



# Accountability Report 2021–22

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Labour, Skills & Immigration



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Accountability Report 2021–2022

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# Labour, Skills and Immigration Accountability Report 2021-2022

## Contents

Contents .....	1
1. Accountability Statement .....	2
2. Message from Minister and Deputy Minister.....	3
3. Financial Results .....	5
4. Measuring Our Performance .....	6
5. Supplemental Information and Appendices .....	28
6. Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act.....	29

# 1. Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration for the year ended March 31, 2022 is prepared pursuant to the *Finance Act* and government policies and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration Business Plan for the fiscal year just ended. The reporting of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department of Labour, Skills and Immigrations' management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration 2021-2022 Business Plan.

Original signed by:

Original signed by:

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Hon. Jill S. Balsler  
Minister

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Ava Czapalay  
Deputy Minister and Chief Executive Officer

## 2. Message from Minister and Deputy Minister

It is our pleasure to present the first Accountability Report of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration for the 2021-22 fiscal year. We continue to work with our colleagues in Advanced Education and those across government to help people live, learn and work to their highest potential in Nova Scotia.

Over the past year, LSI played a pivotal role in advancing solutions for safe and inclusive workplaces, enabling learning, employment and achieving historic population growth through strategic partnerships and program innovations.

LSI is leading work across government and with external partners to achieve planned population growth, with the goal of doubling our population by 2060. Last year, Nova Scotia welcomed its highest number of immigrants ever, saw record-breaking interprovincial migration, and on December 16, 2021, became one million strong.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot became permanent, and a new network of Regional Navigators was created to support the integration and retention of immigrants and newcomers across the province.

The Department continued to respond to the challenges posed by the pandemic and helped build a solid foundation for our future economic recovery and prosperity.

We worked closely with our public health colleagues on compliance with evolving COVID-19 protocols in our workplaces.

We launched several successful marketing campaigns focused to build awareness of LSI's employment programs, safety-related resources and pathways to apprenticeship, as well as our many in-demand jobs, with a focus on health care and the trades.

We expedited access to skills and employment-related supports to those most impacted by the pandemic and are working with communities, employers and other partners to better understand and address acute and long-term workforce challenges and opportunities in key sectors. We also introduced a new focus on digital skills in our adult learning system and expanded our digital service delivery through NS Works Online.

The Department has further increased its focus on integrating Equity, Diversity and Inclusion practices in how we work with various communities and design and deliver programs. This includes creating opportunities for staff to meaningfully engage in this important work.

We would like to thank our staff, colleagues, and partners across the province for their work in making Nova Scotia a place where everyone has an opportunity to thrive.

Original signed by:

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Hon. Jill S. Balsler  
Minister

Original signed by:

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Ava Czapalay  
Deputy Minister and Chief Executive Officer

### 3. Financial Results

Labour, Skills and Immigration	2021-2022 Estimate	2021-2022 Actual	2021-2022 Variance
<b>Program &amp; Service Area</b>	(\$thousands)		
<b>Department Expenses:</b>			
Administration	837	800	(37)
Engagement Equity and Belonging		81	81
Corporate Policy & Services	4,162	72,071	67,909
Safety	17,085	15,875	(1,210)
Labour Services	8,150	6,756	(1,394)
Skills and Learning	145,686	155,617	9,931
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency	17,621	18,871	1,250
NS Immigration & Population Growth	9,905	12,515	2,610
<b>Total: Departmental Expenses Labour, Skills and Immigration</b>	<b>\$203,446</b>	<b>\$282,586</b>	<b>\$79,140</b>
<b>Additional Information:</b>			
Ordinary Revenues	(2,235)	(2,412)	(177)
Fees and Other Charges	(840)	(727)	113
Ordinary Recoveries	(136,148)	(144,069)	(7,921)
<b>Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Labour, Skills and Immigration</b>	<b>(\$139,223)</b>	<b>(\$147,208)</b>	<b>(\$7,985)</b>
TCA Purchase Requirements	\$0	\$0	\$0
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs)	237.7	221.9	(15.8)

#### Departmental Expenses Variance Explanation:

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration actuals were \$79.1 million or 38.9 per cent higher than budget primarily due to: \$67.4 million to provide funding to Workers' Compensation Board to reflect the one-time cost associated with expanding presumptive cancer coverage to firefighters; \$6.6 million increase to Workforce Development Agreement (WDA) (Federally funded), including prior year carryforward; \$3.0 million increase in Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA) including incremental funding and overpayments from clients; \$2.5 million for the Immigration and Population Growth (IPG) marketing campaign transferred from the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage; \$1.0 million COVID response sick leave program; and \$1.0 million in additional Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency grants. These increases are offset by (\$1.9 million) in lower than anticipated Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)

recoveries for OHS and Workers' Advisers Program (WAP) programs; and (\$0.5 million) in net miscellaneous savings.

**Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration recoveries were (\$7.9 million) higher than budget primarily due to: (\$7.2 million) Federal Workforce Development COVID-19 carry forward from prior year; (\$2.7 million) Federal Labour Market Development Agreement increase; and (\$765 thousand) overpayments from Labour Market Transfer Agreement (LMTA) and miscellaneous clients reinvested into Skills; and (\$156 thousand) Federal Workforce Development increase. These increases are partially offset by \$1.9 million WCB recovery decrease for OHS and WAP programs; \$700 thousand Federal Workforce Development carry forward to next year; and \$116 thousand Apprenticeship Progression and Completion Awards decrease.

**TCA Purchase Requirement Variance Explanation:**

N/A

**Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:**

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration FTEs were (15.8) lower than budget primarily due to temporary vacancy savings.

## 4. Measuring Our Performance

**LSI Vision:** *Everyone has an opportunity to thrive in Nova Scotia.*

**LSI Mission:** *We work as a trusted partner to help people live, learn and work to their highest potential in vibrant businesses and communities across Nova Scotia.*

- This incorporates a strong focus on advancing inclusion, learning and employability for all, enabling safe, fair, diverse, welcoming and productive workplaces, and creating opportunities for sustainable population and economic growth.

**LSI Mandate:** *To achieve our vision and mission, our mandate includes:*

- Empowering Nova Scotians, including newcomers and immigrants, to successfully manage career transitions.
- Addressing skill needs and tackling systemic barriers to learning and work.
- Modernizing the apprenticeship system to meet current and future demand with a focus on attraction and retention.
- Fostering a culture of safety in Nova Scotia's workplaces and public spaces.
- Developing labour, employment and safety rules that reflect the changing nature of work and protect workers and citizens.

- Enabling Nova Scotia's employers to create more inclusive and productive workplaces and providing responsive dispute resolution.
- Promoting Nova Scotia as a location of choice and increasing net population levels.
- Advancing partnerships that build sustainable, welcoming and growing communities.
- Supporting labour mobility and the attraction and retention of talent to meet employers' labour needs.

### **The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency**

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA / Agency), established July 2014, is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system. It is an agent of the Crown and has developed its own Business Plan for 2021-2022. The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency publishes an Annual Report that reports on its commitments, and it is available at [www.nsapprenticeship.ca](http://www.nsapprenticeship.ca).

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration's 2021-22 Accountability Report also includes progress on outcomes relative to Agency priorities set out in the Department of Labour and Advanced Education's 2021-22 Business Plan.

## Supporting Measures: LSI Mandate

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2021-22 YEAR DATA		
		2021-22 Target	Status Update	2022-23 Target
# of clients receiving employment services, education and training supports	13,924	13,000*Quarterly count	18055	18000*Annual count
# of post-secondary students participating in co-op work placements through the Co-op Education Incentive program	560 (2015-16)	775	940	775
# of Nova Scotia employers participating in co-op work placements through the Co-op Education Incentive program	360 (2015-16)	375	377	375
# of post-secondary students participating in the SKILL program supports	712	800	791	800
# of Nova Scotia employers participating in the SKILL program supports	560	500	523	500
# of youth & immigrant matches (connectees) with NS employers through the Connector program	323 (2014-15)	500	653	600
# of connectors engaged in the Connector program	109 (2014-15)	100	106	100
# of connections that lead to employment	151	150	264	250
# of recent post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employers in NS through Graduate to Opportunity	120 (2015-16)	330	343	330
# of Graduate to Opportunity employers that hire members of diversity groups	14	125	132	125
# of post-secondary graduates placed in full-time roles with employers in NS through the Innovate to Opportunity program	N/A	30	20	30
# of employers who hired a job seeker through the START program	578	600	522	600
# of Nova Scotia employers participating in workforce development and training through the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive and the Workplace Education Initiative	1700 (2014-15)	1700	2541	2500
# of Nova Scotia employees participating in workforce development and training through the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive and the Workplace Education Initiative	8000 (2014-15)	8000	4972 <sup>1</sup>	5000
% of apprentices who represent diverse populations (not including women)	10.4%	17%	17.7%	20%
% of female apprentices	6%	9%	8.4% <sup>2</sup>	10%

<sup>1</sup> COVID dramatically reduced in person training provision.

<sup>2</sup> The target as set as 9% and we reached 8.4%. Although the number of women has continued to increase, there is more work to do to attract women into the skilled trades. As part of the new Building Equitable Pathways II, a focus will be placed on the recruitment and retention of equity-seeking apprentices and women.

MEASURE	BASE YEAR DATA (2016-17) Unless otherwise indicated	2021-22 YEAR DATA		
		2021-22 Target	Status Update	2022-23 Target
# of organizations/employers participating in the Job Creation Partnership program	70	50	81	80
# of Skills Development Program participants who complete a training program	1,077	900	1108	900
% of Skills Development Program participants reached for follow-up employed 24-weeks (6months) after completing the program	88%	88%	72% <sup>3</sup>	88%
Pass rate for GED	78% (2016 NS Average) 74.1% (2016 National Average)	Meet or exceed national average	69% 71% National Average	Meet or exceed national average
# of learners that achieved their high school diploma through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning	541 (2014-15)	450	291 <sup>4</sup>	400
# of apprentices	6167	7200	7351	7700
# of new apprentices	1416	1200	1354	1500
# of employers who have hired an apprentice	2131	2400	2554	2750
# of new employers in the apprenticeship system	260	200	230	200
# of apprentices that attend technical training	2169	2500	2129 <sup>5</sup>	2500

<sup>3</sup> COVID-19 dramatically reduced in person training provision.

<sup>4</sup> COVID-19 dramatically reduced in person training provision.

<sup>5</sup> The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA) did not hit the target of 2500 apprentices. However, with the COVID-19 mandates and some additional restrictions, there was still some uncertainty on the delivery of technical training in 21-22 that impacted the number of apprentices who enrolled in technical training. We are expected a rebound in 22-23.

Outcome	Measure	Base Year	Annual Target: 2021	Status Update	Annual Target: 2022
Immigration activities address Nova Scotia's economic and labour market gaps.	Number of new immigrant landings per calendar year. <sup>6</sup>	2003: 1,474	7,000	2021: 9,025 2020: 3,510 2019: 7,580 2018: 5,965 2017: 4,513 2016: 5,483 2015: 3,402 2014: 2,672 2013: 2,528 2012: 2,339 2011: 2,143 2010: 2,396 2009: 2,388 2008: 2,651 2007: 2,532 2006: 2,587 2005: 1,931 2004: 1,771	7,000
<p>LSI exceeded its target for this measure in 2021. In 2020, landings were greatly impacted by COVID-19, which affected international travel and border restrictions.</p> <p>Increased landings are due in large part to increases in Nova Scotia's immigration allocation and the Immigration and Population Growth Branch's work to ensure that the annual allocation is used each year. The Atlantic Immigration Pilot program was a significant factor. Additionally, the increase can be partially attributed to travel restrictions being relaxed in 2021.</p>					
Nova Scotia's immigration policies and settlement activities support immigrants and their families to successfully settle and integrate in their new community.	Percentage of all tax-filing immigrants arriving in Nova Scotia in a six-year period remaining in the sixth year.	2008 IMBD: 69%	70% or better retention rate (2017)	2019 IMDB: 71% <sup>7</sup>	70% or better retention rate (2017)
<p>LSI has maintained a relatively stable retention rate. The Department is committed to funding an integrated province-wide approach to settlement services to maximize settlement programming and resources that support successful settlement of immigrants, including to the Francophone community.</p> <p>LSI is undertaking a comprehensive review of settlement services, which will help inform best practices and the next iteration of Settlement programs for the 2023 fiscal year.</p>					

Outcome	Measure	Base Year	Annual Target: 2021	Status Update	Annual Target: 2022
Increase the number of annual provincial nominations.	Number of NS Nominee Program certificates issued per calendar year.	2003: 23	2,300 NSNP Nominations	Supported Applications 2021: 2,443 2020: 1,900	2700 nominations by end of calendar year

<sup>6</sup> Landings measure all immigrants who arrive in Nova Scotia, including provincial and federal candidates, and their families.

<sup>7</sup> LSI uses tax filer data from Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) to calculate retention rates. There is a minimum two-year lag in the availability of data from IMDB. The latest available data is for the 2019 tax year.

				2019: 1,610 2018: 1,400 2017: 1,451 2016: 1,375 2015: 1,350 2014: 717 2013: 620	
LSI has consistently met and exceeded its annual allocation. In 2021, the Immigration and Population Growth Branch exceeded its NSNP nominations by 143.					
Increase Nova Scotia's use of the Atlantic Immigration Program.	Number of designations in the Atlantic Immigration Program.	2017: 277	Increased designations from previous year	AIPP Designations: 1,526 at the end of the pilot 2017 - 276 2018 - 462 2019 - 420 2020 - 300 2021 - 188 TOTAL: 1,646 <sup>8</sup>	500 AIP Designations by end of calendar year.
	Number of endorsements <sup>9</sup> in the Atlantic Immigration Program per calendar year.	2017: 201	1,557 AIPP Endorsements	AIPP Endorsements: 2021: 1,663 2020: 1,617 2019: 1,208 2018: 872 2017: 201	2730 AIP Endorsement by end of calendar year
<p>The Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP) concluded on December 31, 2021. It was replaced by the permanent Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) on January 1, 2022.</p> <p>Over the life of AIPP, more than 1,500 employers were designated under the program.</p> <p>In 2021, LSI met and exceeded its target for AIPP endorsements.</p> <p>The success of the pilot led to the creation of a permanent AIP. The new, permanent program is paperless and will reduce the burden of paperwork for employers while increasing access to employers in all regions of the province.</p>					

<sup>8</sup>The number of designations through AIPP is the number of employers taking part in the AIPP, unlike nominations and endorsements, it is cumulative. Each year up to and including 2021 includes all previous years' designations less any employers that subsequently lost their designation (i.e., withdrawn, de-designated, or consolidated). December 31, 2021, all designations expired. The new program began January 1, 2022, requiring all previously designated employer become re-designated.

<sup>9</sup> The number of endorsements through the AIPP is the number of job offers that were approved by the Immigration and Population Growth Branch each year.

### Advance inclusion, learning and employability for all

#### Apprenticeship START Program Expansion

- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA / Agency) continues to support employers hiring apprentices through the expansion of the Apprenticeship START Program. As of March 31, 2022, there are 2021 active apprentices under 1,671 employers.

#### Building Local Labour Market Responses

- Back to Work: Community Partnership Call for Concepts sought innovative community-based projects and partnerships to build local labour market programs to support vulnerable individuals to develop skills, and to prepare for, secure and maintain employment. 25 agreements were signed for \$9.7 million in funding.

#### Workforce Program Awareness Raising Campaigns

- LSI is supporting Nova Scotia's economic recovery with two marketing campaigns to point job seekers and employers to programs and services that will help them find jobs and address workforce needs. Research shows employers who use provincial employment and workforce development programs and services find them to be effective; however, many employers do not know the programs and services exist.
- The "Start Now" campaign was launched in October 2021 to increase awareness and use of employment and workforce development supports provided by the Skills and Learning Branch, including hiring programs like Graduate to Opportunity and START, workplace education and skills training programs, and adult learning programs.
- The "Look Forward" campaign launched in November 2021 promotes the Nova Scotia Works employment service and features client success stories. Nova Scotia Works consists of in-person services in over 50 employment centre locations throughout the province, and new online employment services through <https://novascotiaworks.ca>.
- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (Agency or NSAA) received approval for an awareness raising campaign with the theme "Shaping Futures." The campaign focuses on inclusion and accessibility. It is a key action in the Agency's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan and builds on the previous campaign (2017-2020) entitled, "Apprenticeship, Ready When You Are."
  - Phase 1 was a short-term COVID-19 response campaign aimed at employers, focused on hiring and/or re-hiring apprentices that may have been laid off due to COVID-19. Phase 2 is a longer-term campaign aimed

at employers, focused on youth, parents and influencers of youth, and teachers to promote the skilled trades as a quality post-secondary career option.

- The campaign has increased apprenticeship engagement, broadened the perception of apprenticeship for youth and influencers, and achieved a significant increase in NSAA website visits.

### **NS Works Employment Services System and NS Works Digital Service**

- Over 5,500 clients have created accounts and are using NS Works Online. A new online client intake has been implemented, with over 700 intake forms received.
- NS Works Online expanded over the past year to include a new integrated digital intake and labour market information (LMI). The first LMI release, including Regional Profiles and Resources and Advice, was implemented in July 2021. Job News was implemented in September 2021. Occupational Profiles and Job Matching were implemented in Spring 2022.
- Employer Engagement Specialist Quarterly Reports and Monthly Metric Dashboards were rolled out and contain information about regional employer needs, challenges and trends reported by 29 Employer Engagement Specialists (EES) across the province, located in Nova Scotia Works Centres. These provide intelligence on the challenges and opportunities that employers are facing in their regions.

### **Digital literacy through Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL)**

- The Department, using a Digital Sandbox Project, gained valuable data which was used to inform the development of new programming in the adult learning system. Information gained from this project helped to inform the development of a new Expression of Interest (EOI) process to continue to scale up the use of the E3 (Enhance, Extend, Empower) Framework and expand digital and other essential skills programming across the province.
- Between October and December 2021, 10 EOI submissions were approved. CLOs were supported with continued assessor training for practitioners, as well as training on the E3 framework.
- In January 2022, CLOs were offered a technology and equipment grant of up to \$15,000 to ensure they could properly support digital programming. The NSSAL Digital Coordinator role was extended to 2022 to support the CLO Instructors as they deliver digital skills programming, as well as the delivery of other literacy & essential skills programming using digital platforms.

### **Skills Development Program Expansion**

- The Department implemented a short-term skills development response that was extended until May 30, 2022. It included expedited access to the Skills Development Program to provide comprehensive financial support to unemployed individuals who were in the Accommodation and Food Services and Wholesale and Retail Trade sectors who wanted to develop skills for a new job. As of December 2021, 422 Nova Scotians were approved for expedited access to the Skills Development Program.

### **Creating Opportunities Developing Everyone (CODE)**

- A cohort of 8 participants successfully completed the Matrix CODE (Creating Opportunities Developing Everyone) in November 2021. A second cohort of 8 participants, focusing on female representation, was recruited in spring 2021.

### **NPower Canada**

- Of the 51 low-income youth enrolled in NPower Canada's inaugural Junior IT Analyst (JITA) cohort in February 2021, 41 (80%) completed the 15-week skills training program and earned the Google IT Support Professional certificate, meeting NPower Canada's 80% target. In June 2021, NPower Canada enrolled 27 low-income Nova Scotians into its second JITA cohort and 81% of the graduates from this cohort have secured employment or gone on to higher education. The December 2021 cohort included an enrolment of 61 participants with 81% of participants completing the program with at least one industry-recognized IT professional certificate.

### **Diverse and Inclusive Apprenticeship Initiatives**

- Through Strategic Partnerships, the NSAA has invested over \$700,000 in initiatives to support the recruitment and retention of equity-seeking apprentices, including women. As of March 2022, 17.7% (1,304) of apprentices are from diverse communities and 8.4% (615) are women. While the number of equity-seeking apprentices and women apprentices is growing, more effort is required to support those apprentices to completion.
- Through the Trades Places Project, the NSAA is developing a library of stories gathered in video format from equity-seeking and female apprentices and tradespersons to support the creation and infusion of equity curriculum into apprenticeship technical training as well as the creation of a micro-credential for certified tradespersons to contribute to culturally and psychologically safe trades workplaces.
- Through the Advancing Women in Apprenticeship Project, the NSAA partnered with Employment and Social Development Canada on a 2.5-year pilot to increase the participation of women in the construction sector. The funding has been used to develop tools needed by employers to create respectful, inclusive workplaces,

and implement a wage subsidy program supporting over 100 female apprentices and 80 employers involved in the construction sector in the Atlantic Region under the direction of the Atlantic Apprenticeship Council.

- The NSAA is funding the continuation of YWCA's Shift Change continuation of this program aimed at male supervisors through the NSCC with project outcomes focused on workplaces becoming more inclusive of diverse women.
- The NSAA is implementing recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with leadership from the Aboriginal Apprenticeship Advisory Committee to bridge the gap between Indigenous Peoples and access to jobs in the skilled trades. NSAA funds the Aboriginal Peoples Training and Employment Commission and the Mi'kmaw Economic Benefits Office to provide apprenticeship supports to Indigenous apprentices; funds an annual youth trades fair and summer camps; has a number of joint registration agreements with First Nation communities and organizations that streamline supports for apprentices in a culturally rich context; partners with the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on the Pathways to Shipbuilding program; and partners with Mi'kmaw Kina'matnewey and LSI-Skills and Learning to apply an Indigenous lens to the trade qualifier process and make recommendations for change to support the success of Indigenous trade practitioners achieve trade certification.
- The NSAA continues to fund a trades refresher program with East Preston Empowerment Academy (EPEA) which supports trades practitioners with skills gap training and preparation for the trade certification exam. The NSAA also works in partnership with EPEA on other initiatives aimed at growing the participation of African Nova Scotians in apprenticeship.

### **NS Works Diversity and Inclusion Initiative**

- The 16 people hired from the African Nova Scotian/Persons of African Descent (ANS/PAD) community as permanent Career Practitioners have been receiving training to become Certified Career Practitioners through the Nova Scotia Career Development Association (NSCDA). Each has been assigned a fully trained ANS/PAD Mentor to ensure success in the training and overall integration into the system. This initiative is being managed by the province's Centre for Employment Innovation (CEI) and continues to be led by an Advisory Committee consisting primarily of Black Leaders from the NS Works system.
- Work was completed to introduce an Afrocentric Transformative System Change Model to the Nova Scotia Works System in 2022 so organizational leaders can consider how generational racism impacts ANS/PAD staff, job seeker clients and communities.

## **Student and Graduate Employment Program Diversity Bonus**

- 154 graduates from equity-seeking groups were hired using Graduate to Opportunity in 2021-2022 - approximately 40% of all new hires under the program. Nearly half of these (47%) were international graduates, 38% racially visible, 22% females in occupations where they are underrepresented, 12% persons with a disability, 5% African Nova Scotian and 3% Indigenous or Mi'kmaq.
- The vast majority of Innovate to Opportunity students are eligible for the diversity bonus, with 85% identifying in one or more groups. This breaks down as 65% racially visible, 50% international graduates, and 3% females in occupations where they are underrepresented.
- Of the 940 student placements under the Co-operative Education Incentive in 2021-2022, 465 of the students self-identified as eligible for the diversity bonus. Most of these students (56%) identified as international students, with racially visible (41%) and females in occupations where they are underrepresented (26%) being the next largest groups. The other groups were Indigenous or Mi'kmaq (3%), African Nova Scotian (2.4%) and persons with a disability (3%). Students could self-identify in more than one group, so percentages do not equal 100.

## **Forestry Workforce Initiatives**

- The Canadian Woodlands Forum and the Forestry Sector Council worked together on several projects:
  - Approval for funding through the One Journey Program to train entry-level machine operators. The Forestry Machine Operators program will train and place 10 machine operators in Nova Scotia forestry companies.
  - Partnered through the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI) on "A Workforce in Transition" program, which aims to improve processes and productivity. Ten employees from 10 companies are being trained to shorten the learning curve for new forestry equipment operators.
  - Pursuing a trade designation of Forestry Machine Operator by the NSAA. The application was approved, and a Technical Advisory Committee is being established.
- Through the Forestry Sector Apprenticeship Initiative (FSAI), the NSAA supported trades professionals to complete their apprenticeship programs and as of March 2022, there were 135 applications.
- A Sawmill Engagement Plan was developed and implemented in 2021. The goal was to promote awareness of apprenticeship programs, as well as diversity and inclusion in the sector. Engagement occurred with 9 of the 16 targeted sawmills.

## **Settlement and Retention**

- Retaining newcomers to Nova Scotia is essential to achieving government's goal of growing Nova Scotia's population to two million by 2060. Settlement partners play a lead role in welcoming newcomers and helping them become successful in Nova Scotia's communities, schools, and workplaces. LSI funds settlement Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) in communities across the province to deliver a wide range of services to support successful settlement, integration, and long-term residency of newcomers and families.
- Over the past ten years, Nova Scotia has welcomed more than 40,000 immigrants, increasing from approximately 2,100 annually in 2011 to a record of more than 9,020 in 2021.
- The Department is conducting a review of Settlement Services, including an assessment of current programs and recommendations for programming and the service delivery model that would best support retention and integration. Phase 1 and 2 of the research will be completed in 2022. Current settlement agreements were extended for the 2022-23 fiscal year while the Settlement Review is in process.
- More immigrants translate to more demand for settlement programming. To enhance the level of oversight of and internal capacity to support settlement services, a new position was created to manage settlement services – Manager, Settlement Contract Liaison. Additionally, Regional Enterprise Networks were given funding to develop marketing assets for their respective geographic areas.
- Nova Scotia continues to support Canada's Refugee Resettlement Program. This program includes Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR), Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSR) and the Blended Sponsorship Program.

## **Cape Breton Infrastructure Initiative**

- Millions in large-scale infrastructure funding has been committed to the Cape Breton Region. Engagement with unions continues for this initiative and an agreement with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America (Local 1588) was successfully negotiated.
- Between July and September 2021, several training initiatives were put in place to support existing and new entrants to the construction trades. Employment Nova Scotia partnered with Inspiring Communities to support the hiring and training of African Nova Scotians into construction trades. Through the Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI), a Solar Panel Installation training initiative was supported by the Cape Breton Electrical Workers union. WIPSI also supported interior systems and form work training, and medical gas training.

- This year, the Department invested over \$1,000,000 in funding to unions and other groups to provide training to existing trades professionals, equity-seeking individuals and for skills upgrading.

### **Apprenticeship Management System (AMS)**

- The NSAA is leading, with Atlantic colleagues, the development of a new online Apprenticeship Management System. User acceptance testing has been completed and user guides have been developed and received from the vendor. The project plan and security assessments have been completed and work is anticipated to be completed in December 2022.

### **Supporting Apprentice Success – Support Strategy**

- The Agency developed a draft Learning Support Accessibility Framework to support apprentices who experience learning disabilities and continues to collaborate with NSCC Accessibility Services and NB Virtual Learning Strategy staff on how to best support apprentices in need. The launch of the strategy is expected in Fall 2022.

### **Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning (NSSAL) Review**

- An E3 Programming Guide has been completed and will be provided to Community Learning Organizations (CLOs) to help guide the development of Essential Skills Programs.
- A Business Readiness survey was conducted in April 2021 with CLOs to help better understand the change management needs of organizations.
- The Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS) solution design and development has been completed and will help standardize the experience of learners between Service Providers within the NSSAL system.
- An Internal NSSAL Steering Committee was formed to continue this work, which includes E3 programming expansion to all CLOs, High School Prep framework creation, development of a new funding program for learners, as well as overall change management and communications support.

### **Workplace Innovation and Productivity Skills Incentive (WIPSI)**

- 25 active agreements began in March 2022 with \$1,267,858 in funding. The WIPSI program continues to adapt to workforce planning and development needs and is targeting training activity to support business. This has resulted in a review of the eligibility criteria and modifications to the program to make it more relevant to business. Throughout the year WIPSI continues to work with the Workplace Education Initiative (WEI) to align programs to the respective policy objectives and support the training of as many businesses as possible. Due to employer need to address labour shortages because of the pandemic, investment in employee

training has been less of a priority in 2021/22. As industry and employers shift their workforce models, it is anticipated that the need for and willingness to invest in training will increase.

### **New Building Equitable Pathways II**

- The renewed framework was a collaboration between the NSAA and representatives of Nova Scotia's equity-seeking groups. Building More Equitable Pathways II provides guidance to the Agency in the areas of championing cultural change, advancing system innovation built upon the principles of equity, cultural proficiency, accessibility, and inclusion, and attracting and retaining diverse skills trade talent. The NSAA is working to enable the successful participation of equity-seeking groups in the apprenticeship and trades certification system with a focus on fostering allyship and strengthening anti-racism, increasing accessibility across the system, and facilitating psychologically and culturally safe work and learning environments. The framework was launched at NSAA's Annual Industry Meeting in October 2021 and is available on the NSAA website at: [NSAA Diversity Framework \(nsapprenticeship.ca\)](https://nsapprenticeship.ca).

### **Nova Scotia Micro-credentials Framework**

- A Project Director position was created this fiscal year. A Working Group, in collaboration with the Project Director, have developed key components of the framework. The framework will create conditions to ensure micro-credential providers can be innovative, agile, responsive, and quick to market while also aligning with relevant pan-Canadian and global work. Subcommittees have been formed to further work on each of the components and there are plans to test the framework with industry and post-secondary partners.

### **Develop a Framework for Recruitment and Retention of Post-Secondary Students of African Descent**

- In 2021-22, Advanced Education partnered with the Departments of Labour, Skills and Immigration and Education and Early Childhood Development, the Council of Nova Scotia University Presidents, and the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to develop a framework for post-secondary recruitment and retention that supports racial equity and equal opportunities for students of African descent.

### **Enable safe, fair, diverse, welcoming and productive workplaces**

#### **Improving business supports for emerging occupational health hazards**

- Collaboration with the Chief Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) included:
  - Establishment of a technical facemask committee with health colleagues.
  - The development/modification of the workplace guide for employers to expand to all infectious diseases to control as an Occupational Health and Safety hazard.

- COVID-19 prevention plans and supporting sectors with questions and implementation as it relates to control methods.
  - A compliance table with other provincial departments to create and deploy a coordinated model across Nova Scotia to provide guidance to a variety of sectors and verify compliance with public health control measures.
  - 745 completed COVID-19 related inspections.
  - 2,985 calls received relating to COVID-19.
- The Safety Branch completed the Communicative Disease Workplace Guide for employers to expand to all infectious diseases to control as an OHS hazard.
  - Working in collaboration with our partners in Long Term Care, Home Care and Disability Support, LSI and the WCB are supporting the Workplace Safety Action Plan, which represents a significant initiative to address high injury rates in the care sector by enhancing efforts to reduce and prevent workplace injuries.
  - In addition to the Workplace Safety Action Plan (WSAP), the Safety Branch has been collaborating with Aware NS and WCB on a targeted program to support Home Care Agencies in their efforts to improve their own OHS Programs.
  - Safety awareness materials were translated into several languages and interpretation services were offered to field officers and inspectors to remove barriers when speaking about safety issues.

### **Presumptive Coverage for Firefighters**

- LSI worked collaboratively with the Department of Health & Wellness, on an expansion of presumptive coverage for firefighters that was announced on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and came into effect July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.
- Presumptive coverage will be extended to cover 13 additional forms of cancer and heart attacks linked to fire fighting. The types of cancer being added are esophageal; lung; testicular; ureter; breast; multiple myeloma; prostate; skin; ovarian; cervical; penile; thyroid; and pancreatic.
- The additional coverage will be in amendments to the Firefighters Compensation Regulations under the *Workers' Compensation Act*. The province will cover the total liability cost of \$80.6 million for four fiscal years.
- About 6,600 firefighters and their families will benefit from these changes and Nova Scotia joins Manitoba and the Yukon as leaders in the country for presumptive cancer coverage for firefighters.

### **Workers' Advisers Program (WAP)**

- The Department is continuing to work on a new digital case management system for each of the divisions of the Labour Services Branch, including the Workers' Advisers Program (WAP). In terms of the WAP Process Review, the Labour Services Branch prioritized two items - medical information processes and creation of paralegal position - for fiscal 2021-2022.

### **Launch of COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Program**

- The Department launched the initial COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Program in May 2021. It was effective from May 10, 2021 to July 31, 2021 and provided up to 4 days paid leave (maximum of \$20/hour; \$160/day; \$640/individual) for individuals who needed time off from work due to COVID-19. It was available to employees and self-employed workers who missed less than 50 per cent of their scheduled work time in a one-week period because they were awaiting a COVID-19 lab test, getting a COVID-19 lab test, self-isolating while awaiting testing results, or getting vaccinated. Approximately 2,050 employers applied to the program, with 90% of claims being for 1-2 days.
- The COVID-19 Paid Sick Leave Program was relaunched in January 2022, effective from December 20, 2021 to May 7, 2022. This program provided the same benefits as the initial program. Approximately 1,112 claims (or 1,742 sick days) and \$233,000 in claims had been paid under this launch of the program.

### **Enhancing stakeholder services while decreasing regulatory burden and barriers**

- The Department continues to work with its Canadian and Atlantic regional partners, industry, and clients to reduce or eliminate regulatory burden to labour mobility, interprovincial commerce, and competition.
- The Technical Safety division is working with provincial energy and environment partners to ensure current equipment safety standards provide adequate protection from increasingly severe and frequent weather events and to achieve provincial goals for greenhouse gas reduction and transitioning to low or no carbon fuel alternatives (solar, wind and hydrogen).
- The Department is taking steps to make professional trade registration requirements, processes, and timelines more accessible for all clients in the public domain to ensure clear understanding of regulator requirements for certifications, licenses and permits.
- New First Aid Regulations have been adopted and came into effect June 13, 2022. The amendments will align several first aid requirements with other federal/provincial/territorial partners across the country, reducing the burden for employers who regularly cross borders to work in multiple jurisdictions.

- The Safety Branch continues to assess the translation of key resources to better support communities. Translations to provide key information related to both Occupational Health & Safety and Technical Safety in French, Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, Portuguese, and Mi'kmaq are being rolled out.
- Two new Safety Advisor positions have been created to help bridge the gap between understanding and following the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations, public health orders and guidelines and the smaller more diverse businesses who would not fall under sector specific plans. The Safety Advisors will collaborate with the Information Specialists, Officers, Investigators, and Inspectors to ensure clients understand what is required of them.
- A new Manager, Outreach Support will serve as a link between the family, colleagues, and advocates of those impacted by serious injury and workplace fatalities in Nova Scotia and the Safety Branch. The Manager provides support, information, in a sensitive and compassionate manner, securing confidence and trust of families of victims of workplace fatalities and serious workplace incidents, also ensuring family members are given timely information in accordance with the needs of the investigation. The Manager will also oversee the Creative Sentencing initiatives and applications to the Occupational Health and Safety Trust Fund.

### **Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces**

- After engaging with regional and industry employers in 2020-21, it became clear that additional supports were needed beyond the Welcoming and Inclusive Workplaces Toolkit. The Skills and Learning Branch is currently sourcing provincial and national partners to determine what resources can be leveraged for employers in Nova Scotia, to develop a plan for the toolkit and training and to build an employer network focused on best practices and learning in the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) space.
- Workplace Initiatives (WI) is committed to building capacity with employers in Nova Scotia in DEI practices and approaches. In October 2021, WI facilitated a session with the Association of Industry Sector Councils (AISC) on the Inclusive Practices Index.

### **Create opportunities for sustainable population and economic growth**

#### **Hairstylist Apprenticeship Pilot**

- The Hairstylist Apprenticeship Pilot is a joint venture between the NSAA and the Cosmetology Association of Nova Scotia. The Pilot will determine the level of support from salon owners, the industry and potential hairstylist from an apprenticeship pathway to certification. There are 13 apprentices registered in the Hairstylist Apprenticeship Pilot.

## **New Black Beauty Culture Hair Innovator (Natural Hair Care Practitioner) Trade**

- The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Board approved an application in February 2022 to designate Black Beauty Culture Hair Innovator (Natural Hair Care Practitioner) as a provincial trade in Nova Scotia. This new voluntary trade provides a training pathway leading to trade certification for individuals who are interested in designing and performing hair care services (typically referred to as natural hair care) on natural or synthetic hair. Work continues on the development of a training pathway and certification examination.

## **Safety Outcomes**

- Safety staff actively participate on the Construction Coalition - a group of sector stakeholders who meet regularly with the intent of improving the sector's compliance with the order issued under the Nova Scotia *Health Protection Act*. Staff helped reinforce and clarify changing compliance requirements for the construction industry. This helped the construction industry to work throughout the summer months without any large COVID-19 outbreaks at job sites.
- Various compliance activities have taken place in high-risk sectors throughout 2021-2022:
  - A workplan was developed by the Fishing Working Group in collaboration with FishSafeNS and Nova Scotia Fisheries Sector Council that focuses on Safety Culture, data around compliance and injuries, and emerging issues. Staff collaborated with FishSafeNS on "Safety Dock Talks" that occur before the season opened.
  - In collaboration with Aware NS and the WCB, an inspection approach has been developed for inspecting Home Care agencies. Staff have been asked to share this approach in a presentation that was provided to the Government of Alberta.
  - Building upon a strong partnership with the Nova Scotia Roadbuilders Association, the Safety Branch launched a new innovative inspection approach. Clients are asked to perform self audits and share the results with the division. The goal is to increase ownership around safety with the workplace and improve compliance, while minimizing the need for inspections by the division.
  - The OHS Division, in partnership with the Federal Labour Program, has undertaken a project whereby the 13 First Nation communities in Nova Scotia will be approached as partners, to better understand how safety culture can be enhanced and supported within these communities, from a culturally sensitive and trauma-informed perspective.
- The first round of the 1-800-9LABOUR campaign aimed at building Nova Scotians' awareness of where to turn if they have questions or concerns about workplace or public safety issues, is nearly complete. The campaign included print and digital

display advertising as well as social media and it will be rerun over the next two years as a follow-up.

- Using Pathways to Compliance, the Safety Branch engages its stakeholders and partners to set safety requirements (Act, Regulations, Standards) and achieves compliance through promotion, verification (inspections), and enforcement. Inspection efforts included verifying compliance with public health requirements related to COVID-19 and general OHS targeted compliance activities.
- The Technical Safety Division is operationalizing new ways to engage stakeholders by creating a digital engagement strategy to ensure consistent and accessible consultations with industry and stakeholders on key issues such as regulations and code revisions, identified hazards and new technologies entering Nova Scotia.

### **Fair Registration Practices Act (FRPA) Review**

- Regulating Bodies were provided with compliance evaluation criteria to ensure transparency in measurement methods and compliance mechanisms were developed to hold the Regulating Bodies accountable when necessary.
- Legislative amendments were passed on November 5, 2021, for the *Fair Registration Practices Act*. Ongoing monitoring of updated review and annual survey questions will continue to ensure continuous improvement.

### **Nova Scotia Sector Councils**

- All sector councils have their approved 2022-2025 strategic plans, with implementation of those plans now underway. The Association of Industry Sector Councils continues work on its key projects including:
  - A labour market information (LMI) dashboard for the sectors;
  - Completing DEI focus groups, where insights gathered will be used to build a training program for Executive Directors;
  - Signing an agreement with TRIEC (Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council) to improve DEI efforts for the sectors;
  - Continuous training opportunities covering a wide range of topics from leadership and scenario planning to workforce culture and decolonization training; and
  - Increased health and family supports for members, particularly around mental health.

### **International Attraction and Stakeholder Engagement**

- In March 2020, planned international and domestic events moved to online virtual formats, were postponed, or were cancelled. As international travel restrictions and health related pandemic measures ease, in-person events are once again being considered/planned and are being held in 2022 to help to address the labour

needs in key sectors (e.g., health care, construction, education). The Immigration and Population Growth Branch will move forward with a blend of in person and virtual recruitment events.

- In 2021-22, departmental staff participated in over a dozen international recruitment events, along with representatives from the private sector.

### **Increase Francophone Immigration**

2021-22 marked the final year of the Nova Scotia Francophone Immigration Action Plan (FIAP). Due to the success of the plan, there was strong interest from both government and stakeholders to develop a new plan. Following engagement with Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF) and francophone partner organizations: the Fédération Acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse (FANE), Conseil de Développement Economique de la Nouvelle-Écosse (CDENE), Université Sainte-Anne (USA), Conseil Scolaire Acadien Provincial (CSAP) and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA), a new action plan inclusive of population growth was drafted and is anticipated to be released in 2022.

- In 2021, 6.5% of nominations under our Provincial Nominee Program were Francophone up significantly from 0.5% in 2018 before the plan was launched.

### **Increase the number of newcomers from elsewhere in Canada**

- The Department's mandate includes marketing Nova Scotia as an immigrant and newcomer destination of choice. Activities to promote Nova Scotia's work and lifestyle opportunities are developed and delivered in coordination with Communications Nova Scotia.
- Marketing is supported through strong stakeholder engagement efforts throughout the province, focused on employers, international students/graduates, community immigration and economic development stakeholders.
- To help fill critical labour needs and support Nova Scotia's strategy to double the current population to two million people by 2060, the Department launched a marketing campaign in December 2021. The campaign attracted skilled trades and health care workers to the province. To complement the campaign, a team of six regional navigators was created to help prospective newcomers in their decision to relocate to Nova Scotia with connections to communities, services, and information throughout Nova Scotia. An evaluation report of the marketing campaign was completed by April 2022.

### **Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program**

- After five years as a highly successful pilot program, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP) transitioned to a permanent AIP and pathway for designated employers to hire skilled workers on January 1, 2022.

- The AIP was further modernized with a digital application system to improve processing times and reduce red tape for businesses. These enhanced program features will reduce barriers to accessing immigration programs and support greater employer participation.
- In 2021, Nova Scotia welcomed 9,025 permanent residents – a record-breaking number that surpassed the previous record by 19% due to immigration and interprovincial migration of Canadians. The AIPP was a key part of this growth.
- The federal allocation for the AIPP for 2021 had increased from 792 in 2017, when the program was launched, to 1,442 in 2020, to 1,557 in 2021. In November 2021, an increase was requested and granted for an additional 100 spaces, which was met by December 30, 2021, bringing the total number of endorsed candidates to 1,657.
- Changes to the permanent program were based on the federal AIP evaluation and lessons learned from administering the pilot. Changes include provisions to enhance program integrity, streamlined reporting requirements, strengthened program criteria to support successful settlement, a standardized approach to settlement plans, as well as new on-boarding and intercultural competency training for employers.
- The list of designated employers is published on our website ([https://novascotiaimmigration.com/wpcontent/uploads/Designated\\_AIP\\_employers.pdf](https://novascotiaimmigration.com/wpcontent/uploads/Designated_AIP_employers.pdf)) and updated monthly.

### **Maximizing Opportunities**

- Nova Scotia uses its immigration allocation to meet labour market demands and support employers. Areas of focus include physicians and health care workers, including nurses and continuing care assistants, early childhood educators, Francophone candidates, and workers in the construction sector.
- The Immigration and Population Growth Branch uses its Occupations In Demand (OID) stream to provide a more efficient pathway for employers with chronic labour needs in specific occupations. The stream launched in early 2019 targeting two occupations NOC 3413 (Nurse aides, orderlies and patient service associates), NOC 7511 (Transport Truck drivers). In May 2021, two occupations in the construction sector were added (NOC 7521 – Heavy Equipment Operators and 7611 Construction Trades Helpers and Labourers). More recent expansion includes occupations in the Food and Accommodations sector.
- In 2021, LSI supported more applications than ever before, ending the year with 2,443 nominations under the PNP, fully meeting its allocation.

- A review of the entrepreneurship stream is being mapped out to evaluate the program and implement enhancements.

### **Program Integrity**

- The Investigations and Compliance Division of the Immigration and Population Growth Branch was created in April 2021 to enhance LSI's ability to mitigate, identify, and interdict suspected cases of fraud.
- Operational procedures have been developed to better coordinate workflow and information sharing between Programs and the Investigation and Compliance divisions. Partnerships with other government departments and law enforcement agencies to have been created as well as training and education on fraud-related matters.

## 5. Supplemental Information and Appendices

### *Key/interesting facts about LSI*

- In 2021, Nova Scotia Works engaged with over 8,000 new job seekers to provide job search assistance and employment support and engaged close to 2,000 employers seeking information and resources.
- LSI is helping fill labour gaps by connecting immigrants who have in-demand skills with employers. In June 2021, changes to the Occupations in Demand immigration stream allow employers to hire international newcomers to fill heavy equipment operator (except crane operators) and construction trade helper and labourer positions.
- There are over 7300 apprentices and 2250 employers engaged in the apprenticeship system. Of those, 17.7% of apprentices are from equity-seeking groups and 8.4% are women. Last year, 762 trades professionals were certified.
- In addition to conciliation services, LSI's Conciliation and Mediation Services offers grievance mediation, conflict coaching in unionized workplaces, and a suite of joint employer and union workshops – free of charge.
- LSI has completed stakeholder engagements on amendments to the *Labour Standards Code* relating to Truth and Reconciliation Day, as well as End of Pregnancy Leave – and is reviewing feedback and exploring potential changes to the legislation.
- In 2021, we launched our first sponsorship program for employees of African Descent. Plus, 99 senior leaders across LSI have completed our Inclusive Leadership Program.
- Our Ally week event (Spring 2022) had total of over 335 attendees and presented an opportunity for staff to hear first voice experiences and engage in conversations on privilege, intersections of power and oppression and why allyship is important to furthering equity and inclusion.

## 6. Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act

The *Public Interest Disclosure of Wrongdoing Act* was proclaimed into law on December 20, 2011. The Act provides for government employees to be able to come forward if they reasonably believe that a wrongdoing has been committed or is about to be committed and they are acting in good faith. The Act also protects employees who do disclose from reprisals, by enabling them to lay a complaint of reprisal with the Labour Board.

A Wrongdoing for the purposes of the Act is:

- a) A contravention of provincial or federal laws or regulations
- b) A misuse or gross mismanagement of public funds or assets
- c) An act or omission that creates an imminent risk of a substantial and specific danger to the life, health or safety of persons or the environment, or
- d) Directing or counselling someone to commit a wrongdoing

The following table is a summary of disclosures received by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration:

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2021-2022
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	N/A
Details of each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A
Recommendations and actions taken on each wrongdoing (insert separate row for each wrongdoing)	N/A