

Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities

Annual Report 2012-13

December 3, 2013

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Ministers' Message

The Province of Nova Scotia is pleased to present the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Annual Report 2012-13. The report provides Nova Scotians an update and overview of Nova Scotia's commitments, investments and programs intended to support Nova Scotians with disabilities in their efforts to participate successfully in the labour force.

The release of this report each year on December 3 commemorates the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. "Break barriers, open doors: for an inclusive society for all" is the 2013 theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This annual observance aims to encourage better understanding of disability issues to reduce the stigma that is often associated with disabilities, and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in our communities.

We know that the full inclusion of people with disabilities in our community will not only improve their quality of life, it will also make Nova Scotia a stronger and more diverse province. People with disabilities have unique, diverse and sometimes complex needs. 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.

In Nova Scotia, the departments of Community Services, Labour and Advanced Education, and Health and Wellness work together to offer programs and services supporting the employability of people with disabilities. We know this is the right thing to do. These programs have made, and continue to make, a profound difference in the lives and families of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

The Nova Scotia government is committed to working together with the disability community, the Government of Canada and other partners to offer services that meet the current and future needs of Nova Scotians 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. Employment is a key component of social inclusion. Canada and Nova Scotia recognize that persons with disabilities would like, and are able, to make significant contributions to their communities. Consequently, governments 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 initiate the progression to 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 2003-04 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 has been extended to March 2014.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [C-NS LMAPD] provides joint funding for programs and supports for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. In fiscal year 2012-13, Nova Scotia spent approximately \$29,913,452 million on programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD. The federal share is capped at \$8.34 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 2012 to March 2013 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 2012-13 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 Scotia¹

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 active² 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 will become available later in 2013 and information products will continue to be released in 2014 and 2015.

¹ 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.

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

Labour Market in Nova Scotia³

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 the last year. The labour force increased by 0.8 percent (3,800) in 2012 compared to 2011. Employment in 2012 increased by 0.6 percent to reach an all-time high of 455,500. While this is an improvement over the previous year, the increase was half the Canadian average of 1.2 percent. All of the job gains were in part-time employment. Full-time jobs declined in 2012 maintaining a trend 2009 when full-time employment in Nova Scotia peaked. And although total employment increased, only older workers experienced employment growth. The numbers of core aged workers (25-54 years) and youth (15-24 years) with jobs decreased between 2011 and 2012. Because the labour supply grew at a higher rate than labour demand, the annual average unemployment rate also increased by 0.2 percent and reached 9 percent overall. Among youth the unemployment rate reached 18.2 percent.

The bright spot in the provincial labour market continued to be the Halifax region, which experienced employment growth (0.5%) in 2012 over 2011. Part-time employment accounted for the jobs gains in Halifax in 2012 and unemployment rates remained virtually unchanged from the previous year (+0.1%). Unfortunately employment rates declined in most other areas of the province. Halifax very much tends to be a service-oriented economy, and the strongest employment gains were found in service industries.

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 80-90], person with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of

³ The data in this section are from the *Labour Market Bulletin Nova Scotia* Annual Edition 2012 prepared by the Labour Market Information (LMI) Division, Nova Scotia.

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

The program provides disability-related supports to assist individuals as part of their employment 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 2012 – 2013 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 170 interventions were made through the LMAPD program to support individuals to receive the 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 2012 – 2013, the Department of Community Services had the pleasure of working with a number of organizations committed to supporting Persons with Disabilities. These organizations offered both pre-employment and employment focused programs.

One organization, ***reachability***, offered three programs, One Step Closer, ThinkFirst and Rhythm. One Step Closer assists participants to successfully address concerns regarding confidence and conflict management issues. The RHYTHM program is designed to support youth at risk to develop social skills, self-confidence, and technical knowledge all in a unique environment - while learning to DJ. RHYTHM ensures participating youth are moving forward towards a positive self-image and improving their transferable, technical, and employability skills. The ThinkFirst 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 2012, over 600 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 10 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 Industries Society** 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.

Through a partnership with **TeamWork Cooperative**, the Department of Community Services ensures that case management and specialized employment services are provided 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.

Employment Support Services Participant testimonials:

John (not his real name) is a 23 year old who was in an accident a few years back severing his spinal cord, resulting in quadriplegia. Before his accident John was a

serious athlete – playing rugby on a National level. After spending a few years in rehabilitation he decided it was time to start living more fully again. With the support of reachAbility’s THINK First program John was able to overcome his sense of defeat and for the first time since his accident set career goals for himself. Since completion of Think 1st in May 2013 he has been working full-time. John has been accepted to a post-secondary social work program starting in January 2014. Today, John is a true leader; mentoring reachAbility clients and working at the Canadian Paraplegic Association (CPA). --Reprinted with the permission of “John”, a client of THINK First

"I am required to travel for work. As a Deaf consumer staying in hotels, it's important for me to have peace of mind while sleeping. The staff at Teamwork Cooperative was very helpful in helping me search for and find the best visual alarm/bedshaker combination fire alarm. They were able to help me find one that was portable, and worked with the various fire alarms that hotels use. I can now have a good night's sleep and do my job more effectively. Thank you!" – a client of TeamWork

"Thank you so much, I really appreciate it. With my new hearing aids, I am finding my life has changed for the better. Work is becoming less stressful. And I feel more confidence interacting with customers. I can't thank you enough of what you did for me. You have inspired me to have some hope out there. It's a pleasure to meet you. You are very kind person." - Reprinted with the permission of a client of TeamWork

Beth (not her real name) is a single parent whose sole source of income was from Social Assistance. Beth expressed interest in self-employment, and was referred to EDN by TEAMWork Cooperative in late 2007. Through the initial assessment interview, it was clear that Beth was not only interested in self-employment; she showed a true aptitude for this career path. She was determined to use Social Assistance as a tool to leave Social Assistance, and this conflicted with one of her fears – that of leaving the “safety” of what the assistance program provided. Her other fear revolved around business planning – feeling very dyslexic and recalling being told by teachers she was stupid with no hope of success, she felt she could neither create nor write a business plan. With the support of EDN, TEAMWork, and a CBDC, Beth created the right plan for herself, accessed a small business loan, and has not missed a payment since she opened her business almost 4 years

ago. Her business is up and running, she has a small part-time job, and she is now receiving less than half of what she received from DCS a few years ago. She is heading towards being totally self-reliant. And, Beth's renewed self-confidence and role modeling has contributed to her daughter's successful graduation from University and obtaining a full time job in her chosen career! This is an important and not unique story – the path for many towards financial self- sufficiency is long, and fraught with obstacles – Beth is an example of what happens when drive meets supports, with time and patience mixed in... the long term savings are immense, and the long term impacts on individuals and families are almost unimaginable.

Charlie (not his real name) was a member of EDN prior to 2007, he had a business name registered, and yet had never opened a business. He first approached EDN seeking support to pay for his registration renewal. After our first assessment meeting, we decided we could not provide the \$50 or so to help him pay for the registration, thus resulting in it lapsing. We discussed what we could provide, starting with getting to the basics – and what we have provided over the years is monthly planning meetings as well as introductions to accountants, intellectual property experts, lawyers, marketing people, angel investors, bankers, and other lenders. Charlie has recently accessed a start-up loan, has completed patent and trademarking processes, has developed product prototypes, and is in the process of approaching national and international retailers to carry his product. This has taken many years, with each successive year involving a faster pace and seemingly larger steps... when in fact, every single step has been meaningful and necessary, and at times, painful and full of wondering if there would indeed be another step taken. Through his perseverance, and the truly sincere contributions of many people who have participated in the process, Charlie is moving towards financial self- sufficiency. It will not be this year, but it will be.

Henry (not his real name) joined EDN in his early 20's, five years ago. He has learning disabilities, dropped out of school in grade 10, and has shown entrepreneurial tendencies since he was a young teenager. Part of his journey has resulted in his being in conflict with the law. Each such conflict had implications on his interpersonal relationships with friends, family, and community of supports. With EDN's recommendation and support, he was accepted into, and graduated from, CEED's Second Chance Program, where he proved to all that he was on a positive entrepreneurial path. EDN and others have worked closely with Henry, and have contributed to the development of his support team. Henry has actively

participated in many of our specific knowledge workshops as well as our annual Entrepreneur of the Year events, and two years ago stated that he is striving to be so recognized in the future. While Henry may have briefly slipped into old habits, EDN continues to work with him on his planning and on his financials, and as much as anything, on bouncing around ideas, discussing opportunities, and supporting his next steps, while also simply being available to “check in”. Henry is currently receiving no government support, and is contributing to the well-being of his family. He is also an uplifted soul who will be making a positive impact on the lives of others.

Program Indicators

Table 1: Community Services LMAPD Program Indicators			
Program	Number of Participants	Number of participants completing a program where there is a specific start and end point to the intervention	Number of participants who maintained or obtained employment
Rhythm Project	48	48	not available
One Step Closer	118	118	not available
Affirmative Industries Association	80	80	not available
TeamWork Cooperative	100	100	not available
Pathways to Employment	40		not available
Prescott Group Agency	10	10	10
Entrepreneur Disability Network	620	not available	not available
Think First Project	20	20	not available
Assessments	1	1	not available
Technical Aids & Services	160	not available	160
Training	11	11	not available
Post-secondary Education	22	not available	not available

The Disability Supports and Technical Aids Recipient Survey 2013

Disability Supports and Technical Aids are provided to support the training and/or employment needs of individuals who have a disability and who need a support or aid to maintain or gain employment. The following are considered eligible supports: orthotic appliances; mobility aids; wheelchairs and similar equipment; appliances for the hearing impaired; appliances for the vision impaired; modifications to vehicles; interpretative and other support services; wage subsidy for a defined period of time and other supports provided to help a person maintain or start a job. A survey of recipients post-intervention was conducted in early 2013 and provided valuable information about recipients. The response to the survey indicates that a large majority of recipients are older workers (45+) with moderate incomes (less than \$40K) who have a hearing disability and who believe the hearing aids or other support helped them keep their jobs. They were overwhelmingly thankful for the assistance they had received.

On January 3, 2013 274 questionnaires were mailed to people who had received financial aid to purchase a disability support between April 1 2010 and March 31 2012. 42 percent of those who received a questionnaire responded. Most of the respondents (95%) had received help purchasing a hearing aid. The average value of support provided was \$3,055. The majority of respondents lived in the Northern Region (52%). Sixty-three percent are women. Eighty-two percent are older than 45. Seventy-one percent were working in January 2013 and another 4 percent were on short-term medical or maternity leave. Among those working, 82 percent were working full-time and 69 percent reported their jobs are permanent. Seventy-four percent reported annual earnings below forty thousand dollars.

Most respondents (59%) categorized their disability as having a moderate impact on their daily living. Thirty-two percent reported their disability having a low impact and 9 percent considered their disability had a high impact on their daily living.

Respondents learned about the program by word of mouth, usually from the service provider of the disability support. A large majority of respondents were very positive about their experience dealing with Community Services and the impact of the assistance on their lives and employment. Many respondents

volunteered that the program would help more people who needed assistance if it were better known.

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 (Axxcess Acadia)
- Provision of funding to Skills Canada Nova Scotia for accessible skills competitions

Partners

- Nova Scotia Student Assistance Office
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
- 9 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 nine Nova Scotia Universities and thirteen 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 disabilities⁴ 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 Student Assistance Office will assess the financial need of adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who make application for a Nova Scotia student loan.

⁴ 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.

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.

Table: 2 Direct Skills Link Client Profiles		
Category	Totals To	Required By
	31 March 2013	31 March 2013
# Clients in training	332	120
# Clients dropped out*	7	0
# Clients completed training	303	0
# Clients employed**	73	30
# Clients referred for ACC/AT***	34	0
# Client consent forms	455	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)'s mission is to allow Nova Scotians to explore skilled trades and technologies, discover their passion, and strive for excellence. Through the Disability Services 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 also runs “Abilympics” competitions and workshops specifically for persons with disabilities. The SCNS Disability Services initiative is split into three main areas:

- Accommodating those with disabilities into all programs offered by SCNS;
- Abilympics competitions within the Nova Scotia Skills Competition for persons with disabilities;

- A workshop series to introduce persons with disabilities to various skilled trade and technology areas.

During the 2012/2013 school year, SCNS hosted three Abilympics competitions, workshops in photography and painting, and ensured that our Nova Scotia Skills Competition, hands-on Youth Projects, and presentations were inclusive. In 2013, SCNS also sent a participant to the first national Abilympics competition in photography during the Skills Canada National Competition, where she won a gold medal.

Participants in our Youth Projects and Nova Scotia Skills Competition are given the option to self-identify, and inform us of any accommodations that they require. In the past several years we have provided readers, wheelchair accessories, and modified projects among other accommodations for our participants.

Table 3: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Skills Canada – Nova Scotia Youth Projects	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2009-2010	14
2010-2011	19
2011-2012	35
2012-2013	16

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

Table 5: Number of self-identifying Persons with Disabilities participating in Abilympics Fall Workshop series (photography and painting)	
School year	Number of self-identifying students
2012	25

Success Stories

Shannon MacKinnon (not real name) had stopped going to her local high school. Her anxiety had gotten to a point when even stepping outside of her front door resulted in a physical reaction. After several months of not leaving her home, she started slowly introducing herself back into her school routine with the help of her family and medical practitioners.

In 2010, she heard about the Nova Scotia Skills Competition, and decided that she wanted to demonstrate her abilities in graphic design to her peers. The competition was taking place in Halifax, a five hour drive from her home in Sydney. Her family traveled up the weekend before to check out the location of the event, and familiarize Shannon with the surroundings.

It wasn't easy for Shannon to return to Halifax the next week and display her skills as 800 students toured through the competition, but she did it. Her desire to focus on her ability, rather than her disability, allowed her to capture a gold medal in the Abilympics poster design competition.

In 2011, Shannon competed again. This time the competition took place in her home town and she found herself to be much more comfortable. However, after winning gold once again, Shannon was about to venture out of her comfort zone more than she could ever imagine.

Gold medalists from the 2011 competition not only received a medal, they also received the opportunity to compete at the International Abilympics in Seoul, South Korea. Shannon had always been intrigued by Korean culture, and she refused to let her anxiety deny her this opportunity.

In September 2011, Shannon and her mother joined Abilympics Team Canada and embarked on their first ever plane trip on a journey that would last over 24 hours and take them to the other side of the world.

For five days, Shannon and her teammates explored the crowded streets of Seoul, competed alongside persons with disabilities from over 40 different countries, and took in a brand new culture including foreign foods, a different language, and a city that refuses to sleep.

From not leaving her house for two years, to travelling across the globe, Shannon's experience through Skills Canada – Nova Scotia has changed her life. Being surrounded by other people who would not let their disability define them gave her inspiration to challenge her anxiety and win. She is now employed full-time in a print shop in her home town.

CTV Atlantic

Published Tuesday, June 25, 2013 6:21PM ADT

A young Nova Scotia photographer is capturing international attention for her work behind the lens, winning both awards and recognition for her images.

Kayla Johnson takes her camera with her wherever she goes - even in her own backyard. She says she developed the habit when she was a little girl.

"I used to steal my dad's camera and take pictures randomly around the house or at the store. Then, I just like how the pictures turned out," says the Millbrook First Nation resident.

It seems professional judges like how Johnson's pictures turned out as well.

Two years ago, she won a gold medal in photography at the Nova Scotia Skills Competition.

Last year she won bronze and this year, another gold medal at the provincial and national level.

She has even competed in South Korea at the International Abilympics – an event that showcases vocational skills of persons with disabilities in skilled trade and technology areas.

Johnson qualified for the Abilympics because she has a hearing impairment.

"It shows we can do things that everyone else can do. It just may take us a little bit more time to do it, but we still make it through."

Her dad, Andrew Johnson, says he couldn't be more proud of his daughter.

“I have four children. They’re all hearing impaired. We’ve raised them so that they have no disability,” he says. “They’re just like any other person and they can achieve anything they put their mind to.”

Most of Johnson’s photography skills are self-taught and her talent has helped to foster career goals for the future – to own her own photography business and take photos professionally.

Johnson plans to further her education at the Centre for Arts and Technology in Fredericton in the fall.

With files from CTV Atlantic's Dan MacIntosh
Read more: <http://atlantic.ctvnews.ca/local-photographer-s-work-captures-international-attention-1.1341505#ixzz2ieGsV040>

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.

Axxess Acadia

Axxess 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 Axxess 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, Axxess 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 Axxess 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 Axxcess 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 Axxcess program had one student enrolled for the full academic year and one for the second term only. This year, both of those students have returned and are joined by three new students! Axxcess students are now living in three different residences on campus and one individual lives in off-campus housing. There are Axxcess students enrolled in three of the four faculties: Pure & Applied Science, Arts, and Professional Studies. Students are attending classes and completing work in everything from Physics to Theatre!

Success Stories (not their real names)

Jody: *Acadia is a nice place; I like the trail-ways for running, I love the choices in the meal hall, I enjoy using the weight room, the pool, and the track! Living in residence is great: sometimes it can get a bit noisy, but people respect me. Kinesiology Activity Labs are the best! I am learning new techniques and demonstrating to others everything I know! I LOVE Friday night SMILE!*

John: *University is fun. People here get jokes about History! I've met people from other countries and people who are really interested in the same things as me; like, Astronomy! Here I have the freedom to do the courses and the work I'm interested in.*

Natalie: *This is my second year at Acadia and I love everything about it! Living in residence with roommates and making friends with people in my building. This year, I've even been voted on to the House Council and am the Ro-Jo Sports Rep! I love travelling across campus, enjoying the scenery and meeting students from other places, like the Bahamas and Bermuda! I still find things exciting and always will: I was told I would never be here and now I am! Other students take the little things for granted, but not me: last year I wrote a university Midterm and this year, I'm writing a Final!*

Stuart: *It's great to be here! It's a fantastic program that is helping me figure out what I want to do after school is done. I'm glad to be in Wolfville and love living on campus and making new friends. I love to learn and I am learning new things every day; the professors want to work with me and help me. I've gotten to know my professors and they've taken the time to get to know me!*

Katey: I am enjoying university, the classes are interesting and I like what I'm learning. I think I am more motivated to go to class, to do my work, and to focus on what's being taught, because I LIKE it! In high school, I never felt the same. Now I'm responsible for what I do and I'm getting it done!

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 2012/2013 institutions reported 4034 students with disabilities, an increase of 152.13% since 2003/2004. The trend has also been positive for those students who register with Post-Secondary Disability Services to be eligible for programs/supports with 1670 students in 2012/2013 an increase of 99.5% 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 6: 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%

*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 7: 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%

Employment

In March of 2007 the Canadian Council on Learning and the Department of Education represented by the Post-Secondary Disability Services Division agreed to collaboratively engage in a five year study on student success, employment related outcomes and life's experiences of graduating and non-graduating students with disabilities. Post-Secondary Disability Services has continued to engage this study beyond the five year initial agreement. In the summer and fall of 2012, the sixth in a yearly series of one year post-graduation or withdrawal follow-up surveys of students with disabilities was completed.

Results at a Glance

Results from the 2012 survey provided measures of employment and satisfaction outcomes of Nova Scotia post-secondary students with disabilities one year after program graduation or withdrawal. In comparing overall results of this survey to those of the 2011 one-year survey, the labour force participation rate increased slightly to 84 percent and the employment rate⁵ increased to 85 percent. Participants of the 2012 survey reported a 7 percent increase in earnings for full-time directly related positions at \$41,568; 90 percent of survey respondents live and work in Nova Scotia⁶ and 66 percent of respondents experience employment relatedness.⁷ Respondents continue to express a high degree of satisfaction with their learning program and overall experience at their institution, with 83 percent of respondents reporting that they would recommend their program and 91 percent

⁵ Employment rate is calculated as the percentage of labour force participants who are working in paid employment.

⁶ Percentage of respondents who studied in Nova Scotia. Overall 88% percent of respondents work in Nova Scotia.

⁷ Employment relatedness is calculated as the percentage of employed respondents who are working in a field directly or indirectly related to their program of study.

stating they would recommend their institution. The overall results of this survey are summarized below⁸ in Table 8 along with a comparison to the results of the 2010 and 2011 one-year follow up surveys.

Table 8: Results at a Glance			
Indicator	2010	2011	2012
Labour force participation rate	82%	83%	84%
Employment rate	87%	81%	85%
Annual average earnings of directly related full-time work	\$37,482	\$38,742	\$41,568
Employed in Nova Scotia ⁹	92%	93%	90%
Relatedness of employment	60%	66%	66%
Respondents would recommend program to another person	78%	79%	83%
Respondents would recommend institution to another person	87%	91%	91%

Methodology and Statistical Validity

The survey population included all of the students who attended a college or university in Nova Scotia (the Nova Scotia Community College [NSCC], a private career college, or one of nine universities), or a college or university outside the province of Nova Scotia who were supported by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education's Post-Secondary Disability Services Division (PSDS) during the 2010-11 academic year. PSDS provided the names of 547 former students eligible to participate in the study. These students either graduated or withdrew from their studies in that year, and they received services or supports to accommodate a disability through their institution and PSDS. Of the 547 graduates and leavers included in the sample, 374 attended a college, 141 attended a university in Nova Scotia, and 32 were enrolled at a college (4) or university (28) outside Nova Scotia. The survey sample included 321 students who had graduated (59 percent) and 226 who had withdrawn (41 percent) from their institution before completing their studies.

⁸ Summary results by institution type and program status can be found in the Longitudinal Report's Appendix http://psds.ednet.ns.ca/sites/default/files/NS_LongitudinalFollowUp2012.pdf.

⁹ Percentage of respondents who studied in Nova Scotia. Overall 88% percent of respondents work in Nova Scotia.

All eligible participants were sent a letter both by email and post-mail in July 2012 inviting them to participate in the survey. Each letter was personalized and provided the recipient with a unique log-in ID to a web-based survey hosted on an NSCC web server. To ensure that all potential participants could participate in the survey regardless of their disability, alternative ways of completing the survey were offered. This included a printed version that could be post-mailed or e-mailed to the participant, or an offer to have the survey completed by telephone with project staff. In addition, the web-survey text was tagged to allow most text-reader applications to “read” the survey aloud to respondents while they were logged in to the survey. For eligible participants who could not be reached by email and/or post-mail, project staff attempted to contact them by telephone to invite them to complete the survey.¹⁰

In total, 250 surveys were completed¹¹ from the 547 eligible participants, 66 percent of which were completed online and the remaining 34 percent of which were completed by telephone or a printed copy returned by post-mail. With 250 respondents from a population of 547, there is a margin of error of 4.6 percent using a 95 percent confidence interval. This margin of error assumes that the respondents are representative of the eligible population. Caution is advised when interpreting or using survey findings, particularly where sample sizes are small, as sampling and selection bias may affect the reliability of results.

Respondent Profile¹²

The breakdown of survey respondents by institution type is provided in Table 9. Overall, 69 percent of the survey respondents had studied at a college, while 31 percent had studied at a university. As shown in Table 10, when the respondents are broken down by program status, 67 percent had graduated while 33 percent had withdrawn from their program.¹³

¹⁰ Three attempts were made for each telephone number listed for eligible participants.

¹¹ All survey questions were voluntary; therefore the total respondent replies to each question may vary.

¹² Further survey data related to the respondent profile can be found in the report's appendix. This includes information on respondent age, gender and disability type.

¹³ As noted in the methodology, the survey population was 59 percent graduated and 41 percent withdrawn. The non-response of withdrawn students may have introduced some bias in the results.

Table 9: Respondent Profile by Institution Type		
Institution type	Respondent profile	
College	173	69%
University	77	31%
Total	250	100%

Table 10: Respondent Profile by Program Status		
Program status	Respondent profile	
Graduated	168	67%
Withdrew	82	33%
Total	250	100%

Table 11 displays the total survey participation rate was 46 percent. Participation across institution type was equal, at 46 percent for those who had attended university and 46 percent for those who had attended college.

Table 11: Survey Participation Rate by Institution Type			
Institution type	Population	Respondents	Participation rate
College	378	173	46%
University	169	77	46%
Total	547	250	46%

Of the 547 graduates and leavers included in the sample, 374 attended a college, 141 attended a university in Nova Scotia, and 32 were enrolled at a college (4) or university (28) outside Nova Scotia. The survey sample included 321 students who had graduated from their program and 226 who withdrew from the institution prior to program completion.

Employment Outcomes

The survey included a series of questions related to employment status, labour force participation, employment relatedness, and employment earnings.

Employment Status

The breakdown of the employment status of survey participants is shown in Table 12. Respondents were asked their labour force status in the reference week. Among the 84 percent participating in the labour force, 68 percent were employed in the reference week. The labour force participation rate is higher for

college than university respondents and is higher among graduates than those who withdrew before completing their program. Respondents not in the labour force were asked why they were not engaged in the labour market. Overall, 48 percent of respondents reported the reason that they were not in the labour force was because of a medical or disability circumstance, while 25 percent of respondents indicated that they were attending school.

Table 12: Employment Status of Survey Respondents	
Employment Status	%
Labour force participants - employed during the reference week	68%
Labour force participants - employed after the reference week	4%
Labour force participants - unemployed	12%
Non-labour force participants	16%
Respondent total	100%

Labour Force Participation

Overall, 84 percent of respondents indicated they were participating in the labour force. The labour force participation rate is higher for college than university respondents and is higher among graduates than those who withdrew before completion of their program. Respondents not in the labour force were asked why they were not engaged in the labour market. Overall, 48 percent of respondents reported the reason that they were not in the labour force was because of a medical or disability circumstance, while 25 percent of respondents indicated that they were attending school.

Employment Rates

Among the respondents in the labour force, 85 percent indicated they were employed during the reference week of the survey (June 24-30, 2012) and another 5 percent started employment after July 1. Ten percent of labour force participants reported they were unemployed but seeking employment. As evidenced in Tables 13 and 14, the employment rate during the reference week is higher for college respondents compared to those who attended university, and higher among leavers than those who graduated from their program.

Table 13: Employment Rate by Institution Type			
Employment rate	College	University	Overall
Started employment after July 1	6%	4%	5%
Seeking employment	8%	14%	10%
Employed	86%	82%	85%
Respondent total	100%	100%	100%

Table 14: Employment Rate by Program Status			
Employment rate	Graduated	Withdrew	Overall
Started employment after July 1	6%	2%	5%
Seeking employment	10%	12%	10%
Employed	84%	87%	85%
Respondent total	100%	100%	100%

Unemployed-Respondent Profile

Table 15 shows a summary profile of the 20 percent of survey respondents who indicated that they had never been employed for a period of six weeks or more in their work history. Of these respondents, 54 percent were non-labour force participants and 46 percent were in the labour force. Among the unemployed respondents, the labour force participants tended to be male (62 percent) and 65 percent of labour force participants had graduated from their program. The gender of non-labour force participants tended to be about equal (54 percent male, 46 percent female), and 37 percent of the non-labour force participants graduated from their institution. Among the unemployed, the average debt owed by the labour force participants was 47 percent more than that amount owed by the non-labour force participants, at \$14,770 and \$10,033 respectively.

Table 15: Summary Profile of Unemployed Respondents				
Unemployed respondent profile	Status			
	Unemployed labour force participant (n=23)	Unemployed non-labour force participant (n=27)	Total unemployed respondents (n=50)	Total - all survey respondents (n=250)
Average age	30 years	30 years	30 years	28 years
Median age	26 years	26 years	26 years	24 years
Gender	Male 62% Female 38%	Male 54% Female 46%	Male 57% Female 43%	Male 50% Female 50%
Institution type	College 61% University 39%	College 67% University 33%	College 64% University 36%	College 69% University 31%
Program status	Graduated 65% Withdrew 35%	Graduated 37% Withdrew 63%	Graduated 50% Withdrew 50%	Graduated 67% Withdrew 33%
Average debt owed	\$14,770	\$10,033	\$12,168	\$18,721
Median debt owed	\$7,000	\$5,700	\$6,350	\$13,000
Most commonly reported disability	Learning disability 38%	Learning disability 35%	Learning disability 36%	Learning disability 40%

Comparative Rates

Statistics Canada's "2006 Participation and Activities Limitation Survey" (PALS)¹⁴ provides data on labour force activity for adults with and without a disability in Nova Scotia. Table 12 provides comparative data from the 2006 PALS and 2010 "Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics" (SLID)¹⁵ to provide comparisons to the employment results observed in this survey.

¹⁴ Canada, Statistics Canada. "2006 Participation and Activities Limitation Survey" cat. no.89M0023XCB2006, microdata file

¹⁵ Nova Scotia, Department of Community Services, Department of Labour & Advanced Education, and Department of Health & Wellness. *Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities. Annual Report 2011-12*, 2012: 56, 57.

Table 16: Comparison of Nova Scotia Employment Rates Data						
Comparative Employment Statistics	2012 survey of post-secondary education graduates and leavers with a disability	May 2012 labour force survey, NS, age 25-54, with post-secondary education	2006 PALS data for NS, age 25-54		2010 SLID data for NS	
			With a disability	Without a disability	With a disability	Without a disability
Labour force participation rate	84%	90%	62%	88%		
Not in labour force	16%	10%	38%	12%	34%	13%
Employment rate of total survey population	72%	85%	55%	83%	46%*	64%*
Employment rate of labour force participants	85%	95%	91%	94%		
Unemployment rate of labour force participants	15%	5%	9%	6%		

* There are some differences in the nature of these three data sources that affect the comparability across data sets. The main differences in the SLID data are that it reports on all ages (15-64), all levels of education and employment statistics include only full-year, full-time employment. The PALS data reports only for ages 25-54 to approximate the age cohort included in the PSE graduates and leavers survey but does not account for differences in education levels. Additionally, PALS and this longitudinal survey use a reference week in reporting employment status and labour force participation includes full- and part-time employment for both surveys.

Overall, the labour force participation rate for the 2012 survey of post-secondary graduates and leavers was 84 percent. When compared with the Nova Scotia 2006 PALS data (for the population aged 25-54), this is higher than what was reported for adults with a disability (62 percent) and lower than what was reported for adults without disabilities (88 percent). The employment rate of labour force participants among the 2012 survey respondents (85 percent) is lower than what was reported in the 2006 PALS data for adults both with and without a disability (91 percent and 94 percent respectively).

When compared with results from the 2012 labour force survey¹⁶ (for the population aged 25 to 54 with some post-secondary to completed post-secondary education), both the labour force participation rate (84 percent) and the employment rate (85 percent) for the 2012 survey respondents are lower than that of the larger Nova Scotia population (90 and 95 percent respectively).

¹⁶ Canada, Statistics Canada. "Labour Force Activity by Educational Attainment, Age, Sex and Province, " CANSIM Table #282-0003, May 2012

Relatedness of Employment to Studies

Respondents who indicated they were employed¹⁷ were asked about the relatedness of their employment to their field of study. Overall, 66 percent reported they were working in employment that is either directly or indirectly related to their program of study.

For former college students, 65 percent of respondents experienced employment relatedness to their education, while university respondents experienced employment relatedness at 68 percent. When compared by program status, there was a substantial difference for those who graduated versus those who withdrew. Graduates were more likely to be employed in a field related to their program of study at 78 percent, as compared to those who withdrew at 33 percent.

Comparative Data

Table 17 compares the employment relatedness (both direct and indirect) of respondents who had graduated from either college or university with the most recent data from follow-up studies of Nova Scotia university and NSCC graduates.

Table 17: Graduate Employment Relatedness (Survey Respondents Who Graduated Compared to University and College Graduate Follow-up Studies)		
Graduate employment relatedness	College	University
Survey respondents (graduated)	80% (n=76)	71% (n=27)
2010 NSCC graduates ¹⁸	83%	
2007 NS university graduates ¹⁹		81%

Within the college sector, graduates with a disability reported a slightly lower (3 percent) employment relatedness than the overall results from the NSCC “One Year Graduate Follow-Up Study”. Within the university sector, graduates with a

¹⁷ Respondents who reported employment in the reference week or after July 1

¹⁸ The Nova Scotia Community College “One Year Graduate Follow-Up Study”, 2011, was conducted using the same methodology for determining if graduates were employed, and a reference week for reporting employment (June 19 – 25, 2011). The sample frame for the NSCC survey did not include graduates who had self-reported a disability as students. The NSCC study indicates that 83 percent of its respondents reported working in occupations directly or indirectly related to their studies.

¹⁹ Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission, “Two Years On: A Survey of Class of 2007 Maritime University Graduates: Selected Provincial Statistics”, 2011:6. This survey is a two-year follow-up study. The study indicates that 81 percent of first-degree holders from Nova Scotia universities reported in 2009 that their job is somewhat or closely related to their 2007 program of study.

disability experienced a significantly lower (10 percent) employment relatedness than the graduates reported in the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), “Two Years On: A Survey of Class of 2007 Maritime University Graduates”. These results should be interpreted with some caution, given the small sample size and differences in the survey methodologies.

Earnings of Respondents

Survey respondents who reported full-time employment or indicated self-employment during the reference week were asked about their annual earnings. The average annual earnings are summarized by employment relatedness and institution in Table 18 (by institution type) and Table 19 (by program status). The average annual earnings of college survey participants saw an increase in earnings as employment became more related to their studies, ranging from \$26,495 in unrelated occupations to \$37,986 in directly related occupations. The average earnings of university participants employed in positions directly related to their field of study was \$54,699, higher than the salaries reported by those employed in positions indirectly (\$38,829) and unrelated (\$20,173) to their field. The evidence indicates that graduate respondents are more likely to earn more if they are employed in an occupation related to their field of study, while leavers are more likely to earn more if they are working in occupations indirectly related to their program (as compared to leavers who are employed in directly related or unrelated occupations).

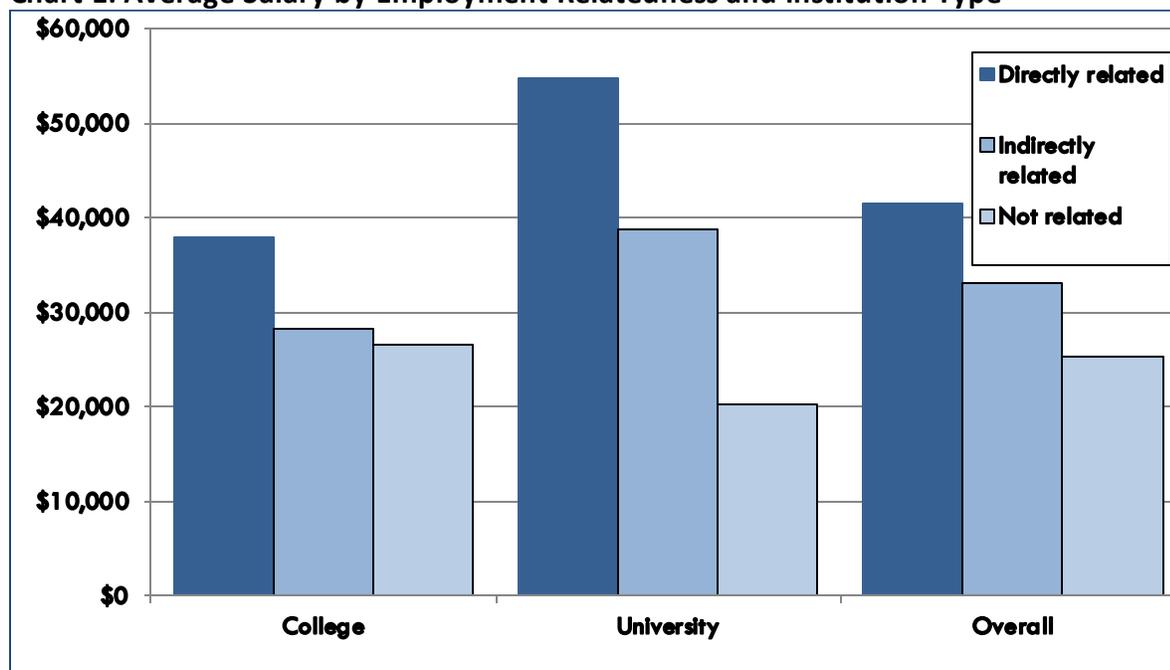
Table 18: Average Salary by Employment Relatedness and Institution Type			
Employment	College	University	Overall
Directly related	\$37,986 (n=44)	\$54,699 (n=12)	\$41,568 (n=56)
Indirectly related	\$28,200 (n=7)	\$38,829 (n=6)	\$33,106 (n=13)
Not related	\$26,495 (n=21)	\$20,173 (n=5)	\$25,279 (n=26)

When annual earnings are reported by the median²⁰, both college and university survey participants experienced an increase in salary as relatedness of studies increased. When compared by program status, the same relationship is observed for both graduates and leavers – as employment relatedness increases, so do reported wages. When comparing average and median overall results, average annual salaries are higher than median annual salaries overall for all employment groups (direct, indirect and unrelated). When comparing by institution type and program status, Table 18 and Table 19 demonstrate that the greatest variation

²⁰ Median" is defined as the middle number when the numbers are put in order, from the lowest to the highest.

appears in withdrawn respondents of indirectly related studies, at \$42,432 (average) and \$22,880 (median). It is difficult to account for these differences from this data alone. Caution should be used in interpreting these results for two reasons: (1) a small number of graduates and leavers earning significantly more or less than the average could skew the results; and (2) annual earnings are self-reported by the respondents and may be under reported or inflated.

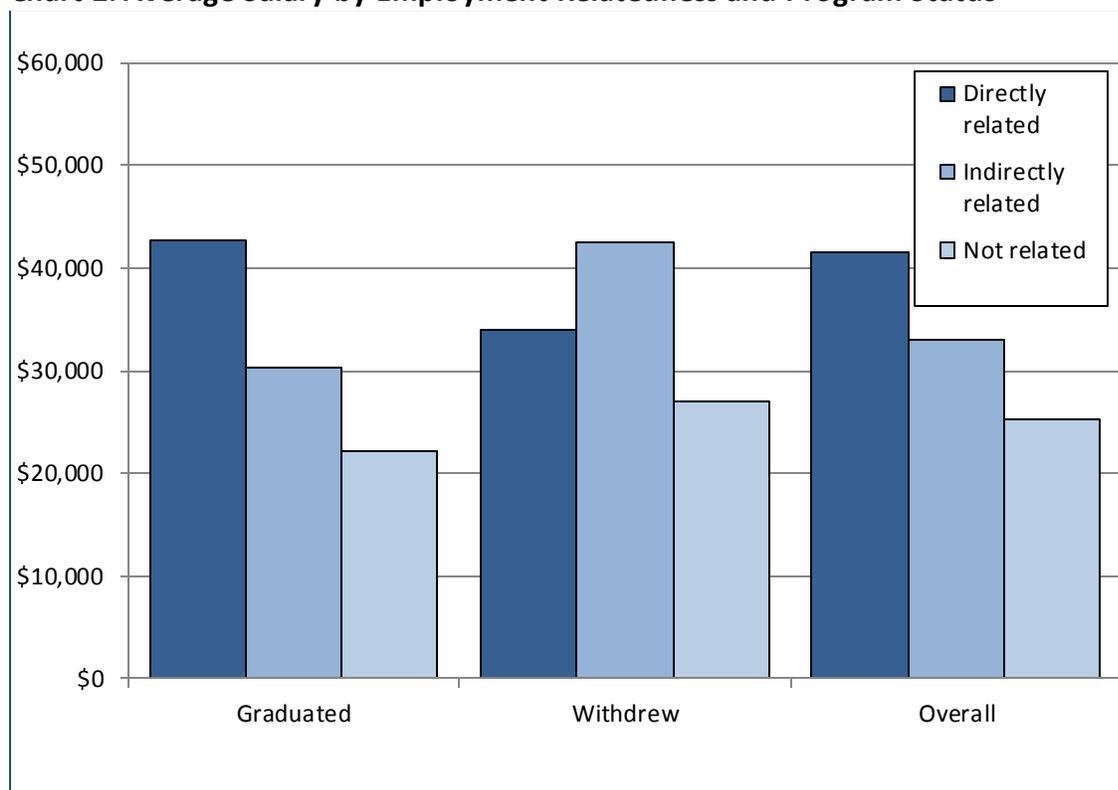
Chart 1: Average Salary by Employment Relatedness and Institution Type



Employment	Graduated	Withdrew	Overall
Directly related	\$42,645 (n=49)	\$34,028 (n=7)	\$41,568 (n=56)
Indirectly related	\$30,308 (n=10)	\$42,432 (n=3)	\$33,106 (n=13)
Not related	\$22,142 (n=9)	\$26,940 (n=17)	\$25,279 (n=26)

*It is difficult to account for these differences from this data alone. Caution should be used in interpreting these results for two reasons: 1. a small number of graduates and leavers earning significantly more or less than the average could skew the results; and 2. annual earnings are self-reported by the respondents and may be under- or over-reported.

Chart 2: Average Salary by Employment Relatedness and Program Status



Comparative Findings

In this longitudinal survey, graduated university respondents with a disability who are working full- time or self-employed in directly related employment reported average annual earnings of \$55,303 (Table 16). This is 27 percent higher than the findings from the MPHEC 2009 Survey of 2007 Maritime University Graduates, which reported average annual earnings among full-time employed was \$43,499.

Employment earnings, university	Annual full-time earnings
MPHEC 2009 Survey of 2007 Maritime University Graduates employed first-degree holders	\$43,499
University respondents in directly related employment, 2012 (graduates)	\$55,303
University respondents in directly related employment, 2012 (graduates and leavers)	\$54,699

The NSCC 2011 Graduate Follow-Up Study (of 2010 graduates) reported average annual earnings of \$33,841. These earnings are less than the average annual earnings of the graduated college respondents in this study of \$38,980. These results should be interpreted with some caution, given the small sample size and

differences in the survey methodologies. Nevertheless, the data does suggest that the employment earnings of the respondents of this survey are comparable to that of respondents from colleges and universities generally.

Table 21: Comparative Employment Earnings, College	
Employment earnings, college	Annual full-time earnings
NSCC 2011 Graduate Follow-Up Study, graduates without a disability in related employment	\$33,841
College respondents in directly related employment, 2012 (graduates)	\$38,980
College respondents in directly related employment, 2012 (graduates and leavers)	\$37,986

Location of Employment

A summary of respondents' employment location by institution location is outlined in Table 22. Overall, 88 percent of respondents were living and working in Nova Scotia at the time of the survey. This percentage is lower than that of employed respondents living in Nova Scotia who had studied at a Nova Scotia institution (90 percent). Of those living in Nova Scotia, over one-half are working in the province's two metropolitan areas: Halifax Regional Municipality (45 percent of respondents) and Cape Breton Regional Municipality (17 percent). Of the 12 percent of respondents who are working in another province, 41 percent are employed in Alberta followed by 14 percent employed in New Brunswick.

Table 22: Respondent Employment Location by Institution Location			
Employment location	In-province institution	Out-of-province	Total
Outside Nova Scotia	10% (n=16)	55% (n=6)	12% (n=22)
Nova Scotia	90% (n=151)	45% (n=5)	88% (n=156)
Respondent total	100% (n=167)	100% (n=11)	100% (n=178)

Table 23 shows that college respondents are more commonly working in Nova Scotia (91 percent) than are university respondents (78 percent). When compared by program status (Table 20), those who withdrew from their program are more commonly working in Nova Scotia than respondents who graduated from their program (at 93 and 86 percent respectively).

Employment location	College	University	Total
Outside Nova Scotia	9% (n=11)	22% (n=11)	12% (n=22)
Nova Scotia	91% (n=118)	78% (n=38)	88% (n=156)
Respondent total	100% (n=129)	100% (n=49)	100% (n=178)

Employment location	Graduated	Withdrew	Total
Outside Nova Scotia	14% (n=19)	7% (n=3)	12% (n=22)
Nova Scotia	86% (n=114)	93% (n=42)	88% (n=156)
Respondent total	100% (n=133)	100% (n=45)	100% (n=178)

Overall Satisfaction with and Evaluation of Learning Experiences

The survey included a series of questions about overall satisfaction with the learning experiences. To measure satisfaction, survey respondents were asked whether or not they would recommend the institution and/or program to other students with a similar disability who were considering post-secondary studies. Overall, 80 percent of respondents would recommend both their program and institution. This satisfaction is slightly higher for college respondents (81 percent) than university respondents (78 percent) and significantly higher for graduated respondents (87 percent) than those who withdrew from their studies (65 percent). Of the respondents who would not recommend both their program *and* institution, many would recommend their institution. Overall, 6 percent of respondents would recommend neither their program nor their institution.

Respondents were asked to evaluate their learning experiences by reporting the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements. Table 21 provides an overview of the average score and distribution of responses to each of the eleven statements. Overall, the results are positive, with the majority of respondents reporting either “Agree” or “Strongly agree” to each statement (i.e., 86 percent reported that they were able to access the supports needed to assist with disability related learning needs, 84 percent felt that disability services staff on campus responded effectively to support requests). An exception to this pattern is the response to the statement that looked at the connection between disability and student interaction (“My Disability Affected Socializing and Studying with Other Students”) – more respondents tended to disagree with this statement.

Table 25: Ratings of Learning Experiences				
Please think about your learning experiences at your college/university and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
(i) I felt that I was treated with dignity and respect by the disability services staff on campus.	3% (n=8)	6% (n=14)	47% (n=110)	43% (n=100)
(ii) Disability services staff on campus responded quickly and effectively to my requests for supports.	5% (n=10)	11% (n=25)	47% (n=104)	37% (n=83)
(iii) I felt that I was treated with dignity and respect by my instructors / professors.	4% (n=10)	9% (n=21)	50% (n=118)	37% (n=89)
(iv) I was able to access the supports I needed to assist me with my disability related learning needs.	5% (n=11)	9% (n=21)	55% (n=126)	31% (n=71)
(v) Having access to the supports I needed allowed me to focus on learning.	4% (n=9)	13% (n=28)	55% (n=121)	29% (n=64)
(vi) My disability affected socializing and studying with other students.	18% (n=42)	35% (n=82)	32% (n=75)	14% (n=33)
(vii) I was comfortable asking for additional help with my courses when it was needed.	6% (n=14)	13% (n=31)	55% (n=128)	25% (n=59)
(viii) I came to my institution well prepared to be a successful student.	3% (n=7)	9% (n=20)	54% (n=127)	34% (n=81)
(ix) My family and friends were supportive of my learning goals.	3% (n=8)	3% (n=6)	49% (n=116)	45% (n=105)
(x) My overall learning experience was positive.	6% (n=15)	11% (n=25)	51% (n=120)	32% (n=76)
(xi) I feel I was given equal or fair (non-discriminatory) opportunities as the other students.	6% (n=14)	6% (n=13)	53% (n=124)	36% (n=84)

The survey included a series of questions that asked the participants about the ways their learning experiences impacted their life. Participants responded to each question on a scale of 1 to 10, and Table 22 shows the average score of each question. Overall, respondents who graduated from their program rated their learning experiences as having a more positive life impact than those who withdrew from their program.

Table 26: Average Score of Impact of Learning Experiences					
On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 equals poor and 10 equals excellent, how would you rate your learning experiences in preparing you to:	Graduated (average score)		Withdrew (average score)		All respondents (average score)
	College	University	College	University	
(i) Get started on a new career path?	8 (n=108)	7 (n=47)	4 (n=42)	5 (n=21)	6 (n=218)
(ii) Develop or improve your skills for a desired occupation?	8 (n=108)	8 (n=47)	5 (n=42)	5 (n=21)	7 (n=218)
(iii) Develop strategies and skills for everyday life?	8 (n=106)	6 (n=47)	5 (n=42)	5 (n=21)	7 (n=216)
(iv) Increase your earning potential?	8 (n=107)	7 (n=47)	4 (n=42)	5 (n=21)	7 (n=217)
(v) Gain confidence in your abilities?	8 (n=107)	7 (n=47)	5 (n=41)	6 (n=20)	7 (n=215)
(vi) Gain confidence in advocating for needed accommodations?	8 (n=105)	7 (n=45)	4 (n=41)	5 (n=21)	7 (n=212)
(vii) Enrich your family or home life?	7 (n=105)	6 (n=46)	4 (n=41)	4 (n=21)	6 (n=213)
(viii) Reduce your financial dependence on others?	7 (n=105)	6 (n=47)	4 (n=41)	4 (n=21)	6 (n=214)
(ix) Actively participate in community and volunteer experiences?	6 (n=105)	6 (n=47)	4 (n=41)	4 (n=21)	6 (n=214)
(x) Improve your overall quality of life?	7 (n=106)	7 (n=47)	5 (n=41)	5 (n=21)	7 (n=215)

Summary

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the province's universities and community college have made considerable investments over the past ten years to increase the opportunities for adults with a disability to access post-secondary education. The 2012 survey results demonstrate that the overall employment and quality-of-life outcomes that former students experienced following their studies at university or college are positive. This study continues to offer evidence that provincial investments provide long-term benefits to the economy of Nova Scotia by enabling a large number of working-age adults with a disability the opportunity to become active members of the labour force. Summary results of the 2012 survey include the following:

- Labour force participation of respondents was 84 percent compared to 90 percent for all adults in Nova Scotia's labour force (aged 25-54 with post-secondary education).
- An employment rate of 85 percent was observed for the reference week of June 24-30, 2012, while another 5 percent reported having started a job in the four-month period during the survey data collection.
- Overall, 66 percent of the employed respondents reported working in employment related to their field of studies. This rate improved to 78

percent for respondents who had graduated from the institution in the study year.

- Of the employed respondents who studied at a Nova Scotia institution, 90 percent were living and working in Nova Scotia at the time of the survey.

In addition, the survey participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their learning experiences at their institutions:

- 83 percent of respondents would recommend their program.
- 91 percent of respondents would recommend their institution.
- 86 percent of respondents were able to access the supports they needed to assist with disability related learning needs.
- 84 percent of respondents reported that disability services staff at their institution responded quickly and effectively to their requests for supports.

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 Canada²¹ and The Public Health Agency of Canada²².

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, 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.

²¹ Health Canada (2002). A Report on Mental Illness in Canada. Ottawa: Health Canada. Cat. N. 0-662-328 17-5.

²² 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)

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*²³ 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 2012-2013, each mental health employability program reported on the total number of individuals who regularly attended and actively participated in their programs and services. The total number of individuals who regularly attended and participated in the employability programs is 1,359 (one thousand three hundred and fifty nine). For the most part, the mental health employability programs and services described in this report are open-ended and

²³ Available online at: <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/mhs/mental-health-addiction-strategy.asp>

provide ongoing support; that is, the programs/services do not have specific start- and /or end dates.

Table 27: LMAPD: Mental Health Employability Program Indicators			
Program Name	Number of participants in program/ service	Number of participants completing a program/service (with specific start and end point to the intervention)	Number of participants who obtained or were maintained in employment where the program/service supports this activity
Community Supports for Adults (CSA)/New Hope	160	10 ²⁴	5
Connections Halifax	304	**	125
Connections Dartmouth	196	**	66 ²⁵
Connections Sackville	71	**	18 ²⁶
Crossroads Cape Breton	184	49	74
Friendship Club	300	**	17 ²⁷
Pathways to Employment	52	**	52
Training, Recovery, Employment and Empowerment (TREES)	92 ²⁸	**	23 ²⁹
All LMAPD funded programs	1,359	59**	380

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

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

²⁴ Most programs offered at CSA/New Hope are open-ended. Date reported includes clients completing a program with specific start-end dates (n=10). In the fall of 2013, program offerings will change and a number of psychosocial rehabilitation/employability programs with specific start and end dates will be offered.

²⁵ Includes employed individuals supported only by CDESS (n=30), individuals supported by CDESS and other employment programs (n=17), and individuals supported with CDESS in the process of gaining employment (n=19).

²⁶ Includes paid employment (n=10), and individuals receiving employment support (n=8)

²⁷ Friendship Club members participate in specific programs as follows: Food Services (n=4 participants/day), Maintenance (n=6 participants/day), Business (n=1 participant /day), Canteen (n=3 per day), Clerical (n=3 per day).

²⁸ Includes new clients (n=78) and reactivations (n=14)

²⁹ Includes paid employment (n=19) and employment development placements, or EDPs (n=4)

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.

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 (formerly *New Beginnings*) helps individuals (19 years of age and older) 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. They 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 their success is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of their 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. Connections Dartmouth 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.

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; for example, two clients are enrolled in post-secondary education. 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 Dartmouth 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, 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 Employment Support Service (CDESS) 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, CDESS staff has helped to create new businesses 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

Wanda's Story (name changed):

Wanda was diagnosed in 2005 at the age of 30 with schizophrenia, paranoid type. She had been working various service industry jobs from 1995 – 2007 struggling to maintain employment due to a learning disability. In 2007, Wanda moved out of her parents' home. She reports that this was a major stressor in her life and she began to experience increased positive symptoms (e.g. delusions, hallucinations) of her illness. In 2008, despite these challenges, Wanda was able to obtain employment as an International Freight Coordinator, which she held for 3 years. After a serious physical injury, she was unable to return to work and has been on LTD since March of 2011. Once again, Wanda relates that the positive symptoms of her illness increased.

Wanda first came to Connections Dartmouth Employment Support Service in May of 2013. After the initial meeting, it became evident that Wanda was lacking confidence in her skills and abilities to secure and maintain employment. The employment staff worked diligently with Wanda to revise her resume and cover letter. Through an existing partnership with a home care provider the employment staff was instrumental in securing an interview for Wanda. Due to her lack of confidence, Connections Dartmouth staff supported Wanda with interview preparation and at her request, accompanied her to the interview. Wanda was

the successful candidate and is now working part time providing home care to seniors. She continues to attend Mindful Relaxation at Connections Dartmouth and uses the deep breathing techniques learned to help her control stressful situations at work. "Connections Dartmouth Employment Support Service has helped me to believe in myself and gave me the strength to go forward. I am truly grateful." --Reprinted with the permission of "Wanda" - a client of Connections Dartmouth.

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

Connections Halifax helps individuals (19 years of age and older) 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 Halifax is informed by a spirit of entrepreneurship. They 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 their success is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of their 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 Halifax 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. Connections Halifax 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.

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

Helen's story (name changed):

Helen was referred to Connections Halifax for Community Outreach & Housing support after a long admission to hospital. At the time she was willing to have this support but did not want to engage in any of the other offerings at Connections Halifax. After several years of developing a trusting relationship with staff and observing the success to other participants during her visits to Connections Halifax she shared that she would be open to helping prepare lunch 2 days per week at Connections.

During her time in the kitchen Helen began to share stories about her past, especially the years prior to being diagnosed with a mental illness. Now in her forties she talked about the dreams she had for herself as a young women. Helen expressed many regrets about interrupted postsecondary education and resulting low self-esteem leading to years of scattered employment in customer service.

In more recent years Helen struggled to maintain her apartment, relationships and had not considered herself capable of work. She expressed significant anxiety about her ability to work or volunteer due to symptoms of her illness. In 2012, Helen expressed interest in starting work to her support person at Connections Halifax. Together, they approached the Employment Services team. With their support, Helen created a resume and explored ideas for future employment. Helen had experience working in coffee shops and identified that this was a line of work that she enjoyed and would like to pursue. The timing was good; there was an opportunity for Helen with the Mindful Mango Café – a social enterprise run by Connections Halifax for people living with mental illness.

The position with the Mindful Mango Café was considered a work training placement to learn employable skills as a barista. Helen would work three days per week with funding provided in part by the Opportunity Fund through Teamwork Cooperative. Helen started this position with a job coach, to help her learn work skills while gaining strategies to manage anxiety in an employment context. Helen learned the skills of the position quickly; she was great on the cash register, friendly with customers, and picked up barista skills without many challenges. What Helen struggled with was confidence. While she was doing the job quite well, she would regularly seek reassurance from coworkers, and apologized frequently for minor errors. In a supportive work environment like the

Mindful Mango Café, Helen was encouraged by both peers and staff to recognize her strengths. Over nine months of working in the training position, Helen slowly began to need this reassurance less and less. By the conclusion of the funded placement, Helen was extremely proficient as a barista, and was expressing that she felt confident in her abilities.

Before her placement with the Mindful Mango Café finished, Connections Halifax Employment Services discussed with Helen where she saw herself working based on her new skill set. Helen had worked at Tim Hortons years before and she felt that she was ready to return to this company. With Helen's consent, Employment Service staff contacted the manager at a Tim Hortons near Helen's home. They were interested in creating a partnership with Connections Halifax, and in supporting Helen in a community-based job. A wage subsidy was arranged with TeamWork Cooperative for the first 3 months to secure the position and allow for extra time and patience with training. At the end of that term, Helen was hired as a regular employee and has been happily working with Tim Hortons for almost 5 months!

David's story (name changed) – in his own words:

Before I became ill and was diagnosed I was a care free, fairly typical young man who was interested in playing with a band, bodybuilding, and finding a career in the business world. I was optimistic about my future, my career and relationships. I was care free and enjoying life and totally oblivious. In October of 2000, at the age of 24, my life changed dramatically with being diagnosed with schizophrenia.

With treatment, the psychotic symptoms subside and then you must try to come to terms with the fact that you have an illness that you will have for the rest of your life. Depression sets in, because everything you had, your job, girlfriend, friends and social life are taken from you. The trauma that your brain has experienced, along with the medication that is slowly helping your brain to heal, leaves you slow, unmotivated, and feeling empty. I lost 2 years of my life at an age when everyone else's growth was happening quickly. I was left behind on education, job experience and relationships and for a long time happiness was absent and I felt little emotion.

With treatment the psychotic symptoms disappeared but so did my social skills, confidence and motivation. Recovery is such a slow process, but after a couple of

years I started to move forward. My first step back into the workplace was as a dishwasher, working 4 hour shifts a few times a week at Sunrise Kitchen. This was a supported employment position through Connections Halifax. I found it challenging at times to maintain a fast pace and interact with co-workers and customers. I was fortunate to have a kind and patient supervisor who helped me to succeed and build confidence. My next restaurant job was a Connections Halifax placement but without support in the workplace. I was afraid of not being able to do the work, and being judged by other people. It was too fast paced and after several months of my best effort, I moved on.

I had a diploma in marketing and started to think about potential jobs. Because of the social anxiety I didn't think I could work in business world dealing with people. I had to find a more solitary occupation. Connections suggested I participate in a career planning process. We did some testing to identify my interests, aptitudes and other factors and narrowed down the job possibilities to three: Architectural Drafting, Graphic Design and Real Estate Appraisal. Now it was up to me. I had to develop some criteria such as, how many years I wanted to spend in school, did I want work with my hands or with my brain, and what kind of money did I want to make. The next step was to do the research and to talk to people who worked in these fields to determine, if there was work in that field, and ultimately which option was the best fit for me.

I began my first real estate appraisal course in 2003. It was a broad introduction to real estate appraisal and I just passed the course with 60%. I took courses one by one, via university distance education, while working part-time. I had my failures. I had to re-write my Business Law exam, which was mainly contract and case law. My final course was like a thesis. I was not working during this course because of the difficulty and the amount of time it required. This for me was the only way I could have completed this course. I worked hard on my paper for 8 months and my reward was an 84% and bragging rights.

On several occasions I had intense symptoms for several weeks during my studies. I survived these courses, along with personal stress. There was the potential for relapse during these times, which was frightening. The thought of having to potentially start from scratch was scary. Looking back at the intensity of some of those situations, I realize I was learning how far I can push myself. Through this

entire process I had the support and guidance from the employment services staff at Connections Halifax. They were able to problem solve with me and help me deal with my own anxiety.

My first job in my field was at a smaller, upscale appraisal firm. I had started a job search on my own and I felt very comfortable when I spoke with the staff at this company. A Connections employment support staff member negotiated both the terms of the position and a wage subsidy for me and accompanied me to an interview with the partners, one of whom had a brother with a mental illness. I started with them 3 days per week. Looking back, they were easy on me during the 9 months I was there. My boss gave me a broad overview of the entire appraisal process without putting demands on me to work independently. I think it would have been too much for me at that time. My next position was a summer job as a Data Collector with Nova Scotia Assessment. This experience provided me a glimpse of what it was like to work for a government organization, but still within my field. Next was a position with a private firm that most people in the industry would call a sweat shop; working long hours for very little money. At this point I still didn't have actual experience preparing reports. I was immersed, and after a week and a half of training I was on my own inspecting properties and then back to the office preparing reports. This was great experience and I was paying my dues.

I continued to progress in my field, but experienced seasonal unemployment. I became an expert job searcher and I received three job offers simultaneously at three different appraisal firms. I chose my current employer because he is a seasoned appraiser and has taught many of my former bosses.

At every junction along the way, I have had the help and support of family and friends, co-workers, managers, and staff from Laing House, Connections Halifax, Teamwork Cooperative and other organizations. You'll find that people will be your biggest source of strength.

Am I successful? I guess it depends how you define success. For me, professionally, success is having a job in my field that I enjoy. --Written by and reprinted with the permission of "David" – a client of Connections Halifax.

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

Connections Sackville opened its doors in September 2012. It was created as part of the restructuring of Recovery and Integration Services. This new program supports individuals who live in many communities (suburban and rural) in a large geographical area. Connections Sackville 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.

Like Connections Halifax and Connections Dartmouth, this program helps adults (19 years of age and older) 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. They believe that by recognizing and strengthening the assets of people and communities, we are more likely to inspire transformation.

As a new program, the staff, management, and participants strive to create a dynamic environment that generates innovative ideas and practices. As a program within the Mental Health and Addictions Program at Capital Health, a cornerstone of their approach is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of their 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 Sackville does not separate the fundamentals that contribute to a successful recovery: employment, education, skills development, housing & outreach, health and wellness, clinical care, family involvement, social & recreational, peer and individualized supports. Each person creates a unique recovery plan based on their identified priorities. For example, three of their clients are currently enrolled in post-secondary education.

Connections Sackville supports individuals living with mental illness to find, secure, and maintain employment within the existing labour market. They have learned from the successes and experiences of Connections Dartmouth and Connections Halifax. The program has 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 as required, and managing any stressful situations that arise.
- Employers are assisted in finding appropriate candidates for job openings.

Staff at Connections Sackville also assists 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 ongoing symptoms arising from their illness.

A success story from Connections Sackville

Donna's story (name changed):

Donna is a 33 year old married woman from Lower Sackville. She works as a retail clerk, approximately 30 hours per week, for a small gift shop with locations in Lower Sackville and Halifax. Now that Donna is working, she and her husband have made plans to buy a house in their community.

When she was 16 years of age, Donna started to experience symptoms of mental illness. She dropped out of school and turned to a wide array of street drugs "to cope with the symptoms". It was during her second admission to hospital at age

19 that she was able to quit using drugs, she was diagnosed with schizophrenia and she began treatment. Upon discharge from hospital she was very socially isolated. Looking back at that time in her life she describes herself as a “hermit”. Donna was fortunate to have a boyfriend, Joe, who stood by her throughout all of this. He “bribed” her to leave the house and to be more active. Joe understood Donna as he was also living with a mental illness. Joe and Donna soon moved in together and later married.

Donna joined Laing House to reduce her social isolation and for support with finding work. She tried work placements as lunch monitor at a school and doing odd jobs at a sports club. Both of these placements provided her with valuable work experience but were short-term. At age 25 Donna joined Connections Halifax and engaged in their supported education and supported employment services. Connections staff used their employer contacts and arranged for Donna to do a work experience placement at a large retail store. A negative experience at the store ended this opportunity, but Donna really enjoyed this work. She learned that she has an aptitude for providing very good customer service in a retail setting. Donna then decided to focus on her educational goal and enrolled in an adult high school. After three years she graduated with her high school diploma. Following this, Donna struggled to find competitive employment. She did child-care for a family member for a while but wanted to return to retail work.

Connections Sackville opened in September 2012. Donna transferred to this new program, which is in her own community. Employment staff at Connections Sackville made contact with her current employer and coordinated a three-month work experience placement, with funding through the Opportunities Fund (in collaboration with Teamwork Cooperative). This placement was extended twice because Donna required extra time to learn the duties of the job. After this, the employer agreed to hire Donna on payroll, and a targeted wage subsidy was negotiated by Connections Staff. Donna gradually increased the amount of responsibility she took on and the number of hours she worked per week. She is now working about 30 hours per week. She enjoys her job very much. Throughout this process, timely communication between Connections staff, Donna and Donna’s immediate supervisor has been critical to support her employer and Donna and to find creative solutions to issues as they arose.

When reflecting on this process, Donna stated “It really helps having good communication with my employment support worker to help get from where you are to where you want to go.... If it wasn’t for you guys, I wouldn’t have a job”.
--Reprinted with the permission of “Donna” - a client of Connections Sackville.

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

Crossroads Cape Breton is a recovery program that supports adults living with severe and recurrent mental illness in maintaining their social, physical and mental health. Their mission is to enable these individuals to lead more socially satisfying and personally productive lives, recognizing that this often involves being employed in the community. 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

Joseph’s story (name changed) – in his own words:

My name is Joseph. I was born and raised in North Sydney. I have lived in Glace Bay for three years on my own, where I worked shoveling snow. This was great for some money when I wasn’t making enough as well as the food bank when I needed to go somewhere for a bit to eat. I went to the Nova Scotia Training Center for slow learners because I had a learning disability.

I became a member for the Crossroads Clubhouse (now Crossroad Cape Breton) in 1995, the first member to join after the founding members. Crossroads is place where I can come to interact with other members and staff members. I enjoy communicating with other people and being able to talk about the issues I am having. When I was growing up I found it difficult to interact with people. It was great to have a place to come and know where your true friends are. I have spent time at the New Dawn institute, which was my own choice as well as time in the hospital and at Talbot house. I am now living in a Seniors Complex on my own; I enjoy living on my own but not at the Seniors complex.

I enjoy cooking and cleaning at Crossroads, as well as work on the B unit including typing. I volunteer my time fundraising for the clubhouse; one of the successful fundraisers I participated in was selling hot dogs as well tickets for a Calgary Flames Hockey shirt. I am hoping that I will find a job that I will be successful with and enjoy. I would love to get a job at the hospital changing beds and cleaning the unit. I am currently working at No Frills on a Transitional Employment Program getting carts, checking the aisles, collecting baskets, and checking water bottles. My first job was working at the SPCA feeding the animals. I then worked at Don Cherry's for three years as a dish washer. After Don Cherry's I was a dish washer at Huang's restaurant for about a month. I then began working with a grant at Dairy Queen which fell through. Next, I worked at Home Depot for 9 months as a TE, my hours then went part time. When I was in school I felt like I was in class that I was too smart to be in which made it difficult. I was picked to be on a fishing boat, it was part time job it was more like when they needed the help. I no longer go to the food banks because I do not need their services but they are great for people who need a hot meal and some extra help.

I feel blessed because I have a good clothing to wear, a place to stay with heat, three great meals a day for a great price. I feel like I am one of the lucky ones because I have everything that I can ask for and a lot of people do not have things as good as I do. I see someone at the addictions service because I have used substances in the past. It has been recommended that I go see someone at Alcoholics Anonymous but I feel like I can stay away from alcohol on my own. AA is supposed to be all about alcoholics but I find that it is all in your head, I don't need to go to AA I can do it as long as I have support from people such as addictions services and the mental health clinic. These are people who I can reach out to and they can steer me in the right direction. I quit smoking cigarettes six months ago and have been drinking lots of green tea instead of too much coffee. I am trying very hard to go without alcohol and cigarettes and it is not easy to do without but I do feel a lot better without them. Alcohol is a depressant and it will bring you down every time. The key is to learn a new style of life, try to get up very early in the morning.

Being here at Crossroads in many ways has saved my life and the life of other members. My co-workers at Home Depot were like family to me it is great to have true friends to be able to communicate with. It is important to have dignity for

yourself and for other people. The reason that I need to work is because I am not getting enough income from community service; I get 150 dollars for transport and 204 dollars for subsidized rent which will increase if I make more money. I am able to make 300 dollars on the side without any of my finances increasing, after 300 dollars we are allowed to keep 30 percent and 70 percent is taken.

I also want to work so that I can have more experience from the work force. Working helps me meet other people and it makes me feel good to have a job. Working has given me a lot more courage to go out and communicate with other people and it makes me feel good to have a job. Working has given me a lot more courage to go out and communicate with other people. If you don't learn how to break the ice, who is going to break it for you? --Written by and reprinted with the permission of "Joseph"- a client of Crossroads Cape Breton.

 **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 approach to recovery through education and employment is 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 is currently working on 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 their employees in positions within our organization or beyond. In addition to these workshops they are planning to engage instructors 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. 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 and the Missing Lint Co-operative completed their merger in April 2012. The newly formed Pathways to Employment began to operate 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 52 individuals within their organization. These waged employees worked a total of 7,996 hours 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 8 of their employees over the past 2 years, on a part-time, as needed basis. Last year they partnered with TechLink in the assembly of 680 wire harness units that were used in the programming of their machines. TechLink delivered all the necessary supplies to Pathways where they were assembled and packaged into units for shipping. This contract created work for 4 employees. Over the past 2 years the program has been working to build a solid relationship with Nova Scotia Community

College. Currently 2 Pathways employees are engaged in casual employment in the 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

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

I really wanted to have some kind of employment and since I've tried different programs over the years and wasn't successful, my mom didn't want me to give up, so one day she was looking in the newspaper and saw an advertisement for a program to help people with mental illness achieve employment. She told me that it might be a good program to check out. I declined at first when she told me about it but after a couple of weeks, I said "OK, let's do it." So one day we were in Sydney and we went there.

Everyone was very friendly and helpful. We were introduced to Callista, the coordinator of the program. I had an interview and it went great - it wasn't a very difficult one. It was just asking about your mental health and why you wanted to get involved. I was so nervous but she made me feel comfortable by telling me how hard it was for her and the struggles she went through to become the coordinator of the program. I thought that was pretty inspirational and it gave me the confidence to take part in the program.

In the beginning I just went there and did some cleaning and office work. I was able to meet Jenny who helped me with my resume and she also had some workshops about different skills and attitudes that helped me in the work place. I went three days a week and made some money. It wasn't that much but to boost my self-confidence.

One day when I was there Jenny mentioned that they were looking for a person to do demos at the New Waterford Sobeys store so I said "OK, I will give it a try." So then one day back in August of 2011 we went up to Sobeys and I had an interview. Jenny went with me and told Francis, the manager of the store, how I was able and willing to take on any task and all the good work that I was doing at

Pathways and then I was hired. The very first day I was very nervous but Jenny made me feel very relaxed. The lady at Sobeys that I was working with was very helpful. Jenny stayed with me until I was completely comfortable and relaxed with the job. It didn't take long and I was doing the job all on my own. I was and still am working there Saturdays from 1-5 p.m.

The whole time that I was in the Pathways program there were certain things that I had trouble with and sometimes it made me upset but when I talked to Paddy I always felt so much better about things. An example would be that I was really scared to go on an interview and Paddy calmed me down. I also worked at the Mental Health Conference in Membertou where I helped set up a booth explaining about the wonderful place that Pathways to Employment is.

I was working at Sobeys for about a couple of months when the manager said that it looked like I needed more of a challenge with my work so he asked me if I wanted to work anywhere else in the store, I said the Bakery. So the next Saturday I started and the workers were all so kind and helpful and I ended up doing the packing and labeling of the products and also put most of the products of the shelf. I found that I have learned a lot of different things. I must say that I was nervous and anxious at first but when I got to meet all the employees they were so kind and easy to get along with that it gave me the self- confidence I needed to work there. I feel that this was the program I was looking for and I finally feel like it was successful for me because not only did I achieve a job, I was also able to get out on my own with the help and support of Pathways and my loving family.

--Written by and reprinted with the permission of "Louise" – a client of Pathways.

Bill's story (name changed) – in his own words:

After quitting three jobs from 2001-2004, I thought I was unemployable, useless and pretty much gave up hope of ever working again. My self-esteem was gone. I was living on a small CPP and topped up Community Services, meanwhile doing volunteer work at Loaves and Fishes. Someone suggested I go to Employability Partnership. I took the PLAR course there and received so much encouragement that I realized I did have work skills and my self-esteem improved. I was told there about a new company (The Missing Lint) was just starting and would I be interested.

In 2005, I volunteered for six weeks making wire harnesses for DynaGen, a local company, and we were quite successful. I also met wonderful people who encouraged me and supported me. I met Shirley, Fred, Angela among others. We started to be paid for our work after the trial period and I had hope again.

The Missing Lint then moved to George Street with increased orders from DynaGen to make load centers and the development of Mentality Magazine. It was a beehive of activity and we all pulled together and supported each other through some very rough times. We became like an extended family, caring about one another and helping each other, spiritually, emotionally and mentally. No one felt alone or less than we were part of. While working on the load centers I learned that I could assemble the whole component from start to finish including high voltage testing. These were very complicated systems. My confidence in my abilities was restored.

As DynaGen work ceased and the magazine folded the Missing Lint diversified and got into property cleaning and maintenance, developed a salon towel service in addition to the continuation of the print shop. The adjustments were made and we all pulled together. We all continued to support each other through these changes. When I heard of the merger I first didn't pay much attention being an individual who was mainly concerned that my places of work would remain the same. Having been assured my jobs would stay the same I was relieved. My jobs at Pathways are the same as they have been for three years and I have developed a great routine for all of them. I brought my old Missing Lint family with me and now have a new family of friends at Pathways. I can and frequently do discuss things with my bosses, Fred and Callista.

I recently had two relapses in three months and received great support from Fred, Shirley and Jenny during my hospital stay. I received support and encouragement from all staff on my return to work. It seems like we are a larger family of friends now. --Written and reprinted with the permission of "Bill" - a client of Pathways.

Daniel's story (name changed) – in his own words:

Hi my name is Daniel, I have been in contact with Pathways for three years and I have seen a lot of progress when two organizations came together to create Pathways to Employment - that created more opportunities for people to achieve employment. Having all the different lines of business such as wood shop, lawn care, towel service and other job opportunities there is a perfect team of

individuals who work at Pathways who are always willing to help out with any questions or concerns that I might have.

When I am asked to work at Pathways I feel as though I have a routine that makes me not feel like my day was wasted. It makes me feel encouraged to do more with my life.

Before Pathways I didn't think that I could have gone this far, but I achieved more than I thought I could because of Pathways. Pathways to Employment supported me in a way that gave me the strength to prepare me for a 9-5 job, five days a week at Rona's Building Supplies. Pathways gave me the strength to grow for opportunities for employment. Pathways to Employment was always there for me and they will for you too. --Written by and reprinted with the permission of "Daniel" – 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 supports 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 2012-2013, TREES employment service continued 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 welcomed 78 new participants into its program while continuing to offer employment services to more than 90 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 clients resided or their level of job readiness, TREES clients succeeded in employment and retraining. During the 2012-2013 year, 23 employment positions were obtained. These results are remarkable considering the current economic conditions in rural communities, and the unavailability of accessible local public transit in some areas of the region. The type and level of attained jobs varied, and included long-haul trucking, tutoring students at the Truro Nova Scotia Community College, and administrative assistant positions with the Truro school board. Regardless of the type or level of job, the emphasis at TREES is on finding the right job in the right environment for each individual – and this has proved to be a formula that works. An individualized approach to mental health employment counseling means that volunteer placements, work place training and educational pursuits are all part of the big picture.

Educational pursuits are a major component of finding purposeful employment and achieving a satisfactory quality of life. In 2012-2013, there were 30 placements ranging from university and college to GED programs. As a result individuals are graduating and finding success in a workforce, an outcome that many never imagined was possible.

TREES recognizes that without program visibility and community awareness, potential participants can fall between the cracks. Accordingly, they continue to distribute brochures and posters about their services, and deliver free community presentations throughout Colchester-East Hants. They also recognize the need to

partner with other organizations and work closely with Service Canada, Employment Nova Scotia, the NS Department of Community Services, Nova Scotia Community College, Bridges, Addiction Services, Department of Justice, and Mental Health Services, to name just a few partners.

Community education and awareness continue to be an integral part of the TREES sustainability. Highlights for this year were group discussions with regional stakeholders about the possibility of a Care Farm project in Truro or the Tatamagouche area. Partners in this discussion included: Nova Scotia Agriculture College (Dalhousie University), Mental Health Services, COMPASS Program, Canadian Mental Health Association, and the NS Department of Agriculture. Farming is a fairly prevalent source of employment for this region and has the potential to provide beneficial outcomes for the client, the farmer, and the community. Lake City, TREES, COMPASS Team, and Department of Community Services have strengthened partnerships to better serve the clients we are all supporting.

TREES has established the *CREATE Awards* (Communities Recognizing Employers Advancement Towards Equality) as a vehicle for employer recognition. TREES recognizes that part of the success of their clients also rests with the employer who is willing to “take a chance” and to offer them employment. TREES *Community Employment* and the *Routes to Work Program* have acknowledged employers in recognition of their inclusive practice of offering employment opportunities to people with mental illness. Inclusion in the workplace for people with mental illness means opportunities to earn a wage, build relationships, to have a sense of purpose, and to be participants in their community. TREES believes that in working together with employers they are taking steps to break down the stigma surrounding mental illness, and create a community where all persons have a place to contribute. Information about the Create Awards may be obtained on the TREES website at: <http://www.treesproject.org/create.htm>

Success stories from TREES

Several inspiring success stories about TREES clients are available on the TREES website at: <http://www.treesproject.org/>. As an example, client Bobby (name changed) says "It feels great to be needed. I have a lot of fun with Linda and Mary Ellen!" Bobby is well known in the community as someone with a big smile, and an

even bigger heart. As an active volunteer at the fire department, bingo Hall, and senior's home, Bobby was eager to try an Employment Development Program (EDP). After trying out several placements, Bobby decided 'Keldora's Creations' was his next step. Here he helps local entrepreneur Linda in all aspects of soap making and sales. With a big smile he says, "This is the place for me!" and Linda feels the same way as she comments "Bobby fits in here perfectly!"

Working Together (Mental Health Services, Cumberland County District Health Authority)

Working Together is an example of a community based psychosocial rehabilitation (PSR)-informed model of service delivery. Its target population is mental health consumers experiencing functional impairment as a result of severe and persistent mental illness. Programming at Working Together is designed to increase participants' capacity to become eligible employees through improvement of their social, vocational, and interpersonal skills. As such, although it does not directly target the employability/employment of the participants, the program plays an important role in indirectly supporting clients in their potential for employability. This program is not currently funded through LMAPD; however the program identifies *Education and Training* and *Building Knowledge* (LMAPD priority areas) as two of its goals - to improve the level of education and work-related skills for persons with severe and persistent mental illness, and contribute to building knowledge/continuous improvement of labour market policies and/or programs for persons with disabilities.

This past year, facilitators at Working Together have offered 14 different programs at Working Together, served 36 adults with well over 800 visits. Programs have included Cooking, Computer Skills, Art Therapy and Crafting, Music, Physical Fitness, Coping Skills, Relaxation, Literacy, volunteering at the local Animal Shelter, Gardening, Men's Group, and Information Sessions from local services and agencies. Participants are involved in community outreach and anti-stigma activities such as the holiday Turkey Dinner, and the annual walk for mental health awareness Minds in Motion. At the end of September 2013, participants of the Cooking group cater a two-day event for the Meriden Family Program³⁰ which will host community members, stakeholders, and local agencies,

³⁰ Developed in the UK, the Meriden Family Programme is a training and organizational development program that promotes family-sensitive, evidence-based mental health services. The aim of the program is to train clinicians, family members and careers to effectively support families whose relative is living with mental illness, and to

to promote working with and supporting families who have loved ones living with a mental illness.

Success stories from Working Together

Facilitators of Working Together have noticed great progress in all of the participants in many different ways. Growth and development was observed on countless occasions in the kitchen, in casual conversations, and with members of the community. Participants developed interpersonal, vocational, and social skills which improved their overall self-confidence, social supports, a sense of pride, and a sense of community. This past year three participants completed the Food Safety Handler's course in November, which has helped them to become knowledge-sharers and leaders in the kitchen. Facilitators of Working Together have also noticed that symptoms of illnesses appeared less frequently, few participants were hospitalized throughout the year, and many found themselves engaged in activities they never thought possible. For some, Working Together was the reason they have maintained their wellness and enjoyed a quality of life like never before experienced.

Facilitators continue to receive positive feedback from the participants of Working Together throughout the course of the programming, and also at the year-end evaluation. The strengths and limitations of each group are routinely discussed, and suggested improvements are gathered to prepare for future groups. Participants continue to name the Cooking, Physical Fitness, Animal Shelter, and Craft groups as their favourite programs. All participants of the programming are invited and encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the year.

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)

identify and address potential barriers in implementing a family-centred approach. Website: <http://meridenfamilyprogramme.com/about.php>.

and Individual Placement and Support (IPS)³¹. 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>

Health and Wellness, Addiction Services

The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) flows monies 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 contributes to barriers related to preparing for, attaining, and retaining employment. The impact of LMAPD funding contributes to the reduction of the disabling effects of substance use and/or gambling-related problems. The target population comprises of 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 methodology 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 from one end of the province to the other regularly provide links with community organizations through the development of treatment plans that help individuals develop strong ties to their community.

The Department of Health and Wellness has completed an evaluability assessment, and has developed an Outcomes Monitoring Survey (OMS) in conjunction with the District Health Authorities working group. The OMS is

³¹ Bond, Gary R., Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, Vol 27 Number 4, Spring 2004.

designed for applicability across the province, and will obtain targeted information that directly relates to the impact of treatment services on the employability of the clients accessing programs and services. Data will be collected upon initial registration and will be collected again six months post registration. This evaluation process will be evidence-based and will clearly demonstrate the impact of addictions treatment, on all aspects of client employability. This will be identified through the evaluation of program relevance, program success and exploring what impacts and effects, intended and unintended, have resulted in carrying out the program.

Addiction Services recovers funding of \$2.9 million annually to be applied to the costs of providing the continuum of care services that are described above and provide a direct contribution to the recovery from addictions and the securing of gainful employment by Nova Scotians. Five thousand, eight hundred forty-six individuals received service in 2012-13 in the District Health Authorities. Information about addiction services programs and locations can be found at <http://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/>.

Estimated Cost-shared Expenditures

2012 – 13	Total Expenditure	Federal Contribution	Provincial Contribution
Community Services			
Employment Support Services			
Employment related assessment & career counseling staff, program delivery, and programs	4,957,956	919,959	4,037,997
Provision of disability related supports	649,395	179,343	470,052
Special Needs Supports	575,502	274,814	300,688
Sub-total:	6,182,853	1,374,116	4,808,737
Labour & Advanced Education			
Post-Secondary Disability Services			
Program Administration	467,600	233,000	234,600
Grants to Students	1,866,180	625,500	1,240,680
Educational Attendant Care	163,680	98,000	65,680
Sign Language Interpreter Services	576,000	347,000	229,000
University Disability Service Delivery	1,054,000	527,000	527,000
NSCC Service Delivery	1,170,000	585,000	585,000
Collaborative Programs	557,772	0	557,772
In Kind Contributions	1,303,691	317,615	986,076
Sub-total:	7,158,923	2,733,115	4,425,808
Health & Wellness			
Mental Health			
Clubhouse Programs*	3,982,396	1,140,000	2,842,396
Addiction Services			
Workplace Outreach	226,419	113,209	113,210
Addiction Services	12,362,861	2,929,906	9,432,955
Sub-total:	16,571,676	4,183,115	12,388,561
TOTAL	29,913,452	8,290,346	21,623,106

* Includes eight mental health employability programs described in this report (see Table 27)

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). Human Resources Skills Development provides the societal indicators data for the annual reports each September³². This report includes SLID data from 1999 thru 2010 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 2010 the average earnings of persons with disabilities were

³² 2009 was an exception. The data was delayed and subsequently reported in an updated release February 2010

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 has widened and shown signs of some recovery in 2010.

Labour Force Participation

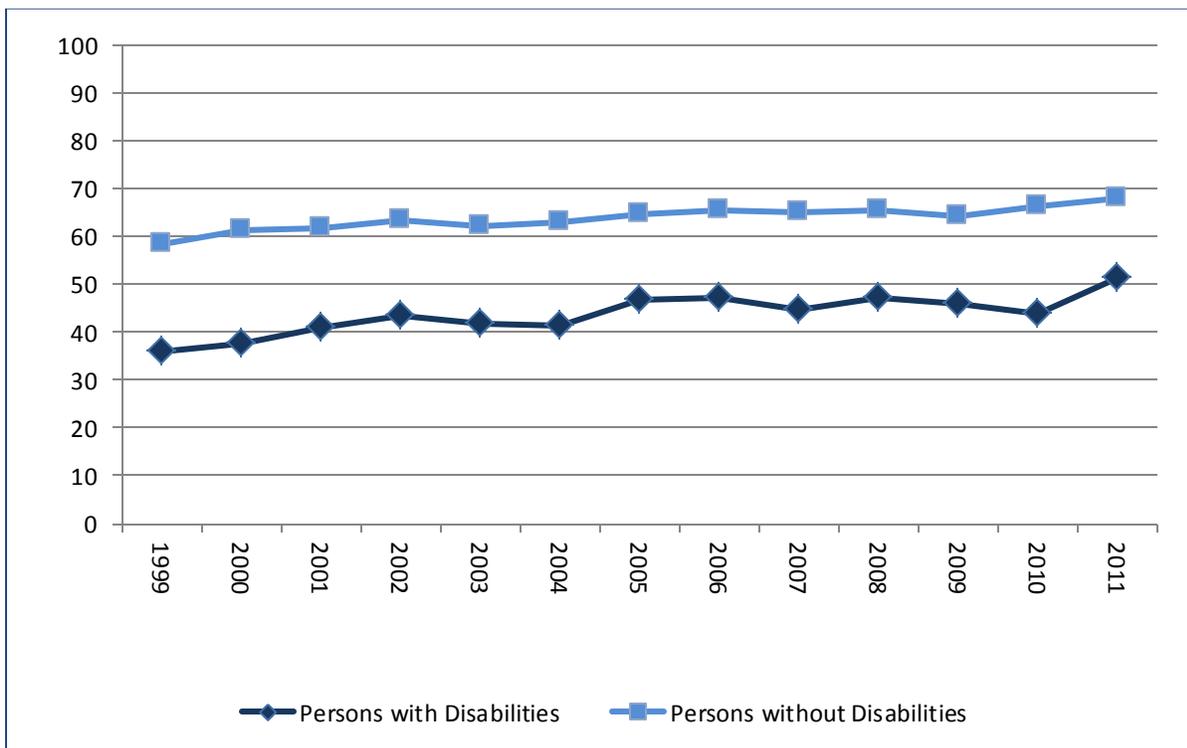


Chart 3: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who were employed all year

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.

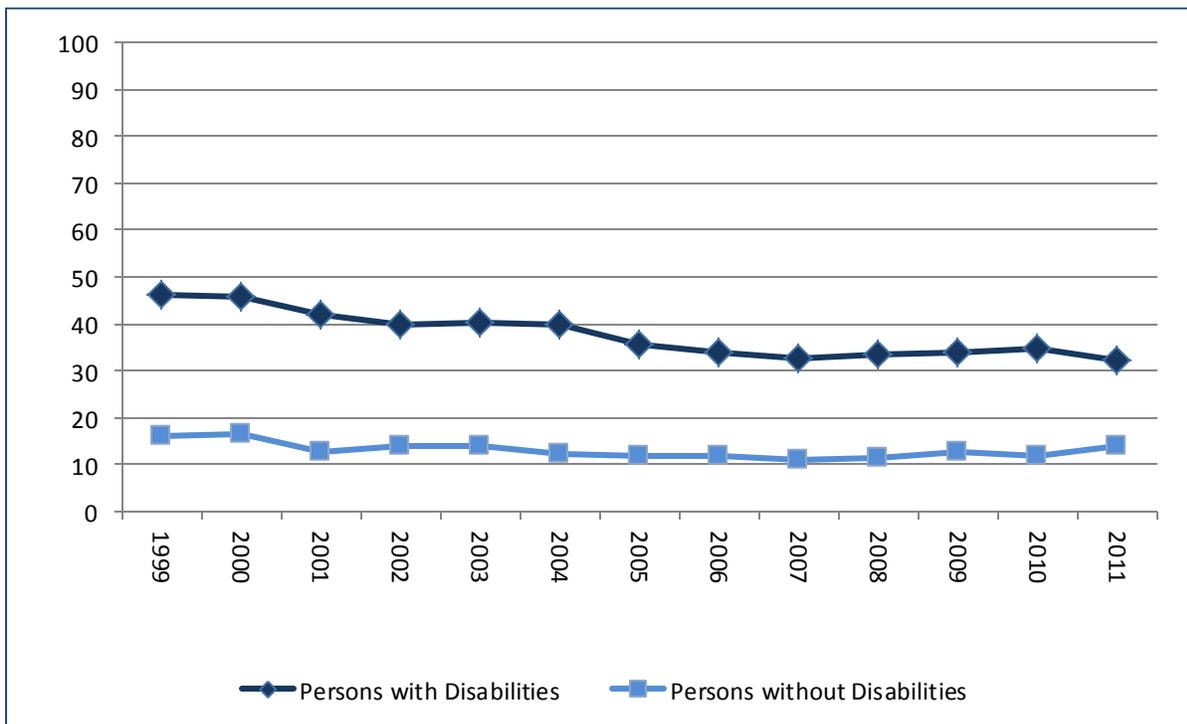


Chart 4: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who were not employed all year or who were not in the labour force

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).

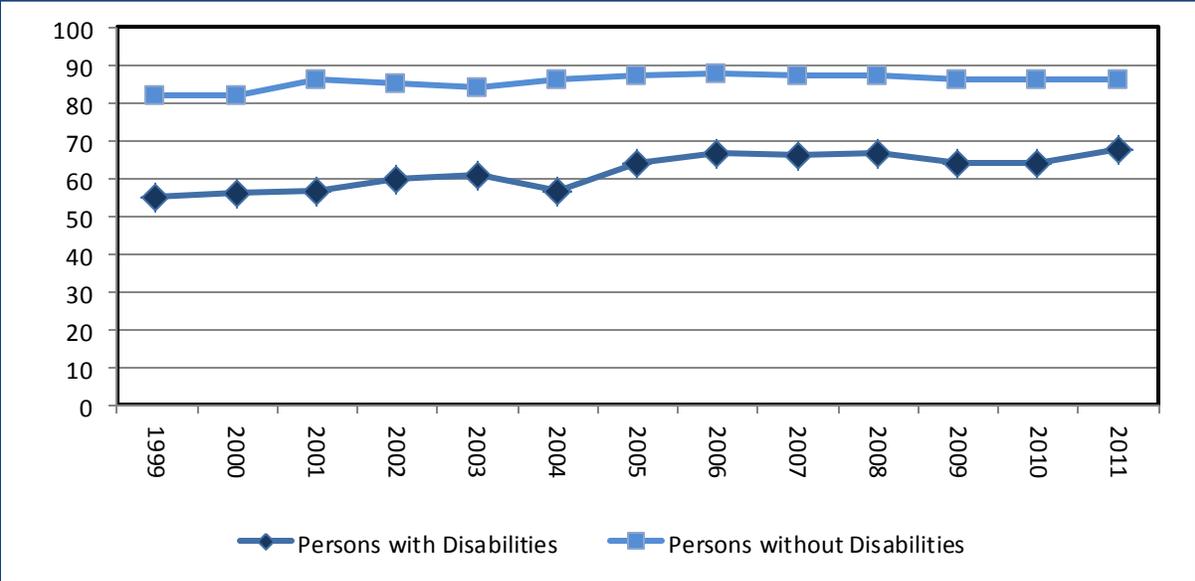


Chart 5: Percentage of working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who had earned income

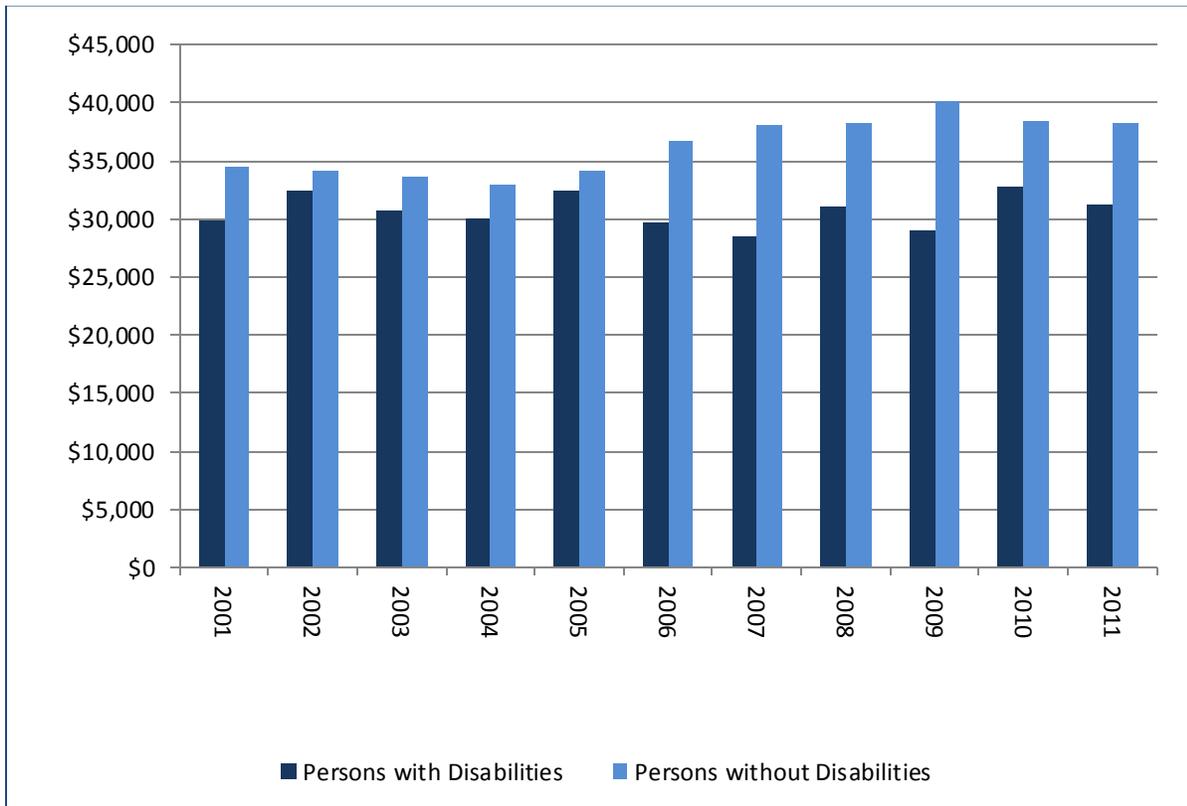


Chart 6: Average earned incomes among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) in constant \$

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 dollars³³ 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

³³ 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.

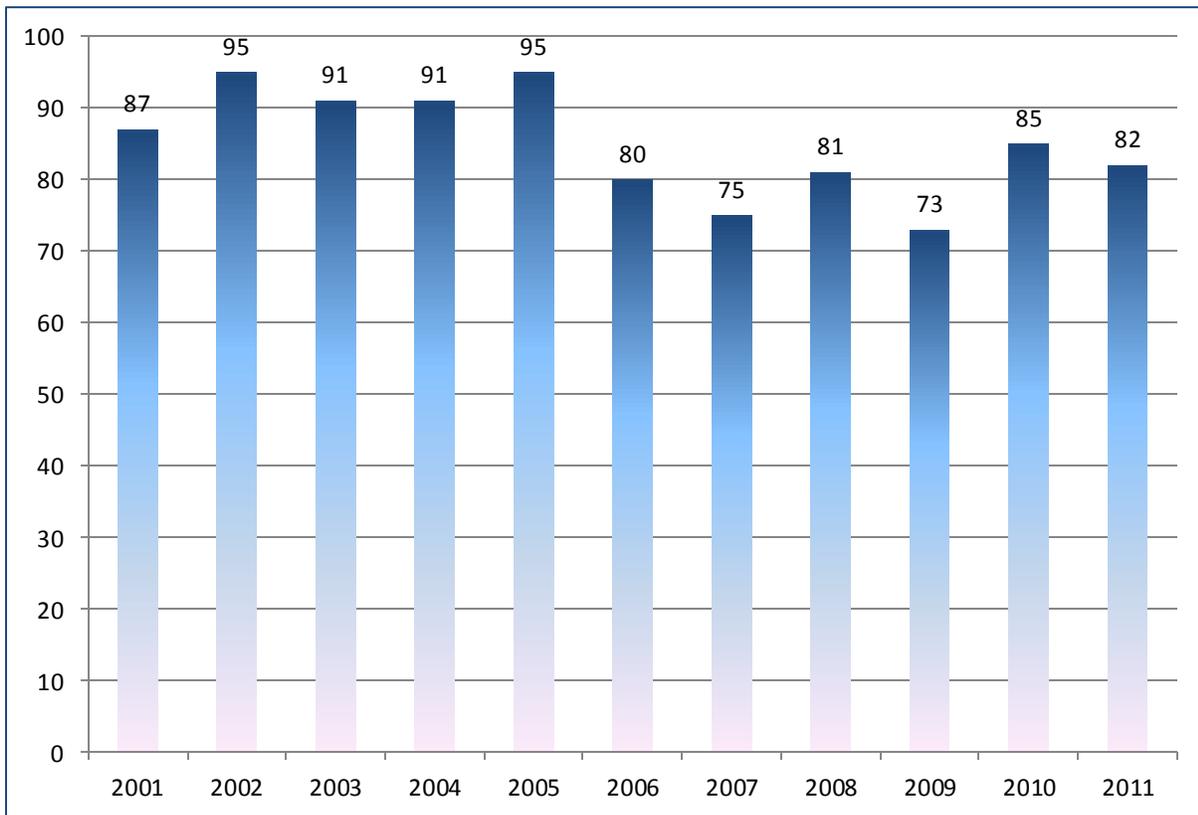


Chart 7: Average earning of persons with a disability as a percentage of average earnings of persons who do not have a disability in Nova Scotia in constant dollars

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 persons 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.

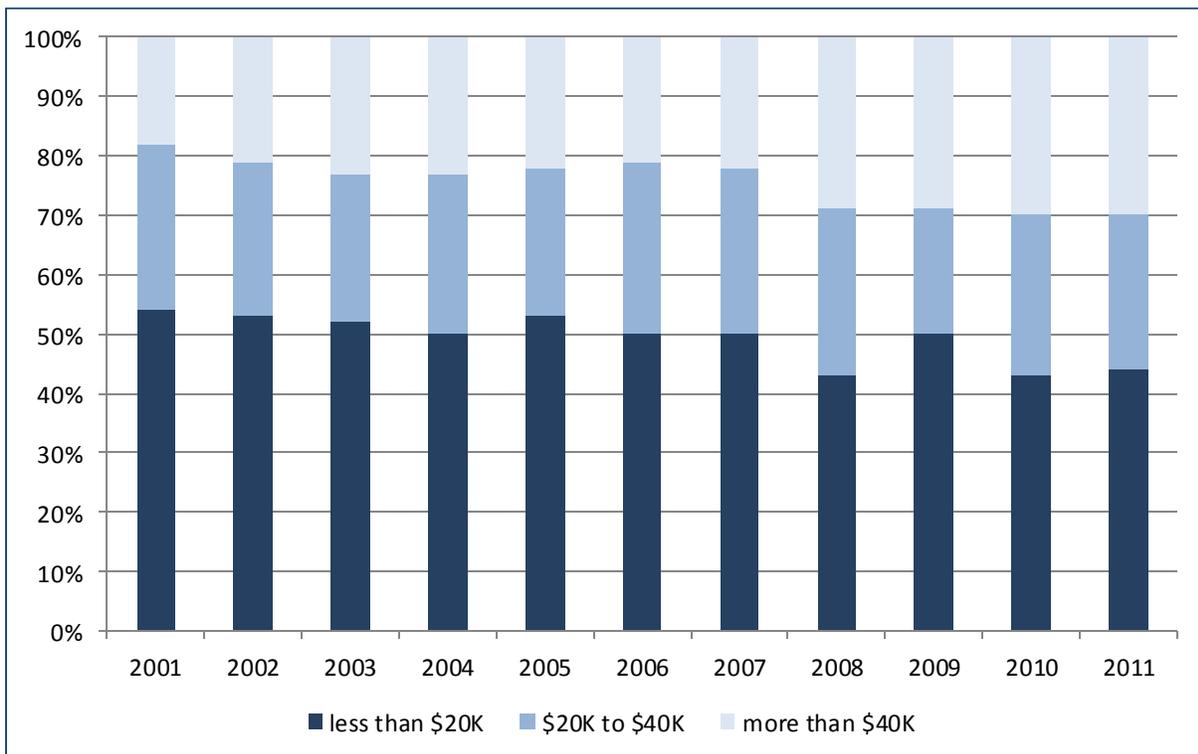


Chart 8: Income distribution among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability

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.

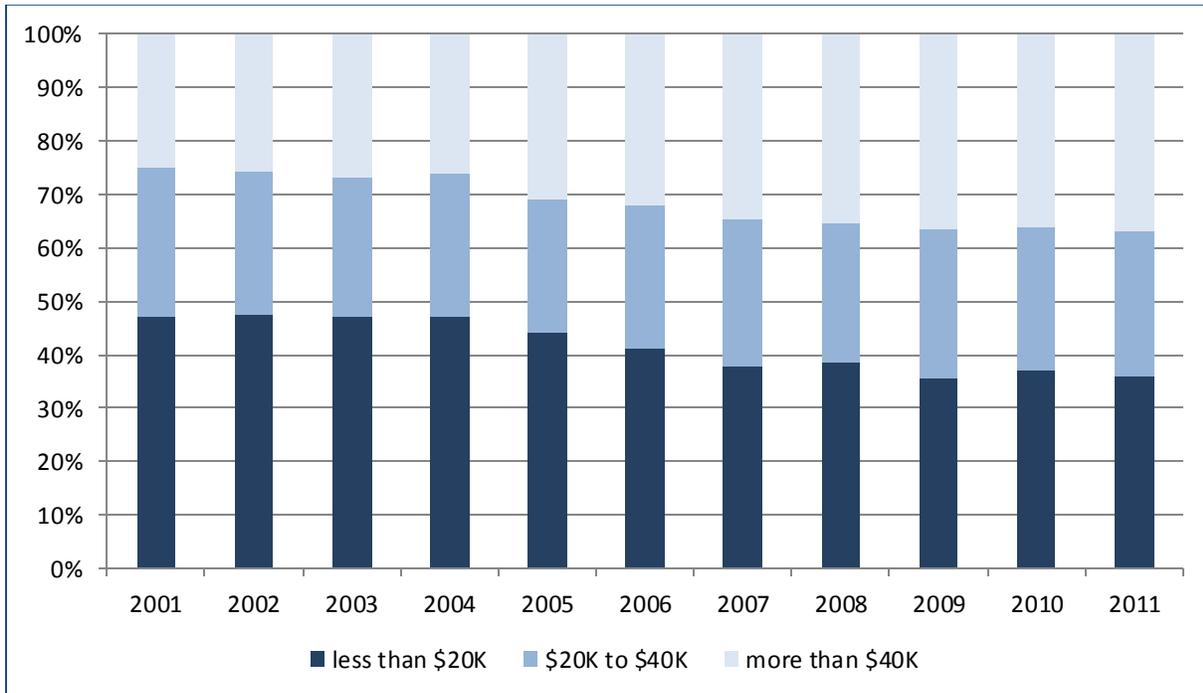


Chart 9: Income distribution among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability

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.

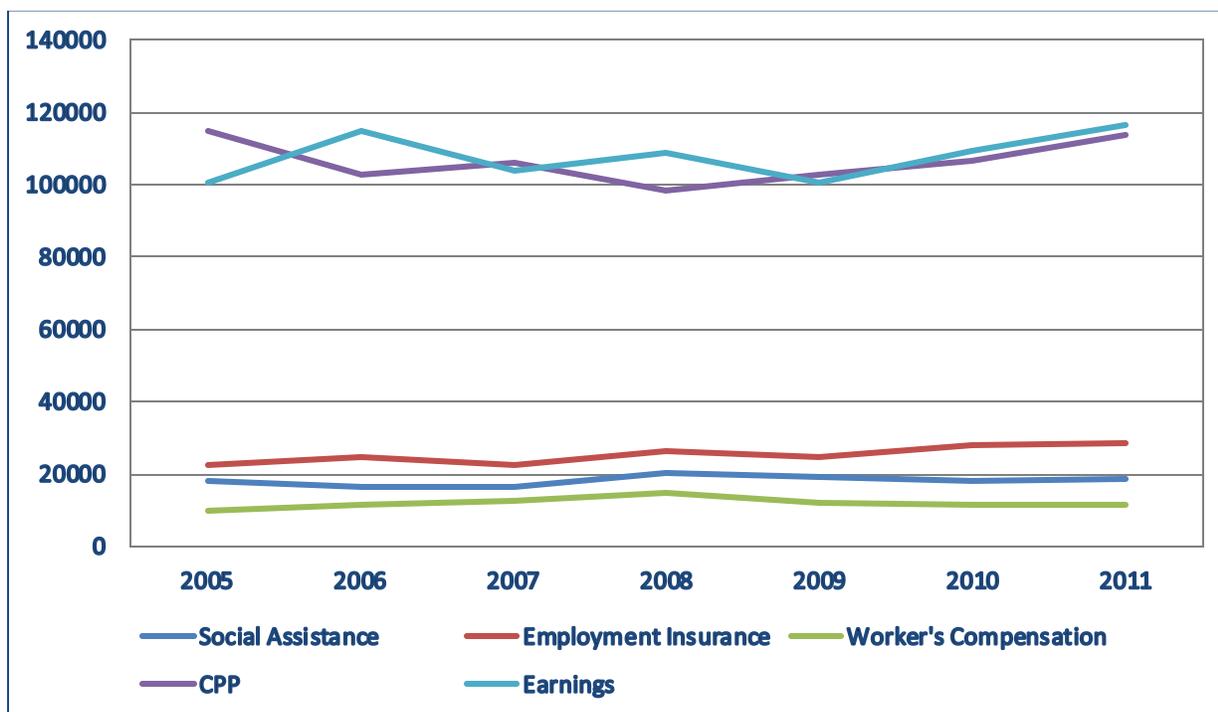


Chart 10: Sources of income reported by working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability

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.

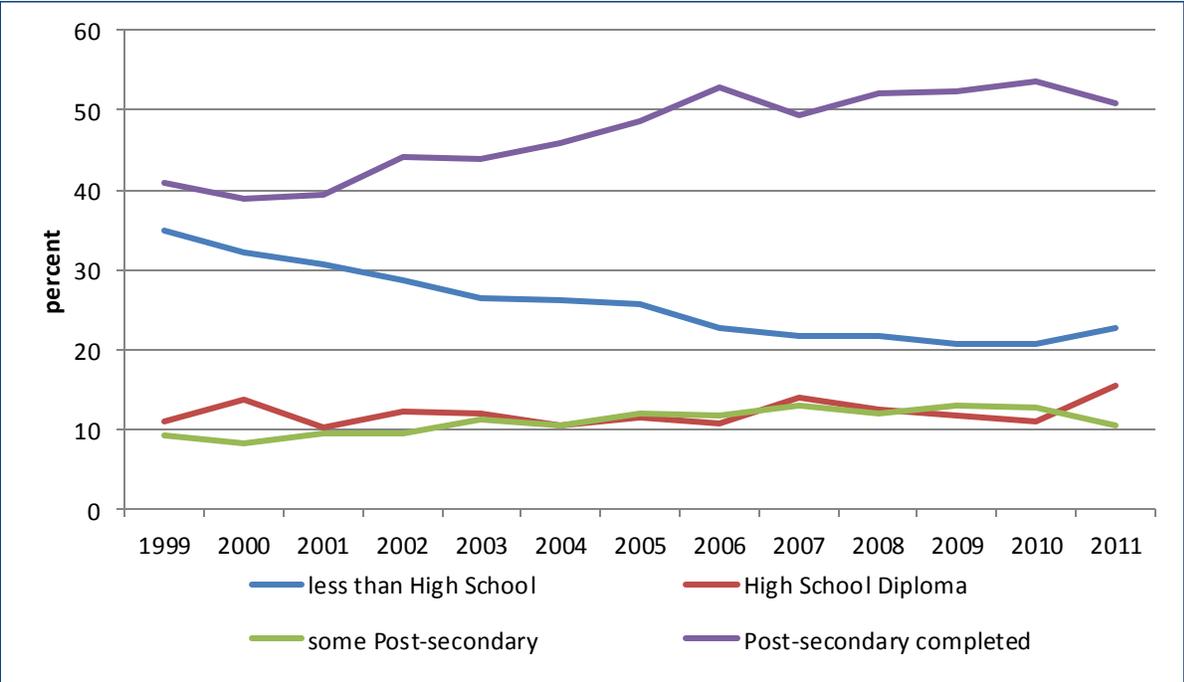


Chart 11: Educational achievement among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability

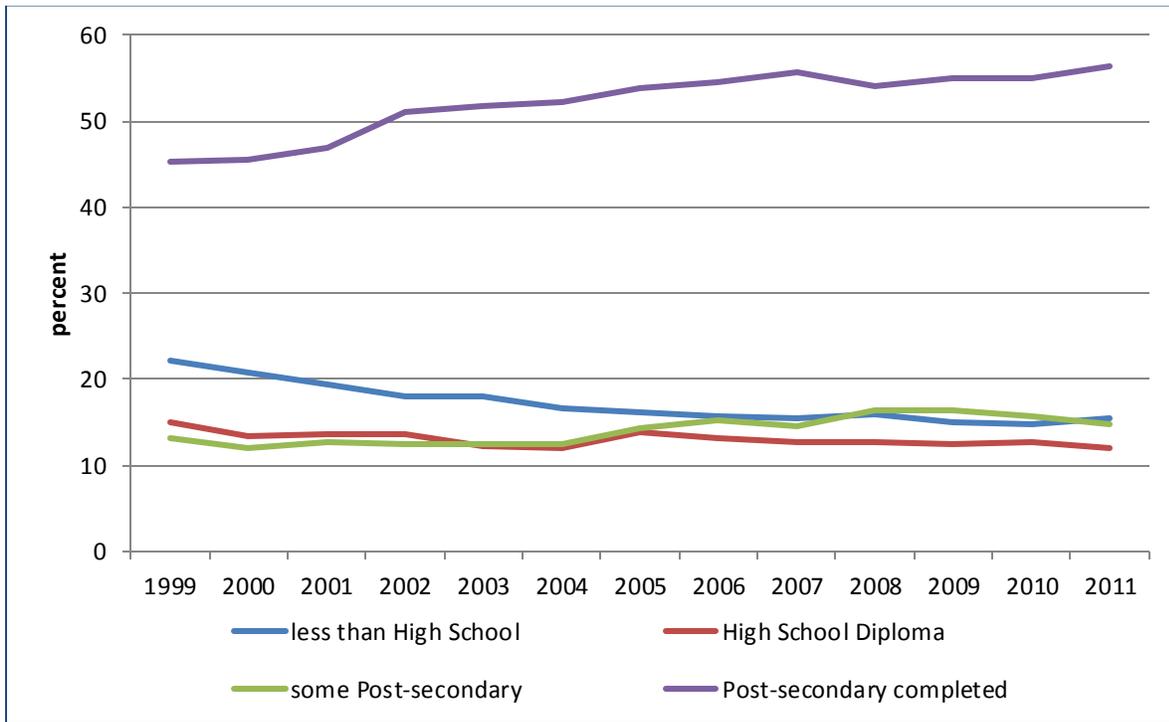


Chart 12: Educational achievement among working aged Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability

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 begin negotiating a 'next generation' LMAPD with provinces in 2013 in anticipation of new agreements being signed by April 1, 2014. Minister Kenney, Employment and Social Development Canada wrote to the Minister of Community Services in September with a proposal outlining the key elements of the Government of Canada's offer to renew the LMAPD in 2014. The federal proposal 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 Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities has provided an opportunity to maintain and strengthen Nova Scotia's 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.