

Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement

Qs and As

What is the Labour Market Agreement?

The Labour Market Agreement (LMA) is a six-year funding agreement between the Government of Canada and the Province of Nova Scotia that gives the Province the ability to develop programs and services for unemployed people who are not eligible for Employment Insurance benefits and for low-skilled workers. Under the LMA, approximately \$80 million will be transferred to the Province by the Government of Canada to increase the participation of Nova Scotians in the work force, enhance the quality of skills development available to Nova Scotians, and facilitate workforce mobility.

Who is eligible for service through the LMA?

Most employment programs require that people be in receipt of Employment Insurance (EI) or Income Assistance (IA) in order to participate. The LMA is open to people who have limited options to access or advance in today's job market. This means that LMA-funded programs and services will be available to Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, immigrants, African Nova Scotians, Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians, workers over 55 years of age, women, social assistance recipients, people who were formerly self-employed, and people who are currently employed but who have less than a Grade 12 education.

Who will deliver LMA programs and services?

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Workforce Development is the lead department for the LMA, but works closely with many other provincial government departments, offices and agencies to make sure that the LMA meets the needs of various constituencies. Programming and services will be delivered by a combination of community-based agencies and provincial government offices.

How do groups apply for project-based money?

This is the first year of the agreement. In the interest of ensuring that we maximize opportunities in the short term, an interdepartmental team drew upon requests for service that had been identified as necessary for the eligible client groups. In most cases, these funds will flow to community-based agencies who already have expertise in the identified areas, and who will be asked to assist people who did not receive supports in the past. In future years of the agreement, there will be more extensive consultation with community stakeholders to ensure that the province is making the kinds of investments that will meet the needs of both the eligible clients and the labour market.

How do people connect with funded programs and services?

Potential clients are likely already in contact with one or more of the departments or agencies offering LMA programming. Eligible clients would be directed to relevant LMA programs; there would be no new application process(es) for the client.

Departments and agencies are already aware of circumstances where additional funding for existing programming may be provided through the Labour Market Agreement. In a case like this, a government department will contact the appropriate agencies.

In other situations, government departments may approach appropriate agencies for recommendations for programming that assists priority audiences. As projects are approved for funding, the department's LMA website www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/lmda/ will be updated.

In my community, there is a group that needs a custom intervention. Can we use Labour Market Agreement funds to assist them?

Labour Market Agreement funding could certainly play a role where many people are being adversely affected by an economic downturn such as the closure of a mill or business. Each situation will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Why weren't third party agencies and community groups consulted before the investment plan was developed? How will future plans be developed?

The Labour Market Agreement was signed in the summer of 2008, making new funding available in 2008-09 for eligible provincial programs. In order to move this money out quickly to eligible clients and communities, an interdepartmental committee representing the departments of Labour and Workforce Development, Education, Community Services, Aboriginal Affairs, Immigration, African Nova Scotian Affairs, Economic Development and Acadian Affairs drew up an investment strategy for fiscal 2008-2009, relying heavily on earlier discussions with stakeholders. In future years, community-based agencies and other stakeholders will have more opportunity for input into investment planning.

Agencies in my area say that LMA planning is not meeting the needs they have identified. How should I respond?

Investments for 2008/2009 are based on what agencies, clients and staff told us were high priorities where an impact could be quickly achieved.

Where will the plan be posted and when?

The investment plan was approved by Cabinet in September 2008. Presentations have been made to stakeholder groups and to various provincial departments, agencies and offices. The plan itself, along with an information presentation, is posted to the Department of Labour and Workforce Development's website at www.gov.ns.ca/lwd/lmda/ and it will be updated to reflect approved projects.

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