

# Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities

## Annual Report 2013-14

December 3, 2014



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## Ministers' Message

The Province of Nova Scotia is pleased to present an update for Nova Scotians on the province's commitments, the programs and investments under the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [LMAPD]. The LMAPD, which aims to increase successful workplace participation by persons with disabilities, was originally signed in 2004 and renewed in July for 2014-18.

This report is released each year on December 3, which is the United Nations international Day of Persons with Disabilities. The theme for 2014 is "Sustainable Development: The Promise of Technology". Technology offers many possibilities to remove barriers, increase independence, and heighten safety for Nova Scotians with disabilities.

People with disabilities have a right to full inclusion in society, and we all benefit from their unique perspective and skills. Government-sponsored labour market programs for persons with disabilities are intended to address the additional employment, education and training challenges that people with disabilities face in their lives. The key is to help those with disabilities meet their full potential.

To that end, Nova Scotia is working on accessibility legislation that will explore every aspect of full participation by persons with disabilities, including access to the workplace.

In Nova Scotia, the departments of Community Services, Labour and Advanced Education, and Health and Wellness work together to support people with disabilities, increase their employability, and encourage employers to work with this group in the labour market.

Through partnerships with the disability community, Government of Canada, employers and other organizations, the Nova Scotia government is committed to continue working to meet the current and future needs of persons with disabilities.

*Joanne Bernard*  
Minister of Community Services

*Leo Glavine*  
Minister of Health & Wellness

*Kelly Regan*  
Minister of Labour & Advanced Education



## Introduction

The government of Nova Scotia understands the importance of ensuring that persons with disabilities experience social inclusion in all aspects of their lives within their communities. Canada and Nova Scotia recognize that persons with disabilities would like, and are able, to make significant contributions to their communities. Employment is a key component of social inclusion. The governments of Canada and Nova Scotia have offered many programs over the years to help persons with disabilities find meaningful employment.

The province of Nova Scotia has partnered with the Government of Canada for more than 45 years delivering cost-shared programs to assist persons with disabilities begin the path toward greater economic and financial independence through employment. This partnership began with the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Agreement in 1962, which was replaced in April 1998 with the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Agreement [EAPD]. In 2004 EAPD was succeeded by the current Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities [LMAPD]. The Multilateral Framework provides the basis for bilateral agreements between individual provinces and the Government of Canada. The bilateral agreement between Canada and Nova Scotia ended March 31 2014. A new 2014 Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement was signed in July 2014 and will be effective until March 31 2018.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [C-NS LMAPD] provided joint funding for programs and supports for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. In fiscal year 2013-14, Nova Scotia spent approximately \$28,198,106 on programs and services funded under the Canada-Nova Scotia LMAPD. The federal share is capped at \$8.3 million annually.

Nova Scotia made a commitment to release an annual public report about the programs and services funded under the agreement. This is the ninth edition of the annual report. This report describes the programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD agreement, including program objectives, descriptions, target populations and cost-shared expenditures for the April 2013 to March 2014 fiscal period.

Nova Scotia considers the achievements made through this partnered, cost-shared agreement beneficial to the well-being of the individual recipients of program services and to their communities. Employment and education related programs and services targeted to persons with disabilities have helped Nova Scotians with disabilities to enter the labour force, maintain employment and improve their quality of life.



## Background

In November 2002, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services approved a process to guide the negotiation of a successor agreement to the EAPD agreement. The Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities [LMAPD] was approved on December 5, 2003 and became effective on April 1, 2004. Subsequently Canada and Nova Scotia signed a bilateral agreement [C-NS LMAPD] regarding the transfer of federal money to Nova Scotia to support programs and services identified as eligible for cost-shared funding under the multilateral and bilateral agreements.

The goal of the LMAPD agreement is to improve the employment situation for people with disabilities. The Agreement attempts to meet this goal by:

- enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities
- increasing the employment opportunities available to them
- building on the existing knowledge base

The 2004-05 federal budget announced an additional \$30 million for the LMAPD initiative, bringing the Nova Scotia share of the federal transfer to approximately \$8.3 million per year. The Province's annual investment in the programs funded under the bilateral agreement exceeds the cost-matching requirements for the federal funds. The programs and services funded under the agreement are targeted to employability and disability supports for Nova Scotians living with disabilities.

The Province of Nova Scotia offers a range of employment related programs and services to people with disabilities. These programs and services are delivered by the Department of Community Services, Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the Department of Health and Wellness. This report includes descriptions of the programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD, expenditure data and societal indicators during the 2013-14 fiscal year.

Annual reports have been released each year on or about December 3, the International Day of the Disabled Person. This report builds on the previous

annual reports, and fulfills Nova Scotia's commitment to report annually on activities under the C-NS LMAPD agreement.

## Persons with Disabilities in Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, Statistic Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey [PALS] estimated 179,100 persons or 20 percent of Nova Scotians had a disability. This is the highest incidence of disability in Canada. The percentage of Canadians reporting a disability was 14.3 percent in 2006. Approximately 113,000 Nova Scotians required an assistive device. The 2006 PALS estimated that 63 percent of Nova Scotians living with a disability had mild to moderate disability and 37 percent had severe or very severe disability. Among the Nova Scotians living with a disability, 103,730 were working aged and 54,560 were active<sup>2</sup> in the labour force in 2006. Approximately 12,000 working aged persons with disabilities, or 11.5 percent were in receipt of income assistance and 47,270 (45.5 percent) had earned income in 2006.

In 2011 the Minister of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (now Employment and Social Development Canada) cancelled the 2011 PALS and announced a new data strategy on disability would be introduced in its place using other Statistics Canada data sets. Surveys being considered include the General Social Survey, the Canadian Community Health Survey, the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics of 2010 and the Canadian Household Survey. The data file from the new Canadian Survey on Disability became available in 2013 and information products continued to be released in 2014.

The Canadian Survey on Disability<sup>3</sup> [CSD] 2012, reported approximately 3.8 million people, or 13.7% of Canadians aged 15 and older, described themselves as being limited in their daily activities because of a disability. In Nova Scotia, 143,760 people or 18.8% of the population aged 15 or older described themselves as having limitations. The CSD captures 10 disability types - seeing, hearing, mobility,

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<sup>1</sup> All the data in this section are from Statistic Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2006. Persons living in residential care facilities and on First Nations reserves are not included in the data.

<sup>2</sup> Active in the labour force includes unemployed people who are actively looking for work and employed persons.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada *Canadian Survey on Disability* December 2013

flexibility, dexterity, pain, learning, developmental, mental/psychological, and memory. Persons were identified as having a disability if they had difficulty performing tasks as a result of a long-term condition or health-related problem and experienced a limitation in their daily activities.

The response to the CSD 2012 indicates the prevalence of disability increases steadily with age. Nearly 1 in 10 working-age Canadians (aged 15 to 64) reported having a disability in 2012, compared with almost one-third of Canadian seniors (aged 65 and older). Women (14.9%) have a higher prevalence of disability than men (12.5%). Approximately 14.2% of working aged Nova Scotians reported having a disability. This figure increased to almost 48% among senior Nova Scotians (aged 65 and over). Men (18.4%) and women (19.2%) in Nova Scotia report similar prevalence of disability.

Canadians and Nova Scotians reported different types of disability depending on their age. The youngest age group (15 to 24) most commonly reported mental/psychological disabilities, learning disabilities and pain. Among those aged 45 to 64 and seniors the most common types of disability were pain, flexibility and mobility.

A severity score, which was developed for the survey, takes into account the number of disability types, the intensity of difficulties and the frequency of activity limitations. Persons with disabilities were classified into four severity levels using the severity score: mild, moderate, severe and very severe. In 2012, 26.0% of persons with disabilities were classified as very severe; 22.5%, severe; 19.8%, moderate; and 31.7%, mild among Canadians. Among Nova Scotians 24.9% were classified as very severe, 21.1% as severe, 21.2% as moderate and 32% as mild disabilities.

## Labour Market in Nova Scotia<sup>4</sup>

The labour market in Nova Scotia has experienced very little growth since 1990. The annual growth in the working aged population has fallen below half of 1 percent since 2000. A decline in population growth reflects a variety of demographic factors, primarily a lower birth rate combined with the out-migration of working aged people.

The Nova Scotia economy has been slow to improve since the 2009 recession. There has been some improvement in the labour market in 2014. Nova Scotia's labour market showed encouraging results in August as the provincial economy supported 3,900 more jobs than it did in July. 82% of the job gains during August were full time. Unemployment was lower than July's unemployment level because the expansion in employment exceeded a corresponding labour force increase. This pushed the unemployment rate down from 9.4% in July to 8.8% in August.

Compared with August 2013, however, weaknesses in the labour market remain apparent. Nova Scotia lost 9,000 jobs since that time, including 3,600 full-time positions. Participation in Nova Scotia's labour market has almost steadily declined over the previous 12 months. The size of the labour force in August 2014 was lower than that of August 2013 by 9,400. The level of unemployment was slightly lower than in August 2013, but the unemployment rate is unchanged because of proportionally identical labour force and employment declines. The downward trend in Nova Scotia's overall employment level began two years ago in 2012. The number of full-time jobs started to diminish in 2011, while part-time jobs began to fade in number during 2012.

Almost all of the 3,900 job gains in Nova Scotia between July and August 2014 were experienced by men in the labour force. The 9,000 jobs lost over the 12 months since August 2013 occurred in both the male and female labour force, but female workers endured the greater part of the losses, accounting for 90% of the employment decline. Most of those who lost their job between August 2013 and

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<sup>4</sup> Labour Market Analysis Directorate (LMAD), Nova Scotia, Employment and Social Development Canada *Labour Market Bulletin Nova Scotia* September 2014

August 2014, among both genders, were aged 25 to 54 (82%). Employment declines took place among all age groups with the exception of aged 55 and over who experienced a rise in employment over the last 12 months from August 2013 to August 2014.

Persons with disabilities have not been immune to the economic downturn of the mid-2000's and the slow recovery. As the Societal Indicators show [pages 65-75], persons with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of labour force participation and employment than other working aged Nova Scotians.

# Programs & Services

## Community Services

Operating under the Canada/Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, the primary objective of the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) program offered by the Department of Community Services is to enhance the employability of people with disabilities. This is achieved through the provision of employment related services and supports that lead to full or part time employment in the competitive labour market.

To be eligible for LMAPD services provided by the Department of Community Services, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- be disabled to the extent that they are unable, at the time of requesting services, to seek any meaningful job because of a physical or mental disability, and there is a realistic possibility of benefiting from LMAPD services; or
- the disability makes it difficult to complete the work requirements of the job; or
- the disability makes it difficult to undertake training which would lead to employment; and
- be at least 16 years of age; and
- not participating in the public school system at the time of requesting services; and
- be a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant who is a resident of Nova Scotia; and
- must not be applying for the reimbursement of a good or service acquired prior to being approved both under the LMAPD program and/or (in the case of a vocational crisis request) approved for that good or service;

Applicants are considered ineligible under the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Program provided by the Department of Community Services if they:

- have a claim under the Workers= Compensation Act, Canadian Veteran=s Rehabilitation Act, or through private insurance companies; or
- are eligible for services under the Labour Market Development Agreement or CPP; or
- are currently receiving active medical/psychiatric treatment which would interfere with the rehabilitation process; or
- are currently under the jurisdiction of the provincial education (public school) system.

Employment Caseworkers work with eligible individuals to ensure they have access to the following services which are available through the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Program:

- Information and direct referral - access to information and referral to support agencies;
- Assessment - access to vocational assessments, career assessments, academic assessments, etcetera;
- Employment and Career Development Services - access to employment support services, career development services, case management and navigation support;
- Skills and educational supports - access to upgrading and short term training programs;
- Provision of required technical aids - funding is provided for the purchase of eligible technical aids;
- Job Coaching - funding to provide on-the-job support and training for a defined time period;
- Wage Subsidy - funding provided to employers to facilitate a direct job placement for an individual;
- Self-employment - assistance related to self-employment is in the form of support for goods & services directly related to supporting the person=s disability, i.e. the adaptation of disability specific tools and equipment required to operate an approved business.

Individuals who have a disability and are currently employed are not eligible for services unless they are deemed to be experiencing a 'vocational crisis'. Individuals are considered to be in a 'vocational crisis' if:

- the circumstances with regard to the existing disability have changed and now prevent the individual from performing a job they once performed; or
- the nature of the work has changed and the individual needs support to adapt to the changed needs of the job.

### **Technical or Medical Aid Supports**

This program provides disability-related supports to assist individuals as part of their employment action plan or to individuals defined to be in a vocational crisis. An eligible support includes a medical or technical aid, or good, or service that would enable an individual to enhance their employability and/or continue in their employment. Medical and/or technical aids or goods or services are not provided to the individual for personal use only, but are provided to support the training and/or employment needs of individuals.

The following are considered eligible supports:

- Orthotic appliance - an apparatus used to support, align, prevent or correct deformities, or to improve the function of moveable parts of the body. Such appliances may include braces, splints, shoe modifications, and special seating molds for wheelchairs
- Canes, Crutches, Walkers - a mobility aid
- Wheelchairs and Similar Equipment - such mobility aid appliances include manual and electric wheelchairs, power carts and scooters. Requests for purchases of power or ultra-light wheelchairs or scooters are considered based on medical necessity and to avert a vocational crisis.
- Appliances for the Hearing Impaired - such as hearing aids or personal FM systems;
- Appliances for the Vision Impaired such as computers and software to support the disability, tape recorders, reading equipment, Braille calculator, high intensity lamps, braille and in some cases, special lenses may also be provided.
- Modifications to Vehicles - modifications can be provided when an individual does not have access to accessible public transportation and needs a car or van to avert a vocational crisis. Vans may be converted to accommodate wheelchair use by the provision of a wheelchair lift. Driving controls may also be adapted.



- Tools and Equipment - the purchase of special equipment or modifications to tools and equipment to support an individual's disability
- Interpretative and Other Support Services - funding is available to purchase a limited number of hours of interpreting services from an approved source in the community to assist with training or employment opportunities.
- Wage Subsidy - a wage subsidy can be provided for an individual that is ready to work. The subsidy is provided for a defined period of time.
- Job Coaching - funding is available to provide the services of a job coach, or other types of work site training to help people deal with issues of the job. This support is generally provided when an individual is beginning a job.

## Project Support

In addition to supporting individuals living with disabilities directly, a number of projects were funded through LMAPD and through other programs offered by Employment Support Services. Examples of funded projects include providing support for individuals having a mental illness to gain skills that will move them toward employment to job coaching services that support individuals to attach to, or remain attached to, the labour market.

On a yearly basis, the Department of Community Services, Employment Support and Income Assistance Program staff serves a caseload of approximately 44,000 individuals and families. Approximately 42 percent of this caseload has been identified as individuals living with a disability. During the 2013 – 2014 fiscal year, caseworkers provided various types of support to these individuals including support for the development of employability plans as a means to attach to the labour market. Other direct services provided include:

- Assessment Services
- Employment and Career Counseling
- Referrals to appropriate service providers
- Referrals for training programs
- Support for individuals requiring a job coach
- Support for employment participation

In addition to the direct services provided, approximately 190 interventions were made through the LMAPD program supporting individuals to receive technical

aids, tools, training and other supports they required to participate in their employment plans or to remain employed.

The primary objective of the LMAPWD program administered by the Department of Community Services is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. This is achieved through the provision of employment related supports and services that assist disabled individuals to obtain and/or maintain full or part time employment in the competitive labour market.

During fiscal year 2013 – 2014, the Department of Community Services continued to work with a number of different organizations who are committed to supporting Persons with Disabilities. These organizations offered both pre-employment and employment focused programs.

One organization, ***reachability***, offered two programs, One Step Closer and Think 1st. One Step Closer assists participants to successfully address concerns regarding confidence and conflict management issues. The Think 1st Program focused on improving the cognitive thinking skills and strategies of youth with varying forms of mental health issues in order to improve their employability. A series of workshops provided extensive opportunities to build cognitive thinking skills and strategies that would assist them on a daily basis in the accumulation of successful life skills and reaching their optimal employment potential.

Through a partnership with the ***Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Network Society***, entrepreneurs with disabilities receive support in the form of business counseling, business plan review and critique and mentoring. In addition to providing service directly to individuals, this organization works to build awareness with business service providers to motivate them to enhance their support of entrepreneurs with disabilities. It is estimated that in 2013, over 700 entrepreneurs with disabilities received support or guidance through this organization.

***Prescott Group Agency*** uses funding provided to hire an Employment Coach. For the cost of one person's wages, the Employment Coach is able to assist 12 individuals having a disability maintain their employment. She visits their job site on an ongoing basis and through appropriate interventions and supports, is able

to help people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities maintain their employment in the community.

***Pathways to Employment Society*** is a social enterprise with a mandate to develop employment skills and provide real employment for individuals who have a mental illness. This organization develops employment opportunities through the creation of businesses. Individuals work in the areas of recycling, office cleaning, document preparation, copying and binding and building and ground maintenance. Staff provides proper training and support to employees using best practice models and the principles of recovery that are individualized and person-centered.

The ***Affirmative Ventures Association*** provides employment services in the form of employability training, job coaching and job development for approximately 80 individuals. Through a number of social enterprises, individuals are taught employability and job specific skills and gain valuable work experience. Job coaches provide ongoing support to individuals when they move to work in the community.

***TeamWork Cooperative*** provides case management and specialized employment services to persons who are deaf and hard of hearing. By combining the skills of a deaf case manager and local contracted interpreters with ASL ability, this organization is able to respond to the employment needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals who require assistance connecting to the workforce in the Halifax Regional Municipality.

***New Leaf Enterprises – Therapeutic Work*** provides job coaching to assist individuals having physical and cognitive disabilities to gain work experience through the operation of a catering business. Individuals receive training and support with the goal of assisting them to return to independence in their community and vocational environment.

## Employment Support Services Participant testimonials:

Casey (not her real name) shares her experience in the **One Step Closer Program**.

*“I was nervous about coming here at first, but the atmosphere once I got here changed by feeling of nervousness to excitement and curious. I have learned so much from this program that it has changed my complete outlook on life and the workplace. I learned so much about myself that I didn’t even know or even think about before. I felt like we were all family, and that made me want to be here every day even more. My confidence and self-esteem has taken a major boost these past 2 weeks, it’s a bit sad that it has come to an end, it seems time flew by too fast. Joe was an amazing instructor who made it fun, and the way he explained things made it so easy to understand and it sunk in a lot easier too. I am very thankful I had this opportunity and look forward to more opportunities in the upcoming future”.*

This young lady shared her experience participating in the **The Think 1<sup>st</sup> Program**.

*“The Think 1<sup>st</sup> program changed my life in so many ways. It was one of the best programs reachAbility has for building self-confidence, self-esteem and just overall positive attitude in life. My confidence in myself has gone up so much; I still find it hard to believe. It gave me more motivation to want to do better in life. Jenn and Lindsay are two amazing people who you can talk to you about anything. They’ve never made me feel like they were judging me, or putting me down.*

*Think 1<sup>st</sup> is about positive attitudes and changing negative thoughts into positive thoughts. I’ve overcome so many of my own negative thoughts which happened almost every day and now when a negative thought pops in my head I push it out with a positive outlook. I would have never learned how to do this if it wasn’t for Jenn and Lindsay and the Think 1<sup>st</sup> program.”*

“June’ (not her real name) is a single mom with one child. June is challenged by ongoing mental health problems and had found going back to work a huge barrier. As a result of the support of the Think 1<sup>st</sup> program, June was able to arrange for daycare and pursue employment. The good news is she is now working full time after a long period of being in receipt of income assistance.

*“Fourteen years ago, I experienced a tragedy in my life that resulted in the loss of my husband, a decline in my health, and I became financially distressed. I was a new mother, supposed to be enjoying maternity leave, but instead, I packed my baby onto my back and was looking for support from various services. I will admit, the service that was most receptive, generous, and offered complete support without prejudice, was **Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Network Society (EDN)**.”*

*After being hospitalized with a head injury – losing some of my vision, speech, and memory – I was uncertain of how to recover financially and EDN was there for me. They navigated services, respected my confidentiality, committed to weekly phone calls, emails, and coached me through the process of entrepreneurship; and more importantly, they restored my hope. They saw something in me I could no longer recognize in myself.*

*With EDN’s assistance, I was able to identify my unique abilities to remain marketable. As a result, I combine storytelling, visioning, self-hypnosis, and practical action plans to inspire my readers to implement action-forward strategies. I guarantee EDN has been the catalyst behind my success.”*

## Program Indicators

<b>Table 1: Community Services LMAPD Program Indicators</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Number of participants completing a program where there is a specific start and end point to the intervention</b>	<b>Number of participants who maintained or obtained employment</b>
One Step Closer	114	114	12
Affirmative Ventures Association	80	10	20
TeamWork Cooperative	61	31	28
Pathways to Employment	48	48	not available
New Leaf Enterprises	5	5	not available
Prescott Group Agency	12	12	2
Entrepreneur Disability Network	700	not available	not available
Think First Project	27	27	6
Technical Aids & Services	160	not available	160
Training	3	3	not available
Post-secondary Education	18	not available	not available

## Labour and Advanced Education

### Post-Secondary Disability Services (PSDS)

The mission of PSDS is to assist students with permanent disabilities in achieving individual success in their post-secondary studies by reducing or removing educational-related barriers through the provision of grants, services and equipment. PSDS serves adult Nova Scotians who live with permanent disabilities studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia

#### Grants, Equipment and Service

- Provision of funding to Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College for on-site disability service delivery
- Financial grants for students to increase participation and reduce debt load based on financial need determined by Nova Scotia Student Assistance (Provincial Access Grant)
- Funding of equipment (computers, assistive devices, ergonomic equipment) and services (tutors, note takers, etc.)
- Funding for American Sign Language Interpreters
- Funding for an adult daily-living needs attendant
- Provision of funding to the Collaborative Partnership Network for short term training programs leading directly to employment
- Provision of funding to Autism Nova Scotia for a Pre-Vocational Workshop program
- Provision of funding to Acadia University for an inclusive post-secondary education program (Axxess Acadia)
- Provision of funding to Skills Canada Nova Scotia for accessible skills competitions

#### Partners

- Nova Scotia Student Assistance Office
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
- Nova Scotia Universities
- Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS)
- Independent Living Nova Scotia (ILNS)
- Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)

- Skills Canada – Nova Scotia
- Autism Nova Scotia

## **On-Site Disability Services**

Disability Services are provided at Nova Scotia Universities and all campuses of the Nova Scotia Community College. Institutions provide direct on-site supports and services for students with disabilities including functional assessments, orientation, instructor-student liaison, tutoring, note-taking, assistive technology provision, and exam accommodations.

Disability Services improve the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities, and enhance the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities<sup>5</sup> who are studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia. Students may apply each year when they make a Nova Scotia Student Assistance Application.

- Student applies and checks Permanent Disability box annually
- Submits medical form (first year only)
- Medical reviewed by PSDS for eligibility (first year only)

## **Provincial Access Grant**

Provincial Access Grants are a financial-need based tuition grant provided to increase participation in post-secondary education and training for students with disabilities by reducing debt load. Students with disabilities frequently take a decreased course load as a disability accommodation, increasing the length of their studies and simultaneously increasing their debt. The maximum grant is \$2,000 per year if an eligible student is attending university and \$1,000 per year if the student is attending college. Funding for this grant is limited. The Nova Scotia

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<sup>5</sup> Permanent disability means a functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary school level or the labour force and is expected to remain with the person for the person's expected life.



Student Assistance Office will assess the financial need of adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who make application for a Nova Scotia student loan. This assessment will determine eligibility for a Provincial Access Grant. The grants improve access to post-secondary education and the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills among persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who are studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia in a program recognized by the Canada Student Loan Program.

### **Equipment and Services Access Program**

Funding for assistive technology/adaptive equipment and services such as tutoring and note-taking are provided to Nova Scotian students with disabilities enrolled in post-secondary education and training. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who make application for a Nova Scotia student loan and have exhausted or are ineligible for the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Disabilities.

### **Interpreting Services**

American Sign Language interpreting and CART services are provided to Nova Scotian students with disabilities participating in post-secondary education through partnership with the Nova Scotia Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians in post-secondary education who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Attendant Care Services**

Self-managed attendant care services are provided for eligible students through partnership with Independent Living Nova Scotia. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with disabilities who require educational-related attendant care to participate in post-secondary education.

## Direct Skills Link – Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)

Short term skills development interventions are provided for unemployed persons with disabilities in the Province of Nova Scotia served by the Collaborative Partnership Network of Agencies. Through this program, clients with disabilities will have an avenue to apply for financial resources for skills development opportunities. These training programs will be of short term duration, not eligible for student loan funding and available through local educational organizations and institutions as well as on-line. This program is a significant resource in providing a diversity of short term educational interventions in response to employers' needs. It improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. It also enhances the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. The target population is adult Nova Scotians with disabilities who are ineligible for Human Resource Investment Fund (HRIF) seeking short term training programs that are not student loan eligible.

Category	Totals To 31 March 2014	Required By 31 March 2014
# Clients in training	315	120
# Clients dropped out*	5	0
# Clients completed training	292	0
# Clients employed**	69	30
# Clients referred for ACC/AT***	19	0
# Clients referred for ASL Interpreting	1	0
# Client consent forms	412	0

\*Dropped out due to course cancellation, personal reasons

\*\*Employed (full time, part time, seasonal, self-employed)

\*\*\* ACC (Referred for accommodations)/ AT (Referred for assistive technology)

## Skills Canada - Nova Scotia Disability Services Initiative

Skills Canada – Nova Scotia (SCNS) is a not-for-profit organization that helps Nova Scotian youth explore skilled trades and technologies, discover their passion and strive for excellence. Through the Disability Services (DS) initiative, Nova Scotians with disabilities are given these same opportunities to

discover skilled trades and technologies. SCNS provides accommodations for persons with disabilities to participate in any of their programs and events and also facilitates workshops specifically for persons with disabilities.

SCNS’s Disability Services initiative is split into three main areas:

- Accommodating those with disabilities into all programs offered by SCNS;
- A workshop series to introduce persons with disabilities to various skilled trade and technology areas;
- Community outreach and awareness.

During the 2013-2014 fiscal year, SCNS’s Disability Services initiative facilitated a total of six workshops: two in photography, three in cake decorating and one in job search skills, reaching a total of 43 students. The DS initiative also ensured that the Nova Scotia Skills Competition, Youth Projects and Presentations were inclusive.

Participants in SCNS’s Youth Projects, Nova Scotia Skills Competition, Presentations and Workshops are given the opportunity to self-identify and provide information regarding any accommodations they require. In the past we have provided readers, wheelchair accessories and modified projects for our participants.

<b>Table 3: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Skills Canada – Nova Scotia Workshops</b>	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2012-2013	25
2013-2014	43

<b>Table 4: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Nova Scotia Skills Competition</b>	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2009-2010	14
2010-2011	21
2011-2012	20
2012-2013	21
2013-2014	14 <sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The drop in self-identification numbers between 2012 -2013 and 2013 – 2014 is due to the shift toward inclusion rather than hosting Abilympics competitions specifically for persons with disabilities.

<b>Table 5: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Skills Canada – Nova Scotia Youth Projects</b>	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2009-2010	14
2010-2011	19
2011-2012	35
2012-2013	16
2013-2014	37

<b>Table 6: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Skills Canada – Nova Scotia Presentations</b>	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2012-2013	69
2013-2014	136

## Success Story

Sarah Sullivan has always had a sweet tooth. When she was a little girl, she would spend time in the kitchen with her mother, watching her bake and helping where she was able.

*“I would pull a chair into the kitchen and watch my mom bake. When I got a little older, she would let me help her. I really cherished that time with my mom.”*

When she started school, Sarah struggled to keep pace with her classmates and fell behind. Her teachers took notice and she was soon diagnosed with a learning disability.

*“It felt awful not being able to keep up with the rest of my class. At first I hated having to go to the Learning Centre for my classes. I wanted to be in my old class with my friends.”*

Meanwhile, she continued to spend time in the kitchen, baking with her mother. It had become a weekend ritual. Despite her struggles in school, Sarah found that she didn't have any trouble reading recipes or correctly measuring the ingredients.

*"Maybe it was because I was more relaxed – baking has always had a calming effect on me. It's like rest of the world falls away when I'm in the kitchen kneading dough. I'm able to concentrate on what I'm doing and don't make as many mistakes."*

By the time Sarah entered high school, she had embraced the Learning Centre environment and her grades had improved. She also began to work part-time at a bakery.

*"It just felt like a natural fit. I spent so much of my childhood in a kitchen so I wanted to see what it would be like to work in a more professional environment. Besides, I thought it would be really neat to get paid to do something that I already love to do!"*

As her final year approached Sarah began to think about her future and what career path she might take. She knew that she really enjoyed working at the bakery, but was unsure if it was the right path. Near the end of the school year, her teacher came to class and announced that a local organization [Skills Canada – Nova Scotia] would be coming in to do two workshops – photography and cake decorating. Sarah immediately chose cake decorating.

*"Choosing that workshop was the best decision. As I decorated my cake, it became clear what my career path would be. I realized how much I would miss baking and being in a kitchen if I chose anything else."*

Sarah plans to apply to a baking program next year and hopes to one day open her own bakery. Her first employee? Her mom, of course!

## **Autism Works – Pre-Vocational Program**

Autism Nova Scotia's Pre-Vocational Workshop program provides on-site job coaches, training modules and supportive infrastructure for pre-vocational

students with autism to succeed in the workplace. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. It also enhances the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. Target population is high school students with autism who are seeking successful employment or transition to a relevant post-secondary environment.

## Success Stories

As part of the follow up to the program there are some notable success stories which deserve to be highlighted:

**Adam:** In 2011, Adam participated in the Pre-Vocational pilot. He returned to school and after graduating availed himself of the services offered at Autism Nova Scotia and with the assistance of a job coach was able to secure paid employment in summer of 2012.

**Stephen:** Stephen was enrolled in the 2012 year. While he was involved in the modules he used the skills he gained in applying for a job during the 2012 summer. He found a job he was interested in during the job searching module. During the resume writing modules he drafted a resume and cover letter specifically for the job. He applied and got a job interview. He used the mock job interviews through the Job Interview module to prepare himself for the interview and afterward he was a successful applicant and was hired for the 2012 summer. Stephen was employed throughout the summer in paid employment.

**Phil:** Phil participated in the 2012 year. He worked through some difficult behaviours while working and managed to complete his placement. Afterwards, Phil had demonstrated strong vocational skills and was hired into the Promise of a Pearl Social Enterprise two days a week.

**Ivan:** Ivan was a part of the 2012 STAR Program. He had difficulties in the past with employment and had demonstrated aggressive and destructive behavior. He also had demonstrated those behaviours in the STAR Program, but after the program was modified he was able to complete his placement with success.

**Brendan:** Brendan was a part of the 2011 pilot. He was placed at the Legal Information Society of Nova Scotia (LISNS) and in 2011/2012 attended NSCC. For his work term placement for NSCC, he was able to use the relationship he formed with the LISNS and returned in the 2012 summer term to do his work placement.

**Matt:** Matt was a part of the 2012 program. He is currently employed at Pete's Frootique in Halifax.

**Tyler:** Tyler was a part of the 2012 program and is now seeking out employment independently.

### **Axcess Acadia**

Axcess Acadia is an Inclusive Post-Secondary Education program funded through Post-Secondary Disability Services in partnership with the Student Services at the Department of Education and Acadia University in Wolfville Nova Scotia. This is the 2nd year for the program.

Through Axcess Acadia, students who do not meet the current admission criteria set by the university and self-identify with a developmental or an intellectual disability, can attend Acadia through a participatory audit program. In this program, Axcess students enroll in any of the current course offerings from the university calendar. Students select courses of their choice and interest, and participate in the course activities, which relate to their individualized learning goals and potential employment paths. After Axcess Acadia students have completed the courses according to their personalized plans, they will graduate alongside their peers with a certificate of completion. In addition to academic pursuits, the students in the Axcess program receive support to build social skills and life experiences through participation in campus and community activities, and engagement in social activities with their peers. During the first year running at Acadia, the Axcess program had one student enrolled for the full academic year and one for the second term only. Second year, both of those students returned and were joined by three new students! There are 5 Axcess Acadia students for this third program year.



## Program Indicators

### On-Site Disability Services, Provincial Access Grant, Equipment and Services Access Program, Interpreting Services and Attendant Care Services

## Participation and Graduation

The trend since 2003/2004 for students with disabilities identifying their disability to their post-secondary institute in Nova Scotia has been positive. In 2013/2014 institutions reported 3,721 students with disabilities, a decrease of 7.8% since 2003/2004. Analysis will be required to determine the nature and cause of this decrease. The trend has remained positive for those students who register with Post-Secondary Disability Services to be eligible for programs/supports with 1,787 students in 2013/2014, an increase of 113.5% since 2005/2006. Table 1 provides values for both the number of students reported by institutions and the number of students registered with PSDS.



**Table 7: Number of Students with Disabilities attending post-secondary training from 2003/2004 to 2012/2013**

School year	Number students* registered with PSDS eligible for programs/supports	% Increase	Number students** reported by Nova Scotia universities and Nova Scotia Community College	% Increase
2003/2004			1600	-
2004/2005			1949	21.8%
2005/2006	837	Baseline	2263	16.1%
2006/2007	955	14.1%	2448	8.2%
2007/2008	1062	11.2%	2719	11.1%
2008/2009	1020	-3.9%	2968	9.2%
2009/2010	1352	32.5%	3124	5.3%
2010/2011	1481	9.5%	3314	6.1%
2011/2012	1582	6.8%	3519	6.2%
2012/2013	1670	5.6%	4034	14.6%
2013/2014	1787	7%	3721	-7.8%

\*The number of PSDS registered students includes Nova Scotia students studying at post-secondary institutions out of province (OOP) or private career colleges (PCC) within Nova Scotia.

\*\*The institution reported total per year also includes the corresponding number of PSDS registered students eligible for programs, including OOP and PCC students.

**Table 8: 2004/2005 to 2012/2013 student with disability graduates**

School year	Number of graduates	Percent Increase
2004/2005	369	baseline
2005/2006	517	41%
2006/2007	537	4%
2007/2008	578	8%
2008/2009	574	0%
2009/2010	687	20%
2010/2011	652	-5%
2011/2012	712	9%
2012/2013	743	4%
2013/2014	854	14.9%

## Health and Wellness

### Mental Health Services

In Nova Scotia, there continues to be a focus on developing and delivering services to help working age individuals living with mental illness to prepare for and attain waged employment. This is based on the belief that work is a deeply regenerative & re-integrative force in our lives, that employment is a fundamental right of citizenship, and that employment opportunities need to be available to all members regardless of diagnosis or disability. It is commonly known that mental health disorders have an impact on other indices of health and well-being. However, the economic burden of mental illness in terms of medical expenses, health care utilization, loss of productivity, absenteeism and unemployment is also very real, and has been underscored in many reports including those from Health Canada<sup>7</sup> and The Public Health Agency of Canada<sup>8</sup>.

In Nova Scotia, Mental Health Services includes several regional programs incorporating a recovery, rehabilitation and employability focus. These *mental health employability programs* are delivered by Nova Scotia's district health authorities (DHAs). The Nova Scotia Department of Health and Wellness funds the DHAs to deliver these (and other) services to Nova Scotians living with mental illness. Located across the province, the mental health employability programs - available under Community Supports for Adults (CSA) Programs and Services - can be accessed through Clubhouses, Clubhouse-inspired programs, Employment Skill Development and Support Programs, and community-based recovery, rehabilitation and employment programs.

The overarching objective of the mental health employability programs is the increased well-being, independence and employability of individuals living with mental illness. Each of the mental health employability programs develops its own unique approach and priorities towards increasing the health, social,

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<sup>7</sup> Health Canada (2002) A Report on Mental Illness in Canada. Ottawa: Health Canada. Cat. N. 0-662-328 17-5.

<sup>8</sup> Lim K-L, Jacobs P, Ohinmaa A, Schopflocher D, & Dewa CS (2008). A new population based measure of economic burden of mental illness in Canada. *Chronic Diseases in Canada*, Vol. 23 (3), pp 92-98/ (Available online at: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2009/aspc-phac/H12-27-28-3E.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2009/aspc-phac/H12-27-28-3E.pdf))

vocational and financial status of their clients. Across the different programs, a variety of services are delivered that cover the spectrum of recovery, rehabilitation and integration, pre-employment and education support, supported training and education, and supported employment.

Typical participants in these mental health employability programs are working age adults who are living with severe and persistent/recurrent mental illnesses that impacts day to day functioning in the community, and who have the potential for employability. The participants are encouraged and supported to attain personal goals throughout their participation in the employability programs. Depending on the program and on client needs, individualized plans for client progress may include any/all of these goals: improving basic skills, work habits and behaviors; increasing confidence and self-esteem; promoting job skills and work experience; and importantly, enhancing the potential for education, training and employability. Several mental health employability programs are also involved in supported housing activities which support individuals in their employment by reducing stress caused by the lack of stable, safe housing.

In Nova Scotia, the mental health employability programs are located in Amherst, New Glasgow, Sydney, Truro, and in the Halifax Regional Municipality (Bedford/Sackville, Dartmouth and Halifax). These programs address all or some of the five LMAPD priority areas, and provide varying degrees of the following:

- On-site skill development: participation in a “work ordered day” and peer support activities
- Vocational development: supported employment, transitional employment and independent employment
- Job readiness: resume writing, job search, interviewing, crisis vocational counseling and communication skills with employers and peers; career exploration, job shadowing
- Literacy support and support to access formal education (Nova Scotia Community College, university, high school equivalency/GED (general education development)).

Employment Skill Development and Support Programs provide the following: assistance in the development of vocational skills to obtain employment; opportunities to develop work skills for employment; assistance with learning new skills to start one’s own business; assistance for participants to gain

confidence in their own ability to seek job opportunities and obtain satisfactory work. The Employment Skill Development and Support Programs address all five LMAPD priority areas and provide varying degrees of the following:

- Job readiness skill development
- Work skill development
- Vocational training
- Entrepreneurial skill development.

Employment is a key determinant of health, and steps to develop marketable employability skills in persons with living with mental illness are a priority under the Community Mental Health Supports for Adults (CMHSA) core programs. A long term goal for many people living with mental illness is the attainment of employment. However, short term successes such as regular attendance and participation on an individual basis in the above programs and services, are also recognized as important steps along the way to employment. Movement from one activity to another may depend on an individual's choice and his/her readiness for more structure.

Stigma and discrimination are real and significant barriers to individuals living with mental illness who are seeking to regain a normal lifestyle. The Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, *Together We Can*<sup>9</sup> has put the province's commitment to improving mental health and addictions care for Nova Scotians into action. One of the five key priority areas the province is focusing on is reducing the stigma faced by individuals living with mental illness, through greater public awareness. The mental health employability programs are also taking action to change the way employers view individuals living with mental illness, to help reduce associated stigma and discrimination, and to impact employability in a positive way. Many of these programs now offer "transitional" and "supported" employment opportunities for individual members, and have implemented processes for attaining job placements with employers.

## Program Indicators

For the fiscal year 2013-2014, each mental health employability program reported on the total number of individuals who regularly attended and actively

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<sup>9</sup> Available online at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/mhs/mental-health-addiction-strategy.asp>

participated in their programs and services. The total number of individuals who regularly attended and participated in the employability programs is 1,470 (one thousand four hundred and seventy). For the most part, the mental health employability programs and services described in this report are open-ended and provide ongoing support; that is, the programs/services do not have specific start and /or end dates.

<b>Program Name</b>	<b>Number of participants in program/ service</b>	<b>Number of participants completing a program/service (with specific start and end point to the intervention)</b>	<b>Number of participants who obtained or were maintained in employment where the program/service supports this activity</b>
Community Supports for Adults (CSA)/New Hope	177	46 <sup>10</sup>	25 <sup>11</sup>
Connections Halifax	353	**	162 <sup>12</sup>
Connections Dartmouth	217	1	75 <sup>13</sup>
Connections Sackville	79	**	24 <sup>14</sup>
Crossroads Cape Breton	185	**	53
Friendship Club	320+	**	19 <sup>15</sup>
Pathways to Employment	67	**	67
Training, Recovery, Employment and Empowerment (TREES)	72	**	37
<b>All LMAPD funded programs</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>47**</b>	<b>462</b>

\*\* These mental health employability programs and services are open-ended/continuous intakes.

<sup>10</sup> Most programs offered at CSA/New Hope are open-ended. Data reported includes clients completing a program with specific start-end dates (n=46). In the 2013-14 fiscal year, examples of such programs included Smoking Cessation; Bowling for Kids; Food Security Project; Anxiety Management Group; and Gardening Group. Examples of ongoing programs that do not have specific start/end dates include Preserves Making and Knitting Cottage Industry.

<sup>11</sup> Employment activities include volunteering, seasonal, full- and part-time employment activities.

<sup>12</sup> Includes paid employment (n=127) and individuals receiving employment support (n=35).

<sup>13</sup> Includes employed individuals supported only by CDESS (n=30), individuals supported by CDESS and other employment programs (n=18), and individuals supported with CDESS in the process of gaining employment (n=27).

<sup>14</sup> Includes paid employment (n=15), and individuals receiving employment support (n=9)

<sup>15</sup> Friendship Club members participate in specific programs as follows: Food Services (n=4 participants/day), Maintenance (n=7 participants/day), Business (n=2 participant /day), Canteen (n=3 per day), Clerical (n=3 per day).

One employability program was able to report on the number of participants completing a program/service where there was a specific start and end point to the intervention; a total number of 59 (fifty nine) participants completed such programs/services. Data was also collected on the number of participants who obtained or were maintained in employment where the employability program or service supported this activity. The total number of individuals obtaining/maintaining employment was 380 (three hundred and eighty). For some individuals, ongoing assistance was required from the mental health employability programs in order to remain employed. See Table 27.

## **Mental Health Employability Programs in Nova Scotia**

### **Community Supports for Adults Program/New Hope Psychosocial Rehabilitation Site (Mental Health Services, Pictou County Health Authority)**

The Community Supports for Adults (CSA) program, which includes the New Hope Psychosocial Rehabilitation Site, is a psychosocial rehabilitation program for adult clients (19 years of age and over) of Pictou County living with severe and recurrent mental illness. The program includes case management, psychiatric consultation, as well as a number of psychosocial rehabilitation related programs that take place in the New Hope site and community at large. Where appropriate, as part of their recovery philosophy and model the program works to *connect employers with persons with disabilities* (an LMAPD priority area) through partnerships with community agencies. The program also identifies *education and training* and *building knowledge* (LMAPD priority areas) amongst its goals. Planning for a new group for early psychosis clients under age 30 is underway to begin in 2014.

### **A success story from New Hope**

#### **Delliah's Story (name changed)**

Delliah was essentially a recluse when first entering the program, going out only to get groceries and for blood work. She began working with a case manager and she began attending programs at New Hope which opened up opportunities for her. She learned about her illness, medication and blood work which increased

stability. Delliah was able to learn to socialize in a safe environment which increased her comfort and skill in dealing with people. She was able to gradually build up tolerance for a full-day routine through working on a variety of projects in the program. Through new hope sponsored outings, she was able to try new things and expand her “comfort zone”. She began volunteering at a local charity store and was provided with stress management and coaching supports around this. Delliah was successful in getting a full-time position with Home Care and has been with them now for 6 months. -- Reprinted with the permission of “Delliah” - a client of the Community Supports for Adults Program/New Hope.

### **Connections Dartmouth (Recovery and Integration Services/Mental Health Services, Capital District Health Authority)**

Connections Dartmouth helps people living with serious mental illness realize their path to self-sufficiency. The distinct culture is rooted in innovation, personal discovery, and the belief that everyone has potential. Connections Dartmouth is informed by a spirit of entrepreneurship. We believe that by recognizing and strengthening the assets of people and communities, we are more likely to inspire transformation. A dynamic environment generates innovative ideas and practices. As a program within the Mental Health and Addictions Program at Capital Health, a cornerstone of our success is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of our work takes place in the community. Peer support based on shared lived experience is fundamental. Witnessing peers’ successes makes it possible for people to imagine a different life for themselves – as students, as employees, as active and engaged citizens.

The environment at Connections Dartmouth does not separate the fundamentals that contribute to a successful recovery: employment, education, skills development, housing & outreach, health & wellness, clinical care, family involvement, social & recreational, peer and individualized supports. Each person creates a unique recovery plan based on their identified priorities.

Connections Dartmouth supports individuals living with mental illness to find, secure, and maintain employment within the existing labour market. In pursuit of this end, Connections Dartmouth has developed relationships with private and public sector employers, as well as with collaborative partner organizations also



working toward this goal. Providing this core service, it involves working simultaneously with both employers and individuals living with mental illness. Individuals established their employment/educational goals and ongoing supports, networking, advocacy is provided to assist the individuals in reaching their goals. The employment supports can be offered in various ways:

- Job seekers are assisted (as needed) with career exploration, key related skill upgrading, resume development, job search, initial contacting, and interview preparation.
- Employed individuals are assisted with job coaching, supplemental training required, and managing any stressful situations that arise.
- Employers are assisted in finding appropriate candidates for job openings.
- Connections Dartmouth also assists employers to learn to work with employees living with mental illness by providing educational information, and practical, experientially based advice.

Connections Dartmouth Employment Support Service (CDESS) staff also develop a wide array of initiatives best defined as social business. Essentially, this involves helping to create opportunities where none exist. This addresses the need for opportunities which are accessible and manageable for persons with very challenging on-going symptoms arising from their illness. Within this area, CDESS staff has helped to create a new business such as the Harbour View Work Crew, this allow persons living with mental illness to re-enter the labour market, actively participate in their community and earn much needed income.

### **A success story from Connections Dartmouth**

Mike's story printed with permission from Mike, a client of Connections Dartmouth:

*"My name is Mike and I have been living in the HRM area for over a year now. I am an adult struggling with mental illness. If it wasn't for my illness, I would never have been acquainted with services such as Laing House and Connections Dartmouth.*



*These supports gave me things to look forward to when things were not so great. There are many people my age that go to these places and it was helpful to talk to others and find out what has worked out for them as far as employment goes.*

*I have learned over the years that having connections in the workforce is a major asset in finding employment and maintaining employment. Employers also look for individuals with people skills and some sort of compatibility in the abilities you have and the abilities required for the job.*

*Connections Dartmouth really kept my eyes open. What I mean by that is when something wasn't working out for me employment wise, there were people I could talk to and point me in the right direction as well as not being so hard on myself.*

*Connections Dartmouth introduced me to the Parkers Street Furniture Bank. From this new organization, I successfully completed a course that taught me the fundamentals of carpentry. When I graduated in December, it was a slow period in the carpentry trade so the Parkers Street Furniture Bank offered to pay my tuition to take a Level 1 Flooring course at the Carpenters Millwright Trades College. From there, I right away gained employment as a Flooring Installer (helper) and have been employed ever since.*

*I must say that being employed to me is the most important aspect to my mental well-being. It keeps me physically fit and mentally active. It also gives me things to look forward to like a pay cheque and a yearly vacation. Work also helps boost my self-esteem and confidence. I also meet lots of people by being out there in the community and work gives me things to talk about.*

*To have a job requires a lot of will power and strength. Many jobs out there require an individual to be able to function at a certain level. There will be challenges along the road and you need to overcome them.*

*Meeting with my psychiatrist at Connections Dartmouth every few months ensured that my medications were working for me and that I was in good physical and mental health. My employment counsellor got me involved with the Parkers Street Furniture Bank which was an important step in getting where I am today. Also, I had several checkups with nurses from Connections to ensure that I was in*

*good health. Laing House was a place I could go to relieve stress and spend quality time with people going through similar things as I was.*

*That is my story thus far.”*

Joanne’s Story printed with permission from Joanne, a client of Connections Dartmouth:

Joanne is a 29 year old woman living with Schizophrenia. When Joanne was 16, she began working as a cleaner at Halifax Metro Centre. She felt that this was a great job, and that she did well at it. She often took on more work than was requested of her, and that made her feel dependable and a hard worker.

Life took a turn for Joanne with the birth of her two children. She left her job to provide a home for her children. Joanne was first admitted to the hospital in 2009. She spent six months at the hospital. Joanne was referred to the Supportive Community Outreach Team, who provided her with extensive community outreach supports to live independently in her community. She was then transferred to Connections Dartmouth in 2012 where Joanne was focusing on improving her daily community living.

In the spring of 2014, Joanne wanted to meet staff of Connections Dartmouth who supports individuals with employment. She explained that through the years of dealing with her illness, the one thing that was missing was employment. She told us that it has been difficult dealing with the fact that she has an illness, but that she was ready and motivated to move on.

Joanne interviewed for a position with Harbour View Work Crew, social business with Connections Dartmouth and was successful at obtaining the job. She demonstrated immediately that she was a hard worker and determined to do well. Her job is to clean the grounds/ parking lots at the Nova Scotia Hospital.

After four months of employment, Joanne is doing an excellent job. She is dependable; enthusiastic and determined to meet her goals of full time employment. In her words, Joanne says work has provided her with self-worth and with something to do that is worthwhile. She says she is no longer bored, and

is actually tired at the end of her day. Joanne also shared that she is pleased with her extra income. She is able to spend more on groceries and social activities. The next step will be to support Joanne in finding full time employment. The Harbour View Work Crew gave Joanne a unique employment opportunity, after 12 years of not working. This has been a stepping stone toward full time employment.

### **Connections Halifax (Recovery and Integration Services/Mental Health Services, Capital District Health Authority)**

Connections Halifax helps people living with serious mental illness realize their path to self-sufficiency. The distinct culture is rooted in innovation, personal discovery, and the belief that everyone has potential. Connections is informed by a spirit of entrepreneurship. We believe that by recognizing and strengthening the assets of people and communities, we are more likely to inspire transformation.

A dynamic environment generates innovative ideas and practices. As a program within the Mental Health and Addictions Program at Capital Health, a cornerstone of our success is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of our work takes place in the community. Peer support based on shared lived experience is fundamental. Witnessing peers' successes makes it possible for people to imagine a different life for themselves – as students, as employees, as active and engaged citizens.

The environment at Connections does not separate the fundamentals that contribute to a successful recovery: employment, education, skills development, housing and individualized support. Each person creates a unique recovery plan based on their identified priorities.

Employment Services support individuals living with mental illness to find, secure, and maintain employment within the existing labour market. In pursuit of this end, Connections Halifax has developed excellent relationships with many private and public sector employers, as well as with collaborative partner organizations also working toward this goal. Providing this core service involves working simultaneously with both employers and individuals living with mental illness.

- Job seekers are assisted (as needed) with career exploration, key related skill upgrading, resume development, job search, initial contacting, and interview preparation.
- Employed individuals are assisted with supplemental training required, and managing any stressful situations that arise.
- Employers are assisted in finding appropriate candidates for job openings.

Connections staff also assist employers to learn to work with employees living with mental illness by providing educational information, and practical, experientially based advice. These core services have resulted in hundreds of competitive job placements over the years.

Employment Support Unit (ESU) Staff also develop a wide array of initiatives best defined as social enterprise. Essentially this involves helping to create opportunities where none exist. This addresses the need for opportunities which are accessible and manageable for persons with very challenging on-going symptoms arising from their illness. Within this area of service ESU staff has helped to:

- Create new businesses such as the Mindful Mango Cafe and now the Mindful Mango Express Coffee Cart
- Manage contracted employment under our employment cooperative, Gung Ho Employment Cooperative
- Provide supervised, casual work teams for a variety of projects.

These areas of development allow persons living with mental illness to re-enter the labour market, actively participate in their community and earn much needed income.

### **Success stories from Connections Halifax**

Laura's story (name changed):

Laura was referred to Connections in 2006. She had been diagnosed in 2005 with schizophrenia and had a history of ADD and depression. Laura had been in her last year of a Theatre Arts Degree at Concordia University when she became ill. She was a very bright and articulate girl who was completely devastated by the impact

of her illness. Being a type A, high achieving personality, she tended to believe that she would never be able to complete her degree. Laura was experiencing ongoing difficulties with cognitive function, memory, emotional flatness and motivation. She was used to being able to perform to a very high standard and tended to seriously underestimate her abilities and her skill level.

It was difficult to even convince Laura that she could be capable of part time work. Eventually, Laura was persuaded to ease herself slowly back in to part time work. Like so many others in the theatre world, Laura had previous background experience as a server in restaurants and in the retail industry. She decided that it would be best to start with something that she knew. We assisted Laura to update her resume and help her contact management in a couple of very artsy clothing and 2<sup>nd</sup> hand stores. Laura thought the pace would be slower in those environments and that she would be able to manage it.

Unfortunately, those efforts were not successful, mostly due to poor timing (stores had just recently hired). However, the positive feedback from the interviews helped boost Laura's confidence. She decided to move home to Lunenburg for the summer and applied to work as a server in an upscale seafood restaurant. This time Laura was successful. Laura succeeded at holding that job throughout the summer and fall and came back to Halifax with a drive to do work that was more meaningful and inspiring for her.

Laura was passionately interested in understanding all she could about her illness and about recovery from psychotic illnesses. In her words "I have a great enthusiasm for recovery from mental illness, compassion for people at all stages, with a strong belief in the power of creativity and meaningful activity to reconnect and strengthen the very things that mental illness can seem to take from people."

She decided that she would like to use her background in theatre and drama to help others. She began by researching and co-developing a buddy program at the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Program. She looked for every opportunity to learn and next completed a peer counseling course put on by Laing House and Dalhousie University. Soon she was running a drama group for mental health consumers through the Healthy Minds Cooperative.

We then worked with Laura to apply for a position as a peer support worker at Laing House. In 2007, Laura was hired as the first peer support worker at Laing House. She developed and ran drama and writing groups along with offering support to others.

As a result of these experiences, Laura developed a new goal. She wanted to do a Masters in Drama Therapy at Concordia University in Montreal to build on her theatre background and her interest in helping others. In order to do this, Laura needed 2 more university credits to complete her undergrad degree. In the summer of 2009, we worked with Laura to apply for funding through TeamWork Cooperative for 2 psychology courses. Laura passed those courses with flying colours. She went through a very intensive and rigorous screening process and was accepted to the Masters of Drama Therapy Program in 2010.

Once again, Laura did extremely well in the program despite some difficult times. She returned to Halifax in 2013 and began once again working in her peer support role at Laing House and with The Schizophrenia Society of Nova Scotia. In her program, she had developed a one woman play about her lived experience of her mental illness entitled Heartwood. This production has since been professionally produced and she has toured throughout Canada performing the play. Laura has also been a keynote speaker and spoken work performer at countless professional conferences throughout Canada.

Currently, Laura is working in a peer support role at Dalhousie University with Student Services. She is also in the process of writing and developing new theatre productions and has been awarded National Arts grants to so.

### **Connections Sackville (Recovery and Integration Services/Mental Health Services, Capital District Health Authority)**

Connections Sackville is a service that helps people living with serious mental illness realize their path to self-sufficiency. The distinct culture is rooted in innovation, personal discovery, and the belief that everyone has potential. Connections Sackville is informed by a spirit of entrepreneurship. We

believe that by recognizing and strengthening the assets of people and communities, we are more likely to inspire transformation.

The staff, management, and participants, strive to create an environment that generates innovative ideas and practices. As a program within the Mental Health and Addictions Program at Capital Health, a cornerstone of our approach is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of our work takes place in the community. Peer support, based on shared lived experience, is fundamental. Witnessing peers' successes makes it possible for people to imagine a different life for themselves – as students, as employees, and engaged citizens.

The environment at Connections does not separate the fundamentals that contribute to a successful recovery: employment, education, skills development, housing & outreach, health & wellness, clinical care, family involvement, social & recreational, peer and individualized supports. Each person creates a unique recovery plan based on their identified priorities.

Connections Sackville supports individuals living with serious and persistent mental illness to find, secure, and maintain employment within the existing labour market. We have learned from the successes and experiences of Connections Dartmouth and Halifax. We have begun to develop relationships with private and public sector employers, as well as with collaborative partner organizations. Providing this core service involves working simultaneously with both employers and individuals living with mental illness. Employment supports can be offered in various ways:

- Job seekers are assisted (as needed) with career exploration, key related skill upgrading, resume development, job search, initial contacting (job development), and interview preparation.
- Employed individuals are assisted with supplemental training required, and managing any stressful situations that arise.
- Employers are assisted in finding appropriate candidates for job openings.



Connections staff also assist employers to learn to work with employees living with mental illness by providing educational information, and practical, experientially based advice.

Connections Sackville is beginning to explore initiatives best defined as social enterprise. Essentially, this involves helping to create opportunities where none exist. This addresses the need for opportunities, which are accessible and manageable for persons with very challenging on-going symptoms arising from their illness. This year, Connections Sackville participants have been offered positions and training opportunities at the Mindful Mango Café, a social enterprise of Connections Halifax.

### **A success story from Connections Sackville**

Brian's story (name changed):

Brian is a 45 year old single man from Lower Sackville. He has a grade 11 education. When he was young, he worked with the Canadian Militia for a few years with no paid employment since that time. He lived most of his life with his mother in their Lower Sackville home. He enjoyed working out at home and spending time with family. He and his mother reported that he spent most of his time isolated in his bedroom.

Brian was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia at age of 25. He was followed by the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis Team and later Mental Health Services Bedford-Sackville (community mental health team). He was referred to Connections Sackville when this service opened in 2012. It was thought that this new recovery-focused service would be helpful.

Brian was initially seen every 2 weeks at home by the Connections Sackville community mental health nurse because he was very anxious about coming to the Connections Sackville Resource Centre. As his nurse gained Brian's trust, he agreed to come to Connections Sackville for visits. During those visits, he described his life-long passion for fitness and his dream was to work as a personal trainer. Brian disclosed that he had attempted a personal trainer course in the past, but failed. This became the focus of his individual recovery plan.



As a first step towards his goal of becoming a personal trainer, Brian agreed to lead (with support of staff) a weekly gentle exercise / slow breathing session for staff and participants at Connections Sackville. Brian was coached before, after and “in-vivo” regarding how to manage his anxiety during these sessions. Initially, he took short “water breaks” to manage his anxiety. He gradually became more comfortable with the group and his role as leader. He recognized the value of the sessions for others and his confidence increased. He was observed to have a gentle manner and he encouraged the other participants appropriately.

As he established relationships with Connections Sackville peers, Brian shared his experience and coached others in stress management techniques that work for him (mainly progressive muscle relaxation). This was very well received by others. They stated “he has been there” and “if this works for him, maybe it will work for me”.

Meanwhile, Brian’s psychiatrist and nurse worked with him to modify his medications for treatment of residual symptoms of psychosis. A new medication was started in the community. Typically, this particular medication requires an elective admission to hospital, but the nurse was able to make necessary time in his schedule to accommodate the intensive clinical monitoring required, so that an admission was avoided. This medication has helped significantly with amelioration of symptoms, further contributing to his recovery.

In the fall of 2013 Connections Sackville established a partnership with a local gym. Connections Sackville participants were invited to use this facility (free of charge) to conduct a twice weekly gym group. Brian has been an active participant in this group. Through this, he has established a positive relationship with the manager of the gym. Simultaneously, Connections Sackville staff supported Brian in his application for funding to take training courses. He successfully completed the “Basic Fitness Theory” course and later the “Resistance Trainer” course. He studied hard and passed these exams with exceptional marks. Brian had conversations with the gym manager about being a personal trainer. He asked her questions and told her about his successful completion of the courses.

When a part-time position became available at this gym, Brian was offered the position. He and his employer continue to receive support from Connections

Sackville staff. Brian has significant anxiety working alone in the gym. A wage subsidy application is being submitted to the Opportunities Fund to enable Brian to have extra training shifts (at little to no cost to the employer) with a goal of increasing his comfort level and confidence so that he will be able to take lone shifts in the gym as required for this job.

The following quotes from Brian demonstrate how the Connections Sackville approach can lead to recovery and employment outcomes for individuals like Brian.

*“I use to spend most of my time hiding in my room. Coming to Connections Sackville was a big first step. The next step, going to the gym, has been expansion of my world.”*

*“I like the social aspect of this arrangement... contact, interaction with others builds confidence, relaxes nerves, decreases inhibition. I find it hard going to a place where I don’t know anyone; having the group makes it a lot easier. Even people who are not from Connections wave to me now.”*

*“Going there (Connections Sackville and the gym) has built confidence. I have enough knowledge that I can help people a little. In the future, if I’m good at it, I might be able to work as a personal trainer.....”*

--Reprinted with the permission of “Brian”- a client of Connections Sackville.

### **Crossroads Cape Breton (Mental Health Services, Cape Breton District Health Authority)**

Crossroads Cape Breton is a community that supports a person’s unique journey of recovery through hope, opportunity and work. Crossroads is based on international standards of practice and is accredited by Clubhouse International. We engage in an objective evaluation of our program and the Clubhouse Model has been accepted for inclusion as Evidence Based Practice by United States Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA). Membership in a Standards-based clubhouse is voluntary and without time limits.

Work and the relationships we build through work are the cornerstones to success in a clubhouse like Crossroads Cape Breton. Members, a term used to denote the importance of people making a choice to become part of our restorative community, participate in all aspects of clubhouse operation – e.g. maintaining our Facebook page, hiring staff, producing our weekly “Newscast”, making decisions about finances, etc.

Members attend Crossroads Cape Breton to improve various aspects of their social, physical and mental health. Our mission is to enable individuals to lead a life that is socially satisfying, dignified and productive; we recognize that being employed in the community is a key to personal recovery for many members. Crossroads services and supports address all five LMAPD priority areas: education and training; employment participation; employment opportunities; connecting employers and persons with disabilities; and building knowledge.

### **A success story from Crossroads**

Genevieve’s story (name changed) – in her own words:

*“I started with Transitional Employment at Crossroads after I was released from a long term institution. This was the first real job I held in four years. I had been very ill and lost my job because of my illness.*

*The job at the Home Depot was, at first, very intimidating because I was dealing with the public and I was afraid that people would recognize me because I had been in the press about my illness. Fortunately this did not happen. I enjoyed my time in the garden center. Eventually when a position was advertised within the Home Depot I applied. I was successful in obtaining the position of cashier and enjoyed the fast pace and interaction with the customers. I stayed there for a year and a half.*

*A pilot project for Peer Support Worker came up at the hospital. There was a lot of competition and I was told that I was the successful candidate based on my interview. I was the first Peer Support Worker in Cape Breton. In this position I mostly did research about what peer support programs were available in Canada. Unfortunately this pilot project was terminated.*

*Then I was called by a social enterprise to work on another pilot project called 'Peer Support/Light Housekeeping' We went into people's homes and supported individuals in cleaning their homes. It gave both parties satisfaction because we felt good about our role and our peers had a clean house.*

*An Employment Skills Development program was held at Crossroads. This first year I took the course, the second year I was the coordinator. It was a very rewarding position as I was based at Crossroads and therefore able to help my peers. I also had a social work student helping me out which made my job easier.*

*One summer when I was not sure where I would work I was once again called to see if I would be interested in working at a social enterprise. The job was supervisor of lawn care. I hesitated to take this position as I had no background in lawn care. However my manager and supervisor assured me that I had the skills necessary for supervision and I would learn the rest of the job. They were right and I had a very enjoyable summer.*

*Recently Crossroads received funding for the festive called Free Your Mind, I initially applied for the event coordinator job, but when they decided that they would not hire anyone for that position, I was offered the position for promotions coordinator. This job was exciting, stressful and rewarding all at the same time. During the beginning of the job I went through several medication changes which made the job more difficult. When I sought support because I was not feeling well I did not find it in places I thought I would but other people were very supportive. The festival was a huge success and for me it was like going to school and graduating with honors.*

*I feel that I have been very fortunate to be able to work in mental health. I am now working on my certification in Peer Support and hope to obtain work at the hospital. I am grateful that there is a place like Crossroads where I can learn, grow and stretch my wings".*

*--Reprinted with the permission of Genevieve- a client of Connections Sackville.*

**Friendship Club (Mental Health and Addictions Services, Colchester-East Hants District Health Authority / Canadian Mental Health Association, Colchester East Hants Branch).**

The Friendship Club provides a safe and supportive environment for adults with a mental illness. This program works with and supports its members in the areas of social well-being, employment supports, personal health practices, coping skills and overall health supports. The program follows the international Clubhouse model of therapeutic rehabilitation. It helps people to feel safe from the stigma of mental illness while in the company of supportive peers and professionals.

At Friendship Club, rehabilitation from mental illness is achieved through therapeutic work-ordered day programs and by participation in social and recreational activities. The therapeutic work programs include food services, maintenance, reception/clerical and business. The recreational activities include such activities as bingo, dances, bowling, skating, walking clubs, fishing and crafts. Self-help groups in such topics as Depression Support and Emotions Management are offered weekly to Friendship Club Members. Affordable meals are prepared four times a week. Members build relationships with members of the larger community through an annual open house, by interacting with volunteers, placement students and the public, and engaging in fundraising activities such as car washes and yard sales.

Friendship Club addresses two LMAPD priority areas:

- **Education and Training:** The goal here is to improve the level of basic work-related skills for persons with disabilities including soft skills, appearance, relationship building skills, group dynamics, organization and adherence to a recovery plan.
- **Employment Participation:** The goal here is to improve the labour market situation and independence of persons with disabilities through employment-related activities such as work-ordered day programming (including Food Services, Maintenance, Business, Canteen and Administrative/Clerical) to help members re-gain skills and confidence lost because of mental illness and associated functional impairments.

Participation in meaningful work through the work-ordered day builds member confidence and skills, and instills as a sense of purpose and belonging, providing a sense of independence and control in the lives of members. Members are better able to maintain stability through the supports they receive at Friendship Club, and in turn, there is increased community awareness pertaining to mental health, mental illness and rehabilitation through the program's community involvement in various areas.

### **A success story from Friendship Club**

Glenda's story (name changed)

Glenda was self-employed for 20 years and no longer able to continue working as a hairdresser, due to mental illness, fibromyalgia, and Carpel Tunnel Syndrome. She was ineligible for CPP-D or EI due to being self-employed.

In 2009 She self-referred to TREES (described later in this report), where staff connected her to community resources such as Careerworks Nova, Service Canada, Opportunities Fund, and NS Department of Education to access possible funding options, but this proved challenging. As a member of Friendship Club, Glenda worked with program staff to develop a long term action plan, and staff provided continuous support throughout the duration of plan. Over time, Glenda accomplished much; the ALP was completed, Human Service 2 year diploma completed Peer Support Specialist certification was completed, as well as volunteer and student placement at CMHA. Glenda is currently on a paid work experience as a Job Coach at SOUP Café. (SOUP stands for Supported Opportunities for Unemployed Persons, and is a recent venture for CMHA. As part of their newly established Supported Workplace Model, SOUP provides an opportunity for individuals to regain skills temporarily lost due to mental illness. Unique in its approach while delivering a high quality product, SOUP has brought forward a swell of community support, all the while challenging the stigma that so often accompanies mental illness).

## Pathways to Employment (Cape Breton District Health Authority)

Pathways to Employment's approach to recovery is through education and employment based on the values and principles of Psychosocial Social Rehabilitation. Pathways follows a fair hiring process that allows applicants an opportunity to participate in an interview to fill a vacancy within one of the 3 social business lines: Property Maintenance; Environmental Repurposing (Wood Shop); and Print shop.

Upon completing this interview process the Program Manager in collaboration with the social business line supervisor choose the best candidates to fill the position available. After the individual is hired as a Pathways to Employment employee, they engage in an orientation process that outlines the expectations, policies, and procedures that are required as a term of employment with the organization. The final phase of orientation is the specific training that is required to work within the social business line. This training is completed in combination with the business line supervisor and peer support from senior Pathways employees. Once the individual is an employee of Pathways a variety of opportunities open up. The employee has the option to maintain employment within one specific business line, request to be cross trained in another business line or be supported in obtaining employment in the greater community. Regardless of what option the individual finds a best fit, Pathways staff offer continuous individualized supports to aid their employees with employment in their recovery process.

Pathways to Employment addresses all five LMAPD priority areas:

- *Education and Training:* Pathways was successful in securing project funding last fiscal year for building and delivering employment workshops for individuals involved in the program. They offer/will offer Communication, Conflict Resolution, Customer Service, Dress for Success, Ethics, Financial Management, Interview Skills, Stress Management, Time Management, Resume Building and Transferable Skills. All of these workshops help our employees in positions within our organization or beyond. In addition to these workshops we engaged instructors for a further series of workshops that would be an asset to individuals looking for employment outside of the Pathways. Including: First Aid, CPR and Food



Handling courses. We had 9/12 individuals secure employment within the community via this program. The project however was only funded for 22 weeks and is not at this current time part of our core program. The program hopes in the future to be able to assist more individuals in furthering their education whether it be for getting high school diplomas or moving on to post-secondary institutions.

- *Employment Participation:* Pathways to Employment operates using the principles of Social Enterprise and Recovery in all aspects of the business. Three distinct social business lines were developed to this end: Property Maintenance (Lawn Care, Towel Washing Service and Custodial Duties); Environmental Repurposing (Woodshop-creating items for resale out of old wooden pallets); and Print Shop. All three business lines have a triple bottom-line: fulfillment of a social mandate (in this case recovery from mental illness), revenue generation, and environmental responsibility.
- *Employment Opportunities:* In the last fiscal year Pathways employed 67 individuals (increase of 29% over last year) within their organization. These waged employees worked a total of 11,613 hours (increase of 42.25% over last year) within the 3 social business lines.
- *Connecting Employers and Persons with Disabilities:* Pathways started a relationship with Central Supplies in Sydney approximately two years ago. Central has utilized 4 of our employees over the past year, on a part-time, as needed basis. We continue to build a solid relationship with the local Nova Scotia Community College. Currently 2 Pathways employees are engaged in employment at their facilities department of the Marconi Campus NSCC.
- *Building Knowledge:* Pathways works to enhance the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. Their staff is continuously monitoring programs both in their social enterprises and in their workplace place to identify best practices.



## Success stories from Pathways to Employment

Jack's story (name changed) – in her own words:

*“When I found out about Pathways, it was at a time in my life filled with anxiety and confusion. I was looking for ways to reintegrate myself and reconnect to the world I had been away from so long because of illness.*

*This organization, through its support, diligence and unwavering patience has helped me regain some of myself day by day.*

*I have capability, intelligence and much to offer my family, friends and community. This can all, unfortunately, be overshadowed by my illness.*

*Thankfully the team at Pathways can see this in me even when I cannot. They have worked with me both on a business and personal level, creating a very holistic experience, leaving me feeling truly supported and truly fought for. I say this not just for the sake of pathos, but when I had reached my darkest days, they gave me a chance when no one else would.”*

*--Written by and reprinted with the permission of “Jack” – a client of Pathways.*

## **Training, Recovery, Employment & Empowerment Services, or *TREES* (Mental Health Services, Colchester-East Hants District Health Authority; Lake City Employment Services/Canadian Mental Health Association - Colchester-East Hants Branch)**

TREES is managed by Lake City Employment Services; established in 1982, Lake City Employment Services Association is a non-profit agency that assists individuals living with mental illness. Their programs use a client-centered approach that encourages individuals to strengthen skills that are necessary to sustain themselves in employment. The goal of the TREES program is to help mental health consumers in the Colchester/East Hants area to improve their quality of life by assisting them in gaining independence through work. Through the TREES program, mental health consumers can work in a wide variety of jobs. This includes full-time and part-time paid employment, as well as volunteer work. TREES also assist clients in training or educational pursuits. Education can include career exploration, obtaining a GED, the ALP program, accessing short training courses, or pursuit of post-secondary studies.

TREES support the principles of psychosocial rehabilitation and welcome the opportunity to be a part of the recovery process. TREES services and supports address all five LMAPD priority areas: education and training; employment participation; employment opportunities; connecting employers and persons with disabilities; and building knowledge.

In 2013-14 TREES employment service continues to provide an integral support model which delivers real help for clients getting back on their feet and on their way to living a healthy life. TREES was able to welcome 48 new participants into its program while continuing to offer employment services to over 70 active participants.

As in previous years, new participants resided in a variety of rural and central locales within Colchester & East Hants area of the province. TREES is mobile, flexible and adaptable to client needs, and offers the option of meeting clients in their rural setting. Without this option, many individuals in the community might not have access to employment services, and/or might not be able to initiate or

continue educational pursuits. The mobile nature of the program combined with a client-centered approach continues to be a successful model.

The good news is that regardless of where one resides or his or her level of job readiness, people are succeeding in employment and retraining. During the year 14 paid employment positions were obtained, 12 volunteer placements accommodated, and 23 STEP work experience placements were set up under a new funding program through Skills Work. These results are remarkable considering the current economic conditions in rural communities, and not having access to a transit system.

The type and level of job varied from a Certified Peer Support Specialist at the Colchester East Hants Health Authority, to a Welder job at Portable Welding in Truro. Regardless of the type or level of job the emphasis is on finding the right job in the right environment for each individual has proven to be a formula that works! An individualized approach to mental health employment counselling means volunteer placements, work place training and educational pursuits are all part of the big picture.

Educational pursuits are a major part of finding purposeful employment and a significant quality of life. In 2013-2014, there were 32 placements ranging from university, college, GED, and the ALP program. As a result individuals are graduating and finding success in a workforce they never imagined was possible!

TREES recognize that without program visibility and community awareness, potential participants can fall between the cracks. Accordingly, they continue to distribute brochures, and deliver free community presentations throughout Colchester-East Hants. They also recognize the need to partner and collaborate with other organizations and work closely with the NS Department of Community Services, COMPAS Program, Nova Scotia Community College, Bridges, Addiction Services, Department of Justice, Mental Health Services, and CareerworksNova who are the key service providers in this region.

Community education and awareness continue to be an integral part of the TREES sustainability, along with “word of mouth” from participants who have accessed services, and remaining knowledgeable about current information on labor market trends and opportunities specific to this region. Highlights for this year

were STEP (Supported Transitional Employment Project) funding accessed through Skills Work an employment initiative through Community Services. Continuous collaboration between Mental Health Services, the COMPASS Program, Department of Community Services, and the Canadian Mental Health Association has strengthened partnerships to better serve the clients we are all supporting.

Thanks are due to the Colchester East Hants Health Authority for funding the program and to the CMHA Colchester East Hants Branch which provides us with office space. We look forward to the challenges of the New Year and to build upon the successes of previous years. Through counselling, compassion, and creativity, TREES shows that individuals

### **Success stories from TREES**

John's story (name changed):

*"It feels great to be able to get back in to the workplace and get paid to do the work I enjoy doing."*

John was in his final year at university when he experienced his first psychotic episode and was unable to complete his degree and unable to work. He spent years working on his recovery, building his confidence and deciding on a career path and struggling to address the gaps in employment. The TREES Project was able to develop an employment plan and contacted an employer within the community to set up a volunteer placement. Once the volunteer placement was completed TREES set up a STEP (Supported Transitional Employment Project) to accommodate a work placement for an additional three months. Both placements allowed John to establish a good rapport with different managers and various co-workers within the hospital cafeteria which quickly transitioned into part time employment in food services.

### **Mental Health Standards**

Employment is a key determinant of health, and mental health programs view developing marketable employability skills in individuals living with severe and persistent mental illness as a priority of the Community Supports programs. The

Community Mental Health Supports for Adults (CMHSA) core program is based on psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery principles and practices, and two models of best practices that adhere to these principles are Supported Employment (SE) and Individual Placement and Support (IPS)<sup>16</sup>. Mental health employability programs embracing these models – including those described in this report -are promoted in the field, and the revised CMHSA standards which embrace these principles are available on the DHW website: <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/mental-health/reports.asp>

## Addiction Services

The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) provides funding to the District Health Authorities in Nova Scotia to support a wide range of services and supports in health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for individuals, families and communities, affected by substance use and/or gambling-related problems. The Canadian Supreme Court has ruled that addiction is a disability under Canadian law. Addiction Services help clients to prepare for, gain, and keep productive roles in the community.

Addiction is a barrier to preparing for, attaining, and retaining employment. The positive impact of LMAPD funding is substantial as it contributes to the reduction of the disabling effects of substance use and/or gambling-related problems. The target population of this funding comprises individuals sixteen years of age or older, who are harmfully involved with alcohol, gambling and/or other drugs.

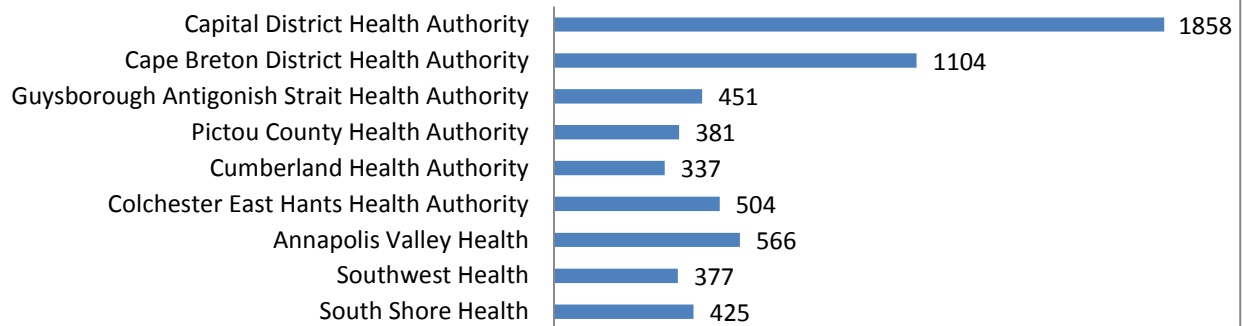
Addictions treatment in Nova Scotia is evidenced-based and is grounded in a holistic treatment that considers all areas of an individual's life, which are affected by an addiction. The continuum of care includes intensive programming such as withdrawal management, structured treatment, as well as community based services, others affected services, outreach and prevention. Clinicians throughout the province regularly engage with other support systems and/or provide direct linkage between clients and to these supports to ensure comprehensive treatment and recovery planning.

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<sup>16</sup> Bond, Gary R., Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, Vol 27 Number 4, Spring 2004.

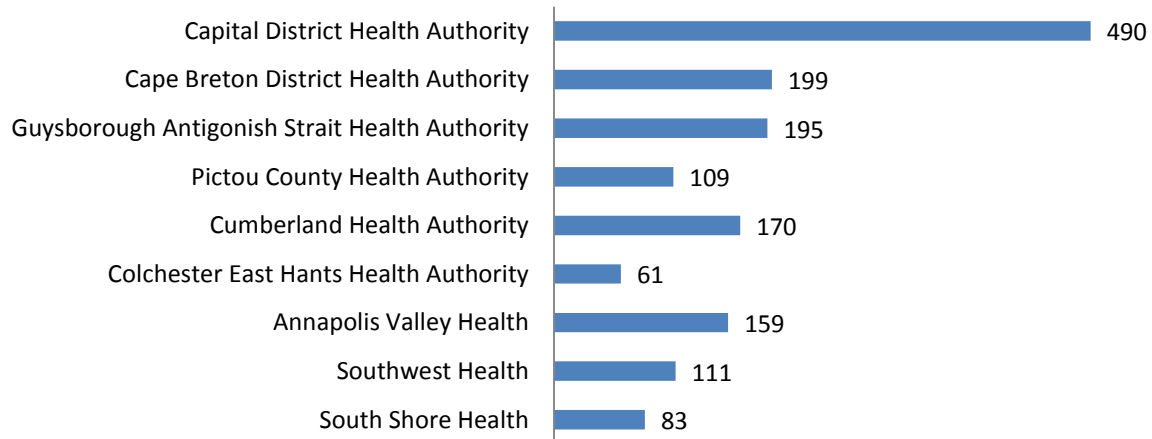
Addiction Services recovers funding of \$2.9 million annually to be applied to the costs of providing the addiction supports and services as described above. Participation in treatment increases stability in a client’s life including the ability to secure gainful employment. Further information about addiction services programs and locations can be found at <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/>.

### Graph 1: Number of Clients Actively in LMAPD 2013-14



Graph 1 includes all unique clients who are 19 years of age and older during the fiscal year of 2013-14 who are actively in the LMAPD program

### Graph 2: Number of LMAPD Clients Discharged 2013-14



Graph 2 includes all unique clients in the LMAPD program who are 19 years of age and older during the fiscal year of 2013-14 and were discharged

## Estimated Cost-shared Expenditures

<b>2013 – 14</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Federal Contribution</b>	<b>Provincial Contribution</b>
<b>Community Services</b>			
<b>Employment Support Services</b>			
Employment related assessment & career counseling staff, program delivery, and programs	4,691,736	919,959	3,771,777
Provision of disability related supports	866,294	179,343	686,951
Special Needs Supports	654,172	274,814	379,358
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>6,212,202</b>	<b>1,374,116</b>	<b>4,838,086</b>
<b>Labour &amp; Advanced Education</b>			
<b>Post-Secondary Disability Services</b>			
Program Administration	478,100	239,050	239,050
Grants to Students	1,003,386	501,693	501,693
Educational Attendant Care	129,470	64,735	64,735
Sign Language Interpreter Services	44,000	22,000	22,000
University Disability Service Delivery	1,351,370	675,685	675,685
NSCC Service Delivery	1,214,800	607,400	607,400
Collaborative Programs	787,682	393,841	393,841
In Kind Contributions	457,422	228,711	228,711
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>5,466,230</b>	<b>2,733,115</b>	<b>2,733,115</b>
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Mental Health</b>			
Clubhouse Programs	4,559,759	1,140,000	3,419,759
<b>Addiction Services</b>			
Addiction Services	11,957,337	3,043,115	8,914,222
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>16,517,096</b>	<b>4,183,115</b>	<b>12,333,981</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28,195,528</b>	<b>8,290,346</b>	<b>19,905,182</b>

## Societal Indicators

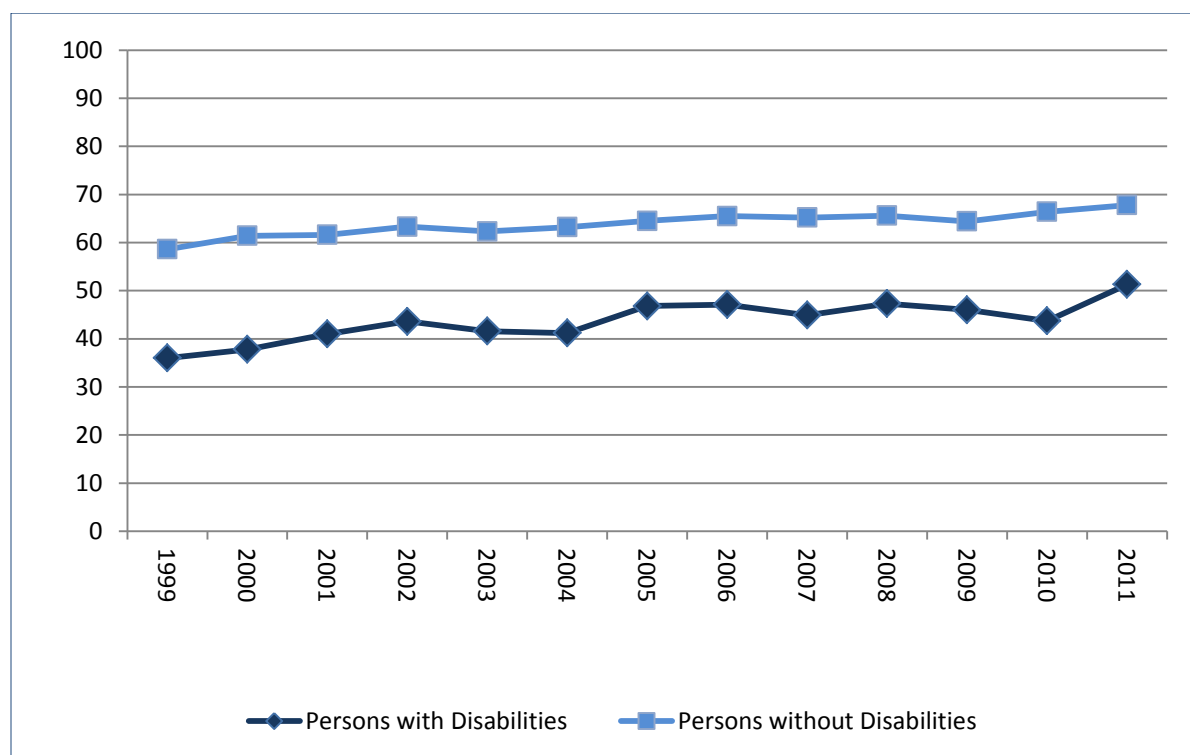
Each year the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities reports have included societal indicators using data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), when available, and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID). This report includes SLID data from 1999 thru 2011 for most of the societal indicators. The SLID is a longitudinal survey, interviewing the same panel of respondents each year over a period of six years. It tracks overlapping panels of individual respondents and is conducted annually. It is a rich source of information about income, employment, education and other characteristics of the adult Canadian population.

Since the first report in 2004 there have been improvements on some of the societal indicators for persons with disabilities. There has been a steady increase in the educational achievements of working aged adults since 1999. There has been an increase in employment and a decrease in the proportions of persons with disabilities who do not participate in the labour force. As the economy grew between 2001 and 2009, the numbers of persons with disabilities who were able to participate in the labour force increased. Greater participation in the labour force was accompanied by increases in average annual incomes and greater numbers of persons with disabilities with earned income. The constant dollar value of average incomes for persons with disabilities has fluctuated year to year as it increased between 2001 and 2009. Over the same period, the constant dollar value of average incomes for persons who do not have a disability increased steadily from one year to the next. These two trends resulted in a decline in the average earnings (constant dollars) of persons with disabilities expressed as a percentage of the average earnings (constant dollars) of persons who do not have a disability. In 2011 the average earnings of persons with disabilities were equivalent to 85 percent of the average earnings of persons without a disability – a 2 percent decrease from 2001. The gap has fluctuated from a high of 95 percent in 2002 and 2005 to a low of 73 percent in 2009, indicating the gap between the



real value of earnings of persons with and without a disability widened during the recession and has subsequently shown signs of some recovery by 2011.

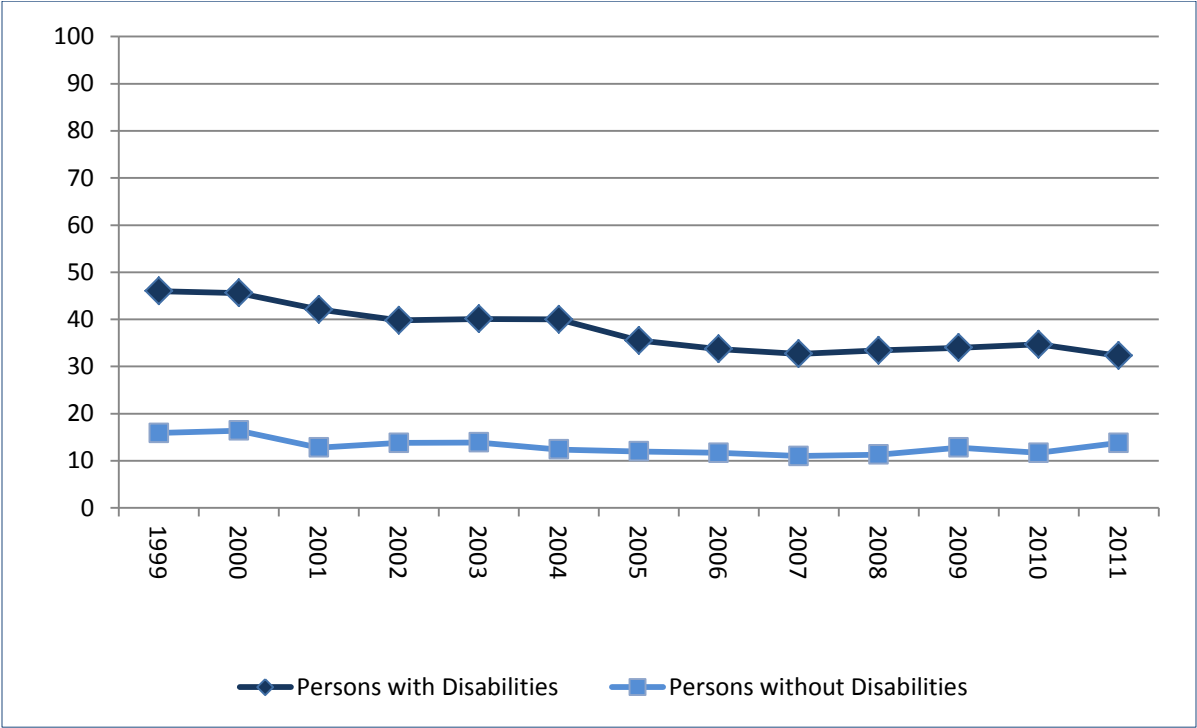
## Labour Force Participation



**Chart 3: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who were employed all year**

The percentage of working aged adult (16-64) Nova Scotians who were employed for an entire year is shown in Chart 3. Between 1999 and 2011 the percentage of full-year employed disabled persons increased substantially by 15 percent. In 2010 the percentage of disabled persons employed for the full year dropped slightly to 44 percent from 46 percent in 2009 and rebounded to an all-time high of 51 percent in 2011. During the same period the proportions of persons who do not have a disability and who were employed for the full year increased from 59 percent in 1999 to 67 percent in 2011. The employment gap between persons who have and persons who do not have a disability fluctuated over the period from 24 percent in 2000 to a low of 17 percent in 2011.

Chart 4 looks at labour market attachment from the opposite perspective. It shows the percentage of working aged Nova Scotians who were either not employed for the full year or who were not in the labour market. Between 1999 and 2011 the percentages of persons who were unemployed or not in the labour force for the full year trended downward. The proportions of disabled persons not working full year decreased from 46 percent in 1999 to 32 percent in 2011, while the proportions of people who do not have a disability and who were not employed all year decreased from 16 percent to 11 percent in 2008 and subsequently increased. Persons without a disability are more likely than persons who have a disability to be employed for the full year. While the proportions of persons with disabilities who were employed for the full year improved between 1999 and 2011, it still remained that significantly more persons with disabilities experienced not being employed for a full year than did persons who did not have a disability.



**Chart 4: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who were not employed all year or who were not in the labour force**

## Income

Along with increased participation in the labour market, Nova Scotians experienced increases in the proportions of working aged adults with earned income between 1999 and 2011. Chart 5 shows the percentages of persons who have a disability and the percentages of persons who do not have a disability who have earned income. This table captures persons who have employment for only a part of the year as well as those who were employed for the full year. Between 1999 and 2011 the percentage of persons with disabilities who had earned income increased from 55 percent to 68 percent. 2011 is also the year of highest incidence of earned income among persons with disabilities. The proportions of persons who do not have a disability and who have earned income remained significantly higher than earned income among persons who have a disability. There has been a greater increase in the percentage of persons with a disability earning income – a 13 percent increase in the numbers of persons with a disability earning income compared to a 4 percent increase among the numbers of persons without a disability earning income. The gap in the proportions of adults with earned income persisted, fluctuated from one year to the next but also decreased between 1999 (27 percent) and 2011 (18 percent).

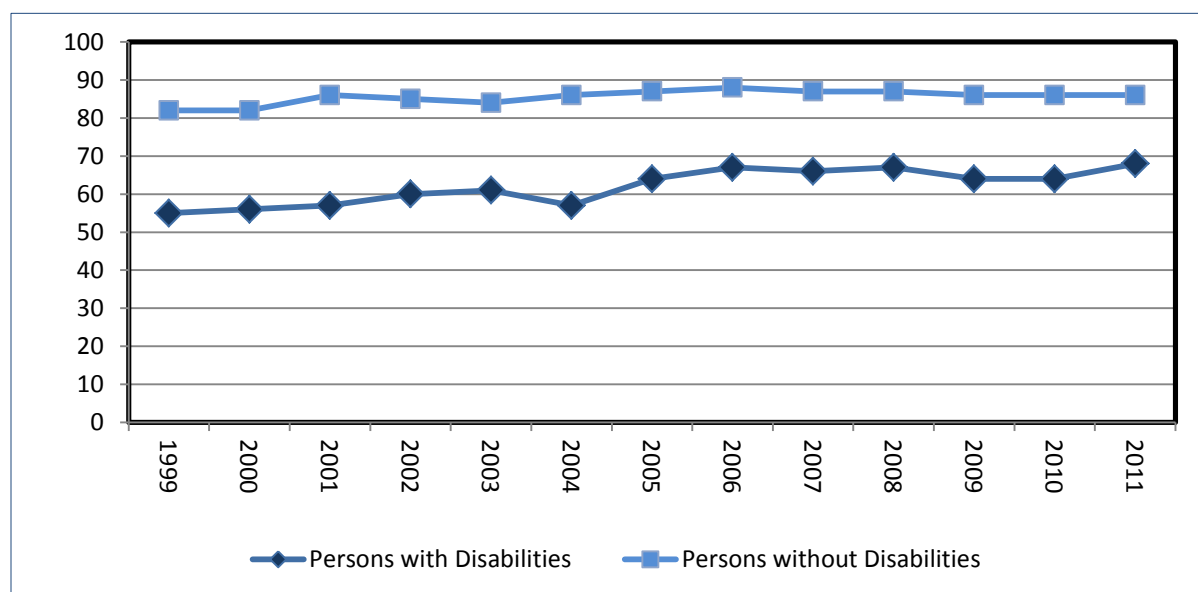
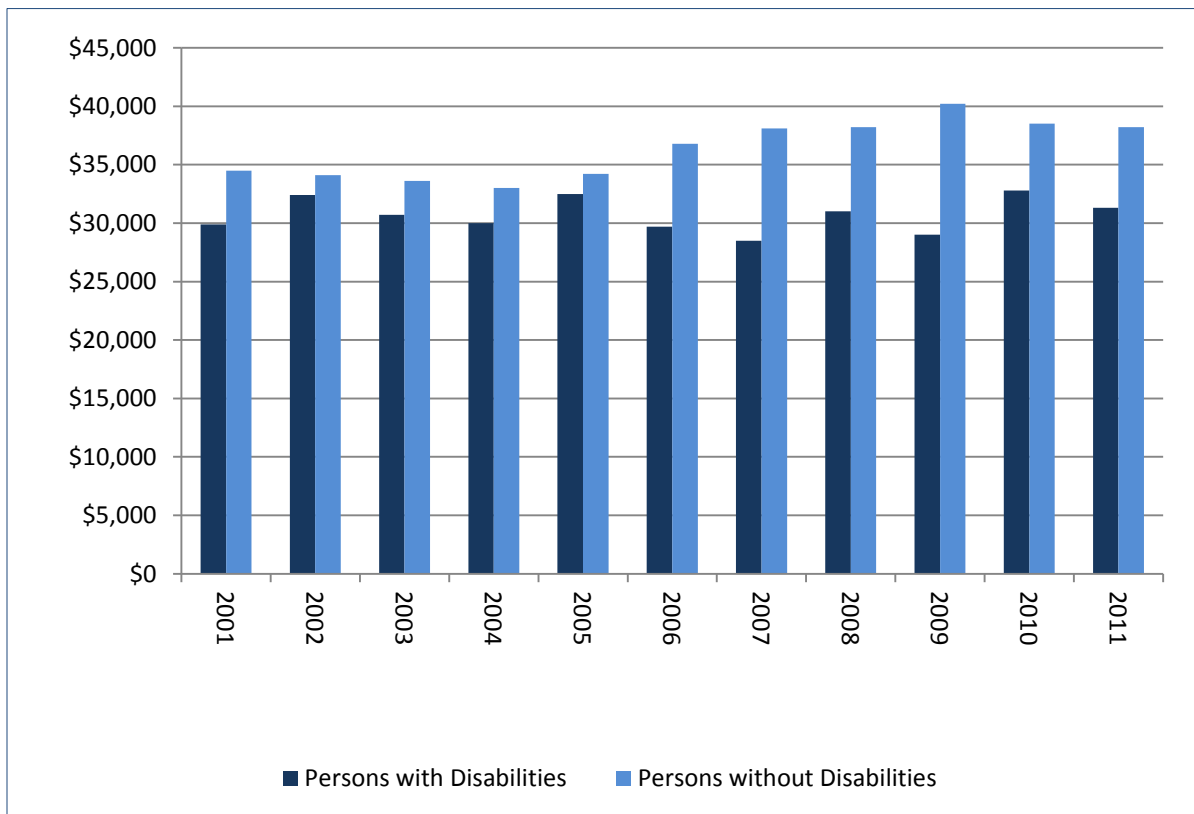


Chart 5: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who had earned income

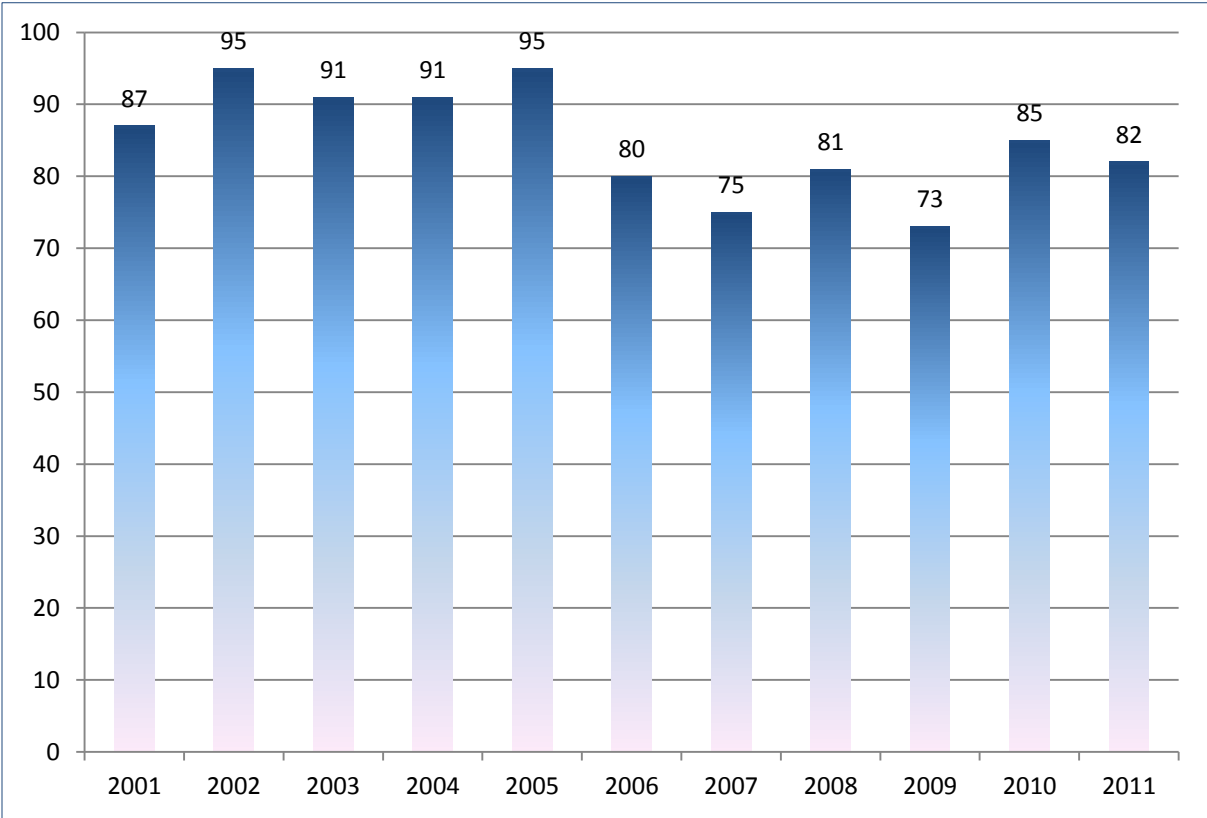


**Chart 6: Average earned incomes among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) in constant \$**

Increases in average annual incomes for persons who have a disability and persons who do not are shown in Chart 6. The average earned incomes fluctuated between 1999 and 2011 for all persons. The average earned income in constant dollars<sup>17</sup> among persons who have a disability increased 5 percent from \$29,900 in 2001 to \$31,300 in 2011. The average earned income among persons who do not have a disability increased from \$34,500 in 1999 to \$38,200 in 2011 – an 11 percent increase. In 2009 the average earned incomes of persons with a disability dropped to \$29,000 – below the average in 2001 then recovered in 2010. The impact of the 2009 recession on the average earned incomes of persons who do not have disability was delayed to 2011 when their average earned incomes decreased. The 2009 recession appears to have impacted person with disabilities

<sup>17</sup> The term ‘constant dollars’ refers to a metric for valuing the price of something over time, without that metric changing due to inflation or deflation. The term specifically refers to dollars whose present value is linked to a specific year. Constant dollars are used to compare the ‘real’ value of an income or price over time. The relative value of the constant dollar in any given year remains the same no matter what year is used as the baseline for the value of money over time as long as the same reference year is used for the comparison of all years in a series. In this series 2010 is the reference year.

more severely than persons without a disability. There is insufficient information to indicate the reasons for this difference.

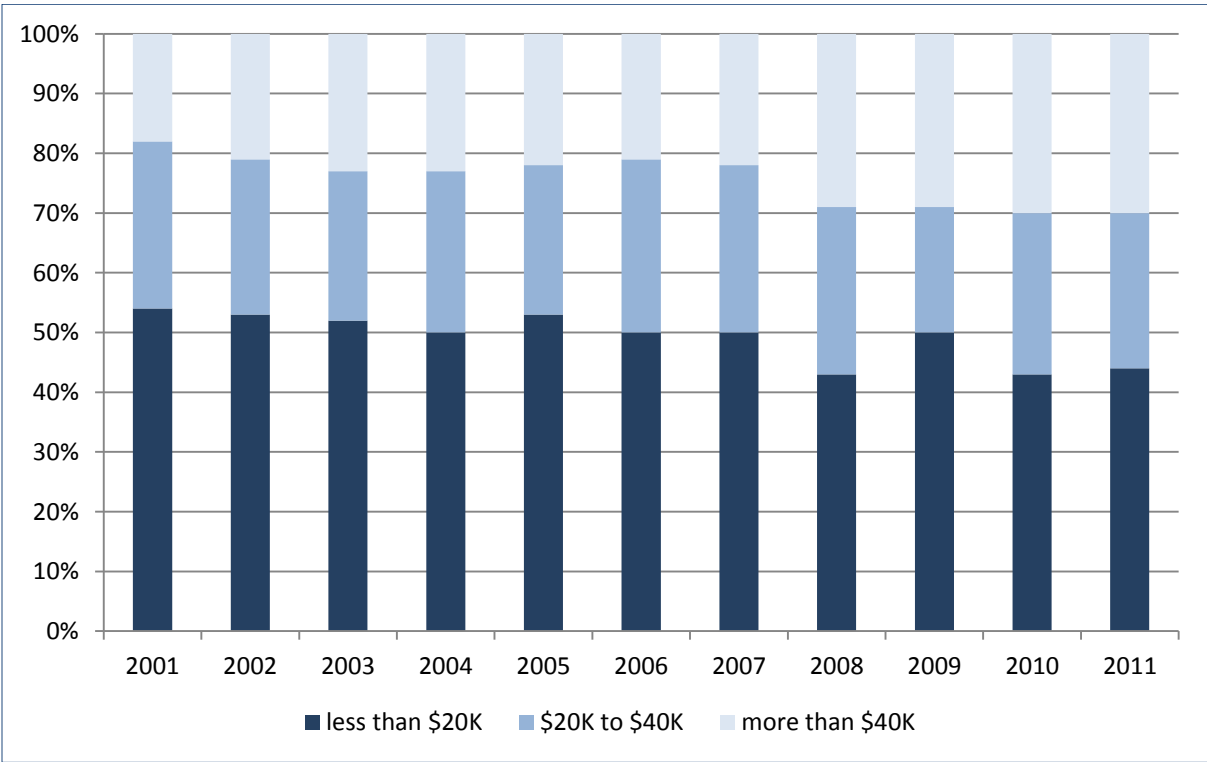


**Chart 7: Average earning of persons with a disability as a percentage of average earnings of persons who do not have a disability in Nova Scotia in constant dollars**

Chart 7 shows the average earnings in constant dollars of persons who have a disability as a percentage of the average earnings in constant dollars of persons who do not have a disability. It shows the combined impact of changes in average earnings of persons with a disability over time in relation to changes in the average earnings of persons who do not have a disability. Although more persons with a disability experienced more employment over the period and have seen an increase in the value of earned incomes, these improvements have declined relative to the increases in employment and average earned incomes of persons who do not have a disability. Since 2006 person with a disability have fared comparatively worse in the labour market than persons who do not have a disability, although there are some tentative signs of recovery in 2010 and 2011. The increased employment experienced among persons with a disability did not

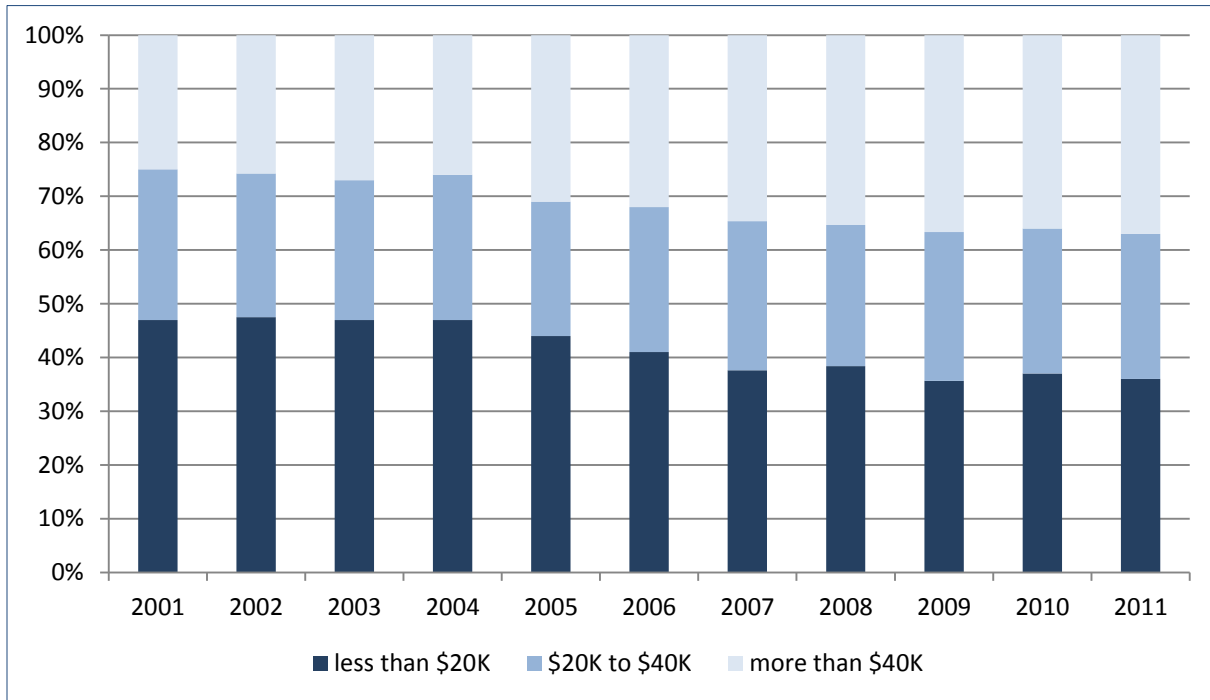
result in an increase in average earnings in constant dollars compared to persons without a disability. A possible explanation could be that new earners enter the labour force at lower rates of pay than experienced earners thus depressing the average earnings for the group. If more earners who have a disability work fewer hours than do earners who do not have a disability, this would also negatively impact average earnings.

Charts 8 depicts the income distribution of working aged Nova Scotians who have a disability and Chart 9 show the income distribution for the Nova Scotians who do not have a disability. More persons with disabilities have lower incomes than do persons who do not have a disability. Both groups of earners are doing better in terms of more people earning higher incomes in 2011 than in 2001. Among earners without a disability (Chart 9) and among those with a disability (Chart 8) there is a smaller proportion in the lowest income category, approximately the same proportions of earners in the middle category and higher proportions of earners earning more than forty thousand a year.



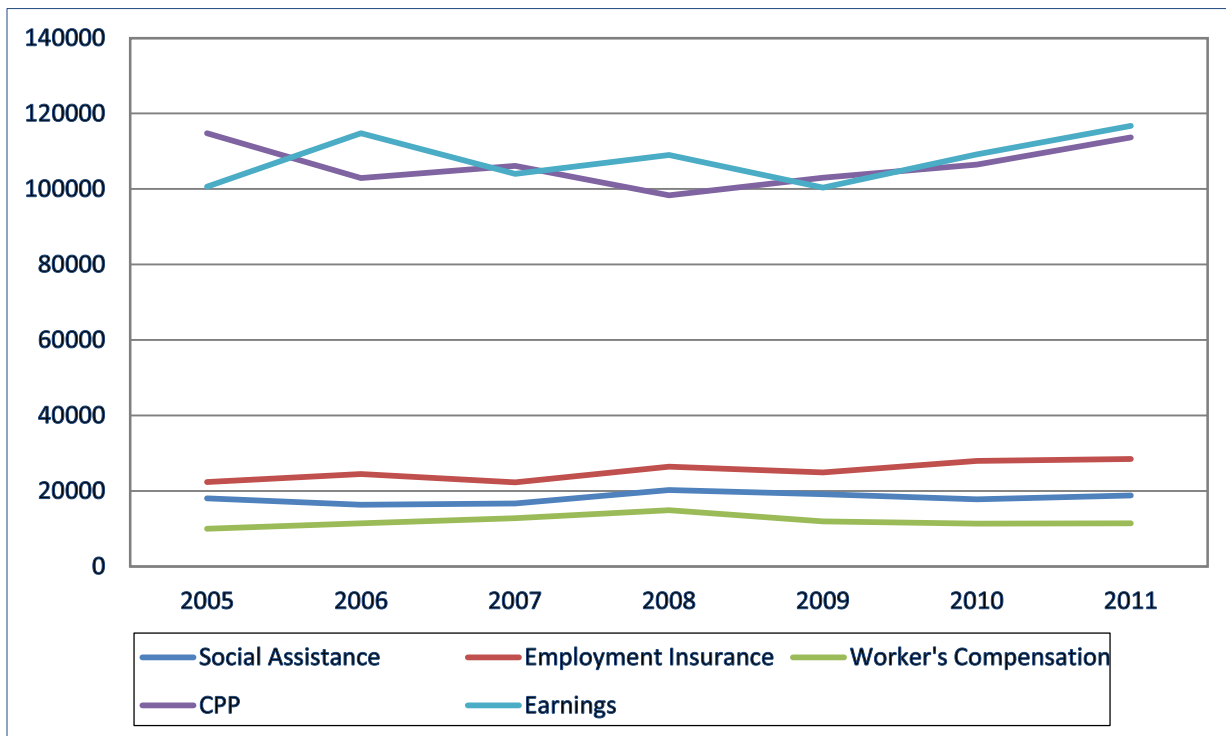
**Chart 8: Income distribution among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**

Among persons living with a disability, the proportions earning less than twenty thousand dollars a year tend to fluctuate more from one year to the next while more persons who do not have a disability have tended to make steady incremental shifts upward in their incomes years over year. This seems to indicate that persons with disabilities' employment experience are more precarious than their non-disabled colleagues.



**Chart 9: Income distribution among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability**

A greater proportion of persons without disabilities are earning higher incomes than persons who have a disability, and greater proportions of persons with a disability earn less than persons who do not have a disability. These trends combine to depress the earned incomes of persons with disabilities compared to those persons who do not have a disability.



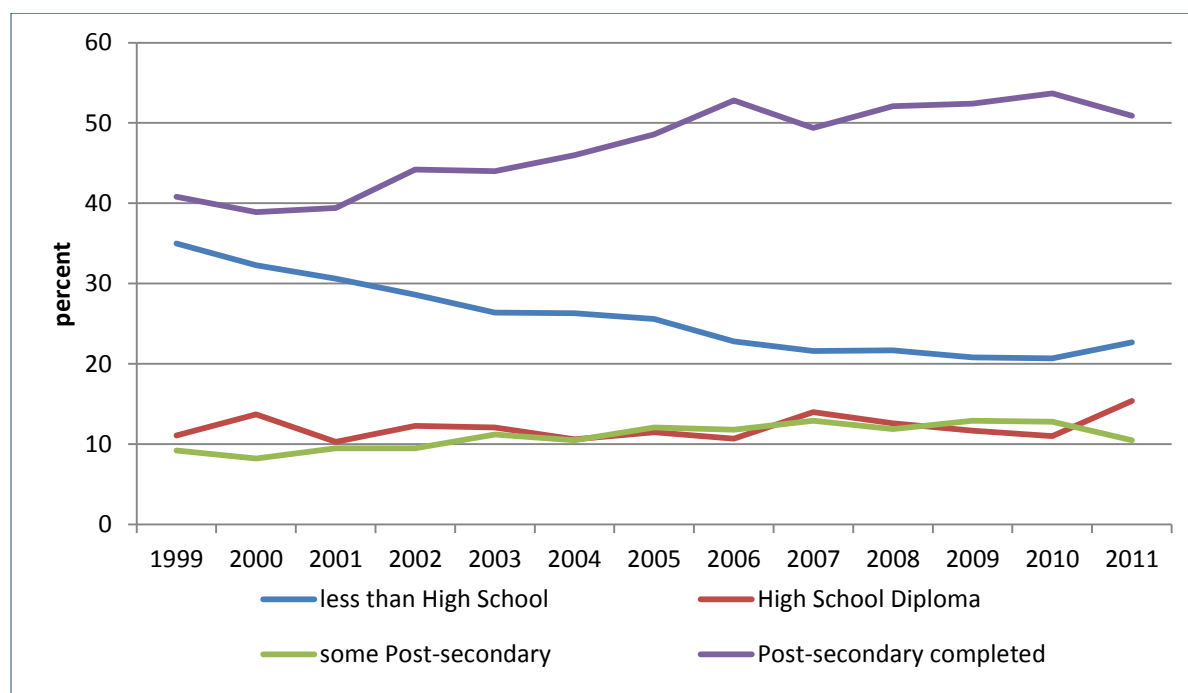
**Chart 10: Sources of income reported by working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**

Chart 10 shows the income sources reported by persons who have a disability. The data available is limited to 2005 thru 2011. Respondents may have more than one source of income. Canada Pension Plan disability benefits can be combined with part-time earnings. Persons may claim short-term illness benefits under employment insurance. There is very little variation in the numbers of persons reporting Workers' Compensation and social assistance income between years. There has been an upward trend in the numbers reporting employment insurance, which may indicate the precariousness of the labour market in recent years as well as increasing labour market attachment among persons with a disability. The most common sources of income for persons living with a disability are earnings from employment and Canada Pension Plan, which also display the most variability from one year to the next. Almost as many persons with a disability reported income from earnings in 2006 as did in 2011.

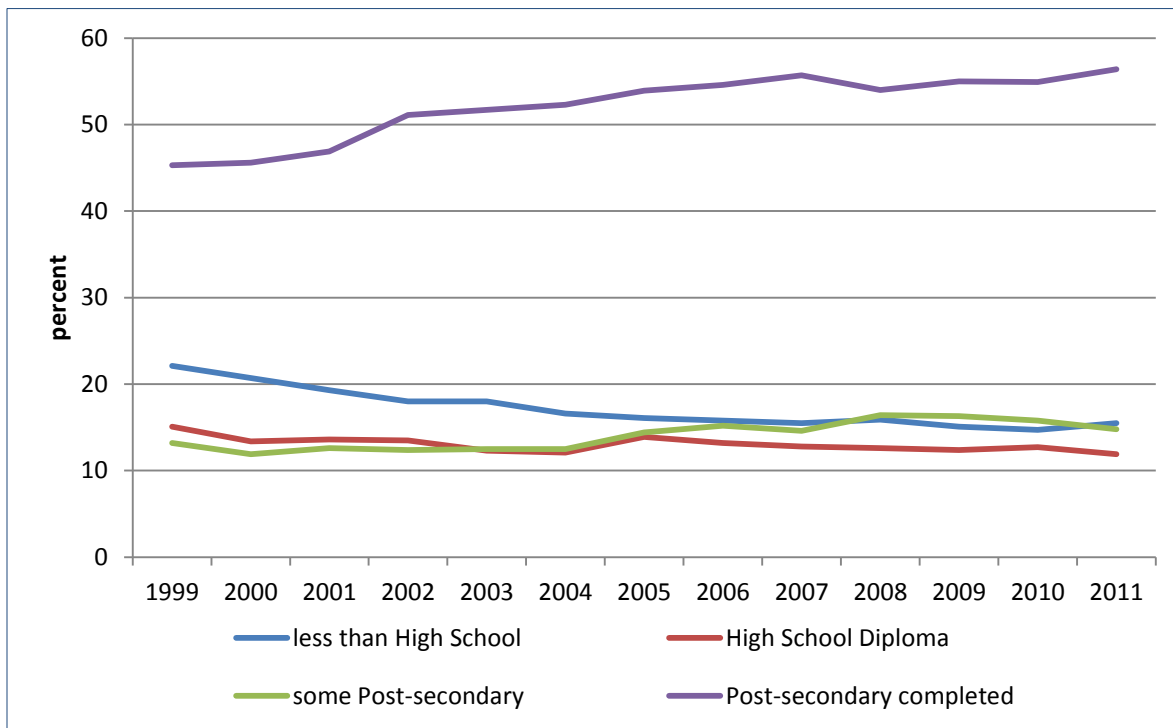


## Educational Achievement

Charts 11 and 12 show the educational achievements of working aged (16-64) Nova Scotians who have and do not have a disability. For both groups, an increasing proportion of persons have completed higher levels of education since 1999. The percentages of persons who have a disability and have completed post-secondary education have increased and the proportions with only high school or less have declined, leading to a smaller gap in post-secondary education between the two groups. A larger proportion of persons who do not have a disability have some or have completed post-secondary education (71 percent) than persons who do have a disability (61 percent) in 2011. Since post-secondary education usually results in more stable employment and higher incomes, the comparative educational achievements could depress levels of earned incomes for persons with disabilities as a group.



**Chart 11: Educational achievement among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**



**Chart 12: Educational achievement among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability**

Since 1999, there have been improvements among the societal indicators related to labour market attachment for Nova Scotians living with disabilities. Not all these improvements have been steady. There have been ups and downs in trend lines. Although Nova Scotians with disabilities are not yet on an equal footing with their non-disabled peers, there have been marked improvements in educational achievement, labour market attachment and earned incomes. Persons without disabilities experience higher incomes, higher educational achievement, and more labour market attachment than do person living with a disability. Nevertheless, since 1999 more people with disabilities have higher incomes, labour market attachment and have completed post-secondary education. There is still much than can be done to help persons with disabilities reach economic self-sufficiency, and full inclusion in their communities.

## Looking Ahead

Since 2004 Canada and Nova Scotia have collaborated to improve the employment outcomes of persons with disabilities by funding labour market programs and activities for persons with disabilities under the C-NS Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [LMAPD]. The societal indicators demonstrate that improvements in the labour market attachment, employment earnings and educational achievements of persons with disabilities have been made in Nova Scotia since the 2004 Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities was first implemented.

In Economic Action Plan 2013, the Government of Canada gave notice it would extend the 2004 LMAPDs to March 31 2014 and began negotiating a 'next generation' LMAPD with provinces in 2013 in anticipation of new agreements being signed in 2014. Minister Kenney, Employment and Social Development Canada and Minister Bernard, Community Services signed a new Canada – Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [C-NS LMAPD] in July 2014. The 2014 C-NS LMAPD is intended to encourage the labour market attachment of persons with disabilities, be more responsive to employers' needs, be more demand driven and measurable, while continuing to address the diverse needs of Canadians living with disabilities.

The 2004 Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities provided an opportunity to maintain and strengthen Nova Scotia's labour market programs and services for persons with disabilities. It is anticipated the 2014 Agreement will continue to support provincial labour market programs and services for persons with disabilities. The government of Nova Scotia welcomes the opportunity to work with the Government of Canada to maintain and develop effective ways to provide meaningful supports for persons with disabilities in order that they may partake fully in all aspects of society. Nova Scotia will continue to demonstrate its commitment to the employment of persons with disabilities by providing labour market and employment programs serving persons with disabilities.