

# ENS Transformation: Frequently Asked Questions on EAS Amendments and New EAS Agreements

The questions below are grouped according to topic. Please click on a topic below to be taken to the section of this document containing the related questions.

If you have a question that is not addressed in this document, please submit the question by email to [ENSTRANSF@gov.ns.ca](mailto:ENSTRANSF@gov.ns.ca).

Frequently Asked Questions On:

- [Amendments](#)
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- [New Agreements](#)
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## ***AMENDMENTS***

***Q: Why are some agreements being extended instead of entering into new agreements right away?***

A: The extensions will allow for the introduction of LaMPSS 2.6 which is going to enable multiple funding sources in one agreement. The extensions will also move all EAS agreements to two common end dates to facilitate future agreement negotiations. We plan to enter into new agreements after these common end dates using the new funding mechanism that LaMPSS 2.6 will facilitate.

***Q: If our agreement ends in June, will we be contacted for an amendment?***

A: There are two situations that will trigger the need for an amendment at this time: (1) your agreement ends prior to April 30, 2013 or (2) any of the currently negotiated staff positions have been flagged as being eligible for a wage adjustment. If either of these situations exist in an agreement, contact will be made over the next few weeks by an ENS Program Officer to discuss an amendment.

***Q: When will the amendments to extend agreements & introduce wage adjustment begin and when will they all be completed?***

A: Work is beginning immediately to identify agreements that require an amendment and to contact the impacted service providers. These amendments will be complete by the end of February.

***Q: Will the Program Officer doing the amendment be the person at ENS I already have a relationship with?***

A: While in many cases the person working on the amendment will be the Program Officer who already manages the agreement, some regions have elected to use a focused, team approach to have designated Program Officers complete all the amendments. Where the team approach is being used your organization may be working with a new Program Officer for the amendment process; however, the Program Officer who currently manages the agreement will also be involved. The Transformation Team will work together with Program Officers as the amendments are completed.

***Q: If a different Program Officer does the amendment will they continue to maintain the file after the amendment?***

A: Any changes to the Program Officer assigned to an agreement will be communicated to the service provider, as per the usual practice.

***Q: Will the amendments to end dates and wages be a lot of work for my organization?***

A: Much of the “leg work” for these amendments has already been done by the Transformation Team. The data that has been collected for your organization will be shared and discussed with you. As during any amendment to an EAS agreement, some updates will be required to projected activities and the budget.

***Q: How will the amendments impact current agreement negotiations for LMA projects for 2013/2014 which ENS has requested organizations submit?***

A: Where an organization has an EAS agreement, and has been working with ENS to submit a proposal for 2013/14 LMA funding, every effort will be made to integrate the process. Each of these cases will need to be reviewed individually.

## ***WAGE ADJUSTMENTS***

***New! Q: Have we or are we going to set any academic requirements for any of the positions other than accountants (i.e. Are there going to be minimum academic requirements for career practitioners)?***

A: At the present time only the Accountant position requires specific academic credentials. Career Counsellors require specialized counselling competencies, but what those competencies are has not yet been defined. ENS has adopted the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners and these provide a guide for defining skill sets and core competencies for staff.

***New! Q: Are we going to consider implementing a ladder payment scale that will allow organizations to pay higher amounts to “more experienced” staff?***

A: The wage adjustment process provides the ability for organizations to increase the pay for positions that are currently paid under the average wage that has been calculated by ENS. The amount of the pay increase will be dependent on the organization’s HR and organizational policies but can only go as high as the average wage as outlined for each position. As a result, the organization can implement or may already have in place a ladder payment scale. This process will now have the ENS average wage as the top of the ladder for each position.

***New! Q: If two employees work at the same position, but one just started whereas the other one has been working for several years, the years of experience should give a better salary to the second person. Do the wage adjustments include this?***

A: The wage adjustment process is about enabling organizations to increase the wages of those staff that are currently being paid below the provincial average wage rate. These adjustments must take into consideration the organization’s HR and organizational policies. If the organization has a tiered approach to wages for positions based on experience, time, and credentials then this is all taken into consideration. At this time, ENS will only support increases up to the average wage rate of any given position.

***Updated! Q: Is the EAS Position Titles and Abstracts document available in French? The job descriptions on some EAS agreements are currently in French, which makes the comparison with an English document difficult.***

A: ENS Business Expertise is currently working on the translation of this document. The translation will be completed this week. We will share it with all EAS organizations as soon as it becomes available.

***Q: Can one position be matched to 2 (or more) of the position titles outlined in the EAS Positions and Abstracts document, with the percentage of time indicated for each position?***

A: ENS expects that for each staff there would be one position title assigned. The position title to be assigned would be the one that best represents the job duties on which the staff spend the majority of their time. If the Service Provider feels that their staff duties are split exactly 50/50 between two positions, they need to make a decision about the designation of that staff person to one or the other of the positions.

***Q: How do the EAS Position Titles and Abstracts apply to LMAWFY agreements? We have been told that these will also be amended to June 30th and then new contracts would be negotiated. Also, though, on the last conference call there was speculation that these other contracts with ENS would be merged into the EAS. Is this the long term goal?***

A: The EAS Position Titles and Abstracts are currently being applied only to EAS agreements. Our approach is to complete the work being carried out on these agreements which will allow for appropriate adjustments where necessary before reviewing other types of projects to determine if there are similarities. ENS has not yet completed program reviews at this time so is not in a position to communicate long term goals at this time.

***Q: What do you mean by wage adjustments? Will all staff receive an increase and how much will it be?***

A: We have reviewed all the current wages across existing EAS funded organizations in Nova Scotia. We have researched comparable wages for positions in similar NOC codes, and have determined an average wage for positions. The adjustment will be offered only to organizations where we have identified that staff are currently receiving wages below this average. The adjustments will allow organizations to increase the wages for specific positions up to the average wage determined by ENS.

***Q: Will wage adjustments be retroactive?***

A: Yes. Wage adjustments will be retroactive to April 1, 2012.

***Q: How did you come up with the average wages?***

A: The average wage was determined by reviewing the wages and positions in current EAS agreements. Labour market information was also taken into account. Using current job titles and descriptions each position has been mapped to the positions outlined in the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners, which ENS has adopted as our provincial standard.

***Q: Since the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners are generalist, will you be open to discussing the specialization that is required to provide specific services that require a certain level of expertise (e.g. services to specialized populations)?***

A: At this point in time we are adopting the national standards which are widely accepted across Canada and have been reviewed deeply by the NSCDA. While we cannot influence the Canadian standards, ENS is open to dialogue with groups interested in further review of levels of expertise associated with specific services.

***Q: Will a range of wages be included?***

A: The exercise carried out to compare wages for positions across Nova Scotia identifies an average wage by position rather than a range. Affected organizations will be advised of positions that are under the average and a discussion will take place to determine if the wage will be adjusted upward in consideration of the organizations HR and other organizational policies.

***Q: When the amendment is completed for wage adjustments, will additional funds be available in the administrative cost category, which is calculated based on a percentage of the overall agreement value?***

A: The administrative category will only be increased if a position that is currently funded in Administration is identified for a wage adjustment.

***Q: Will wage adjustments include changes to the whole compensation package or salaries only?***

A: Wage adjustments will also include mandatory employment related costs as negotiated within your current agreement.

***Q: What about staff whose wages are higher than the average wage? Will there be reductions in salary?***

A: No. The wage adjustment is intended to bring those staff who are lower than the average wage up to the average.

***Q: When will ENS allow cost of living increases for staff?***

A: Cost of living increases will not be considered as a part of the amendment process. When agreement negotiations begin for the new, two year agreements consideration will be given to what increases may be incorporated at that time, given the current fiscal situation and direction of the Province.

***Q: How will the payment for wage adjustments be made to impacted staff? What deductions will be taken from the retroactive payment?***

A: A lump sum payment will be made to the each organization based on the wage adjustments identified within their agreements. Organizations will be responsible for disbursing these adjustments to affected staff and making appropriate deductions based on CRA guidelines and organizational human resource policies.

***Q: Will staff that have left since April 2012 or are currently on leave be paid retroactively?***

A: The wage adjustment applies to current employees as defined by each EAS organization's own human resource policy. There will be no wage adjustment for staff who have left the employ of the organization. The organization's human resource policies currently on file with ENS will apply in cases of employees on leave.

***Q: How will the wage adjustment be applied to positions where staff duties are split between multiple positions?***

A: We recognize that staff can be called upon at times to perform combined duties such as those of a career practitioner while also facilitating workshops or helping out in the career resource centre. The job descriptions provided for positions with the EAS application package have been used to place EAS staff into the positions associated with career development services. This information will be validated with service providers as part of the amendment process.

***Q: What will the new position titles be and when will we be receiving more information on these?***

ENS has adopted the Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners as a guide for defining skill sets and core competencies for staff in EAS funded organizations. After analyzing the position titles and duties of staff currently working in EAS funded projects across the province, we were able to map the majority of those positions back to the S&G's. The new position titles and accompanying descriptors will represent the work that ENS will be including as part of the delivery of career and employment services in CNSC's. This information will be shared with service providers very shortly.

***Q: What if an EAS staff member doesn't agree with the position their duties are assigned to?***

A: All appeals must be addressed through the organization's internal human resource channels.

A process will be implemented for organizations who wish to make an appeal to ENS regarding the application of the wage adjustment process. Details of this process will be shared as we move forward with the amendment process.

***Q: Will LMA agreements be getting wage adjustments too?***

A: At the present time the focus of these changes is on EAS funded agreements only.

***Q: Some organizations have a multi-way split with different funders for the same salary. Are other provincial departments "on board" with the wage adjustments (i.e. Department of Community Services, Department of Education)?***

A: At this time these changes apply to Employment Nova Scotia funding only. We will review on a case by case basis in instances of partnered funding.

## ***NEW AGREEMENTS***

***Q: Will ENS continue to work with the existing group of EAS service providers or are you looking at reducing the overall number of EAS agreements?***

A: ENS will enter into new, two year agreements with all existing EAS service providers.

***Q: If this is only the beginning of Transformation, what will happen next?***

A: We are committed to continued consultation. While these new, two year agreements are rolled out, the Transformation Team will continue to work on other key pieces of Transformation. This may include supporting the work being done relating to standards for career practitioners, reviewing employment workshop offerings and standards, and identifying innovative and alternative modes of local service delivery. The team will also engage in continuous evaluation of the new funding and service delivery models.

Over the next two years, as a part of the new agreements, ENS will introduce service standards, standard job titles and descriptions, as well as an expanded menu of services which will include changes to assessment activities and clients' flow through case management.

***Q: When do we need to submit our new applications for the 2 year agreements? When will we learn more about the upcoming changes and their impact on our organization so we can be ready to apply?***

A: We anticipate the application process will need to begin in the spring of 2013. We plan to hold information sessions over the coming months in each region to further communicate with you about the changes that are going to be introduced in the new agreements. The EAS program will be disabled for new applications while changes are in progress.

***Q: Could our agreements ever be aligned with a March 31st end date for ease of accounting?***

A: While we recognize that the current end dates are not ideal for accounting practices, it is not possible for us to align to a March 31<sup>st</sup> end date for the new agreements. We will take this into consideration for the future.

***Q: It sounds like the new, two year agreements will require EAS service providers to offer more services. Will ENS be providing more staff and funding?***

A: The expanded menu of services aims to ensure clients who are looking for work are well-prepared and can access the employment services that best meet their needs. Careers Nova Scotia Centres will help people make informed decisions and take concrete actions about education, jobs and careers. The expanded menu of services, which will include changes to assessment activities and clients' flow through case management, may require your organization to look at how existing staff and resources can be used differently. We would like to address some existing service gaps and ensure the effective use of existing services in other areas. These considerations will be part of negotiations for the new, two year agreements.

***Q: How long will we have to start offering the new menu of services and change the client flow process? Is there any flexibility to do things differently?***

A: The menu of services and client flow process are to be introduced with the new, two year agreements in order to provide consistent service across the province. Information on these will be shared in the near future and organizations will be able to review internal operations to determine where adjustment may be needed. ENS will discuss an appropriate period of time to facilitate adjustments to service.

***Q: Will additional qualifications and training be required for staff? Is there funding available from ENS to do this?***

A: The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners have been accepted by ENS as the standard for career development practitioner services. We will be entering into an agreement to support work the Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA) is preparing to carry out in the area of core competencies for career practitioners through a voluntary certification process. Once a method to assess competencies has been developed we will be in a better position to understand whether additional training will be required and/or supported.

***Q: Given that assessment activities and client flow are changing, will specific tools and resources be provided for us to use?***

A: A selection of assessment tools and resources has been gathered to support the new service delivery model and will be shared with service providers for review and feedback to determine appropriate use with applicable client groups.

***Q: Will there be training on the expanded menu of services, including any new tools and resources, for community boards or only for EAS staff?***

A: Organizations will be invited later this winter to participate in information and feedback sessions to review the menu of services, client flows, tools and a number of resources. We will also use webinar and other communication methods to keep service providers informed and/or provide training and support. These sessions will be open to both board members and EAS staff.

***Q: Can you elaborate on whether case management for PWD clients will be changing? Will the changes in assessment include provisions for working with PWD clients?***

A: The work being done with assessments is in consideration of all client groups with the goal of providing options for levels of assessment appropriate to client needs. This work is intended to address issues identified during consultation regarding availability and cost of assessment tools.

***Q: What are the new service standards?***

A: As a part of the new, two year agreements ENS will introduce both client facing and organizational service standards. In many cases these standards will reflect the good practices organizations already have in place.



For example, one client facing service standard will be for hours of operation to be posted and reflect client needs. An example of an organizational service standard is to have client satisfaction measures in place.

Service standards will be phased in beginning with the new, two year agreements. ENS will be looking to service providers for feedback as they are introduced.

## ***NEW FUNDING MODEL***

*Q: Will there be more budget flexibility in the new agreements than what we've had in the past?*

A: This is the intent. As the new funding model is rolled out with the 2 year agreements flexibility within cost categories/budgets will be identified and explained. This is a work in progress.

## ***GENERAL***

*Q: Will all of the information provided in the webinar / teleconference held in December 2012 be available online?*

A: The information from the webinar has been distributed by email to all EAS service providers. We are working to develop a webpage where all relevant information can be stored for easy reference.

*Q: Will current EAS organizations be branded as Careers Nova Scotia Centres?*

A: ENS will need to work with our corporate communications team to determine what branding may or may not be involved for our EAS service providers. At this point the Transformation Team here at ENS is focused on the work associated with the plan to enter into new, two year agreements with our existing service providers. We will receive direction on when and if EAS service providers will be branded as Careers Nova Scotia Centres from our corporate communications. As soon as more information is available we will share it with you.