therapist at the Nova Scotia Hospital, describes her experience with students as "win-win-win." Interacting with the students helped residents recover; the full-time staff counted on the students to help with the workload; and, most importantly, students became inspired



Karrie Scribner, Nova Scotia Hospital and Samantha Powell, co-operative education student.

to consider careers in healthcare – one of the sectors already feeling the pinch of the labour shortage. That is what happened with co-op student Samantha Powell, of Millbrook High School. After working with Karrie and her team, Samantha says she wants to work in this field and help people.

Sector Engagement Program

Sharing the challenges, and the opportunities

The Sector Engagement Program works with Nova Scotia's sector councils and industry associations to ensure they are supported in their efforts to maintain a balanced, skilled and adaptable workforce. We assist with access to programs, services, resources, essential skills training, business planning and partnership activities.

Here is one example of how the program works.

In the winter of 2005, we were approached by the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Sector Council and the Halifax Airport taxi and limousine drivers us with a partnership opportunity.

New regulations required taxi and limousine drivers to hold the Emerit National Taxi and Limousine Certification. Many of the drivers were concerned about their ability to pass the course. Several of them spoke English as a second language and others had been out of school for a long time.

A partnership was developed through the Sector Engagement Program to support the drivers. It included the Nova Scotia Tourism Human Resource Sector Council, the taxi and limousine drivers, Service Canada and the Department of Education. The program offered driver training as well as an essential skills program, help with communication, English and exam preparation. As a result, all of the drivers were successful in the exam and 261 of them earned National Certification for Taxi and Limousine Drivers.

Growing the System

Getting Nova Scotia businesses involved

With help from industry and labour, we are making every effort to get more Nova Scotians and business involved in the apprenticeship system, and to increase the system's ability to provide a complete, practical education to more apprentices.

The results are encouraging: since 1999, there has been a 49 per cent increase in the number of apprentices who accessed training. Since 2001, there has been a 64 per cent increase in sections of in-class training offered.

Mentor/Coach Program

Helping industry meet its workforce needs

A key element of success for any apprenticeship is a mentor or coach. There is a long history of the mentor/apprentice model in the skilled trades – it is an established and respected manner for one craftsman to pass skills to another. It is so important, in fact, that stakeholders across the skilled trades identified mentorship as an important part of all apprenticeship programs in the designated trades.

In response, we partnered with the Nova Scotia Boatbuilders Association last year to pilot the Mentor/Coach Program in the Boat Builder trade. After a successful pilot program, we're now working to make workplace mentoring an integral part of apprenticeship technical training. Strong mentoring relationships will help apprentices get the most out of their training and prepare them to become journeymen. We also plan to offer a workplace mentoring course to journeymen, to help them become better mentors.

By focusing on mentoring, we hope to strengthen the workplace training happening today and prepare for the future by ensuring the transfer of skills and knowledge to successive generations.

Smart Business

Overcoming business' barriers to growth

Communities in western and central Nova Scotia are taking a new approach to stimulating local business growth. Six Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) representing eight counties in Nova Scotia will implement the Business Retention and Expansion Program to encourage the stability and growth of local companies. The project is being coordinated by the Nova Scotia Association of RDAs, with support from the governments of Canada and Nova Scotia. The Department of Education, along with

the Office of Economic Development and Nova Scotia Business Inc., is a key project partner.

Through the program, we are helping businesses improve their competitiveness. We are also encouraging them to remain in Nova Scotia, and to expand – thus sharing their success with even more Nova Scotians.

One Journey: Work and Learn

Merging people with opportunity

Skills shortages are often related to specific occupations. Sometimes there are not enough skilled workers to fill an occupation; other times, skill requirements change within an occupation. As a result, an employer may have difficulty securing qualified workers.

The One Journey: Work and Learn Initiative brings people who need jobs together with industries that need skilled workers, then provides the training, so both groups benefit. For this initiative, we partnered with the Department of Community Services, industry, and the community. Our goal is to provide opportunities for skills development and employment so Nova Scotians who are receiving income assistance or employment insurance can become employed.

The trucking industry is proof this initiative works.

Nova Scotia's trucking industry was challenged by a shortage of long-haul truck drivers. The partners involved with this initiative worked with the Trucking Human Resources Sector Council and three local carriers to develop a training plan that included essential skills, job readiness, and truck driver training.

Thanks to this successful partnership, the trucking industry now has well-trained, professional truck drivers and several former Community Services clients have meaningful careers.

With financial support from several partners, 15 One Journey: Work and Learn projects have been created since the initiative was launched in 1999. These have focused on the hospitality, call centre customer service, flooring installation, auto parts, and inventory control industries. Of the 150 Nova Scotians who participated in these programs, 72 per cent are still employed.



George LeBlanc, driver for Armour Transportation Systems and recipient of the 2004 National Driver of the Year award.

"One Journey: Work and Learn demonstrates the value of partnerships between industry and government. We feel this is a model in best practice and applaud government for its leadership." Kelly Henderson, Executive Director, Trucking Human Resource Sector Council



Investing in Nova Scotia's education and training partners

Helping the teaching facilities learn and grow too

One of the keys to Nova Scotia's economic success is its exceptional post-secondary education and training institutions. Every year, graduates of these facilities bring new skills and knowledge to the workforce. And every year, our province's businesses, industries, and government benefit from this influx.

We work with the province's universities, community colleges, private career colleges, training institutions and organizations, and professionals to provide them with funding and support so they can build on our province's education and skills training legacy. We are also working with the provincial apprenticeship board to ensure that trade legislation and regulations continue to meet industry requirements.

Nova Scotia Community College

Putting education to work

The Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) offers more than 100 diploma or certificate programs and courses at 13 campuses around the province. It is known for its hands-on approach to education. It also gives students the opportunity to do work placements in real work environments, ensuring that all graduating students have the theory, the practical skills, and the experience that employers want and need in a new hire.

As our labour market becomes more sophisticated and its needs change, so must our education and training programs. Ensuring that students can meet the demands of the labour market is a priority, not only for the NSCC but also for government and industry. That is why NSCC, the Department of Education, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and

Composites Atlantic Limited came together to offer a new, unique training program to answer a need identified by industry: the Composites Fabricator Technician program.

The program was developed and will be delivered in partnership with Composites Atlantic Limited. Students will learn how to build light-weight, corrosion-free, high-tech parts that are increasingly replacing heavier metal parts in the aeronautic, defence, and space industries, as well as in the boat-building industry. Composites Atlantic Limited will subsidize each student's tuition in the program, and all students who complete the program are guaranteed a job interview with the company.

This is an exciting example of how government, an education provider, and an employer can work hand-in-hand to benefit the industry, our provincial economy, and the people of Nova Scotia.

Career Options

A guide for those who help guide careers

Adults interested in a career change can seek guidance, support, and advice from many different sources. These include high school guidance counsellors and teachers; counsellors at the province's universities, NSCC, and the Department of Community Services; and career resource centres. Now those career counsellors have a new handbook to help them help others. It is called *Career Options: An Occupational Handbook for Nova Scotians* and it allows users to easily browse and compare information on approximately 275 occupations. It includes information on work prospects, average wages, responsibilities, and entry-level requirements.

▲ Top photo: Maurice Guitton, President and CEO, Composites Atlantic Limited.



Investing in Nova Scotia's economy

Helping Nova Scotians get the jobs they want and the jobs Nova Scotia needs

Information gathering is an essential first step toward making a sound decision.

We want to make sure all Nova Scotians, particularly career seekers, employers, trainers, educators, and federal and provincial government departments, have access to relevant, up-to-date labour market information to help them make sound labour market decisions. These decisions could involve anything from career development or human resource planning to policy making and training program development.

We work with industry associations, sector councils, and the provincial and federal governments, to develop, review, and deliver products and services designed to support Nova Scotia's continued economic prosperity and growth.

Labour Market Information for Nova Scotia

labourmarketinfo.ednet.ns.ca

Our new Labour Market Information Portal, www.labourmarketinfo.ednet.ns.ca, is a single source for labour market information that Nova Scotians need. Visitors will find guides to using and understanding labour market information and links to helpful resources. The website was developed in partnership with federal and provincial government

▲ *Top photo: Kate Mann and Darren Martell, employees of the Prince George Hotel and participants in workplace education programs.*

representatives as part of the Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework.

We also produce an annual labour market publication, the Nova Scotia Labour Market Review, each spring. This features the most up-to-date statistics on employment, unemployment, economic regions, industries, occupations, education and demographics.

Demographic Information for Nova Scotia

Preparing Nova Scotia for the challenges and opportunities of the future

In the coming years, demographic trends will have a significant impact on Nova Scotia's society, economy and labour market. Nova Scotia has a decreasing rate of population growth and our population is older than the Canadian average. To better understand the impact of demographic change, the Department of Education, in collaboration with several other federal and provincial departments and agencies, commissioned a research study that looks at the changes Nova Scotia will experience over the next 20 years. The report, titled *The Nova Scotia Demographics Research Report: A Demographic Analysis of Nova Scotia into 2026*, identifies the challenges and opportunities Nova Scotia will face in responding to these changes. It also makes recommendations for aligned policies across government to address demographic issues.



About the Department of Education's Skills and Learning Branch

Skills and Learning Branch

This branch comprises Adult Education, Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development, Labour Market Partnerships, the Youth Secretariat and the Labour Market Development Secretariat. It also coordinates the Skills Nova Scotia Framework, the province's labour market skill development strategy. The branch works collaboratively with a range of government, industry, labour, business, community and education partners to design, implement and evaluate policies, programs and services. These support learning and skill development at home, at work, and in the community.

Adult Education

The Adult Education division coordinates educational programs and services for adults. It contributes to social and economic development by enhancing the employability of adult Nova Scotians and by ensuring that adults have the necessary foundational skills, knowledge and educational credentials required to make successful labour market transitions, and to participate actively in the home, the community and the workplace. Its primary initiative is the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL). Established in September 2001, NSSAL is an administrative body within the division that works with colleges, school boards and community-based organizations to deliver educational programs ranging from basic literacy to high school completion.

Adult Education has responsibility for:

- Adult literacy and basic education
- High school completion for adults – Nova Scotia High School Graduation Diploma for Adults
- High school equivalency – GED certificate
- Family and parent-child literacy
- Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR)
- Educational programs for targeted communities (incarcerated or in conflict with the law, women, seniors, Mi'kmaq, African-Canadian, Acadian, persons with disabilities)

Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development

The Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development division leads the development and delivery of educational and training programs for Nova Scotia's current and future workforce. It supports strategic human resource planning within industry, providing supports when employees are negatively affected by re-organization or workplace closures. It is also responsible for administering the *Apprenticeship and Trades Qualifications Act and General Regulations* and promoting compliance with the Act through enforcement measures. The division carries out its work in partnership with industry associations, labour organizations, employers, education/training institutions and other government groups. The division also formally supports industry engagement through the Provincial Apprenticeship Board and the Nova Scotia Partners for Workplace Education Advisory Committee.

▲ Top photo: NSCC student Angela Smith, Welding program, Akerley Campus.



Gillian Chalmers, silver medalist, IT Office Software Applications competition, 2006 Canadian Skills Competition.

Apprenticeship Training and Skill Development has responsibility for:

- Sector Engagement Program
- WorKit! Youth Apprenticeship Program
- Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Training System
- Provincial certification in 55 trades
- Interprovincial standards Red Seal Program in 47 trades
- Training standards and examination development
- Organizational and educational needs assessments
- Nova Scotia Workplace Education Initiative
- Nova Scotia Workforce Skills Development Initiative - One Journey: Work and Learn

Labour Market Partnerships

The Labour Market Partnerships division supports the three goals of the Skills Nova Scotia Framework by meeting the needs of Nova Scotia's labour market; providing better labour market access and supports to Nova Scotians; and strengthening Nova Scotia's system of lifelong learning. The division conducts labour market research and analysis and collaborates through partnerships with industry, community organizations and government departments and agencies to improve labour market access and mobility.

Labour Market Partnerships has responsibility for:

- Skills Nova Scotia Framework - planning, coordination, and implementation
- Labour market information - products and services
- Labour market policy
- Labour market research and analysis
- Joint planning and partnership to support industry
- Targeted labour market initiatives
- Career development and education and employment counseling strategy
- Inter-governmental relations (Federal-Provincial-Territorial)

Youth Secretariat

The Youth Secretariat provides a focal point for the development of effective responses by government to the needs and aspirations of Nova Scotia's youth. Work focuses on research, coordination of government initiatives, access to information, and the development of innovative approaches to addressing the interests of youth.

The Youth Secretariat has responsibility for:

- Supporting inter-departmental and inter-governmental collaboration on youth issues
- Conducting research and policy development on youth issues and programs
- Collecting and disseminating youth-related information
- Promoting and supporting youth engagement
- Supporting non-governmental, youth-serving organizations
- Providing support and liaising with the Provincial Student Education Council and the Youth Advisory Council

Labour Market Development Secretariat

The Labour Market Development Secretariat provides policy support and coordination to the Canada Nova Scotia Skills and Learning Framework, a partnership between the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia to support skills and learning initiatives for Nova Scotians.

The Labour Market Development Secretariat has responsibility for the following related to the Framework:

- Supporting the governance structure, including the executive, operating, priority, and service delivery committees
- Communications
- Coordinating the business planning and reporting process

For more information about the Department of Education's Skills and Learning Branch, please contact 902-424-8880 or visit www.ednet.ns.ca

For more information:
Department of Education
Skills and Learning Branch
902-424-8880
www.ednet.ns.ca



Education
Skills and Learning Branch