

Cooperative Education Incentive (Co-op)

January 2021



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Program Introduction

The Cooperative Education Incentive (Co-op) provides funding to support work experiences for students participating in university and college cooperative education programs. The program strengthens Nova Scotia's workforce by helping students to acquire the experience and contacts they'll need to launch their careers, and by connecting employers with talented youth. Co-op is administered by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

Program Details

The Co-op program helps employers with the cost of hiring co-op students to fill temporary positions in their organizations, while helping students to secure paid, on-the-job work experience related to their field of study and career goals.

Employers must pay a minimum wage of \$15 per hour (plus vacation pay and other mandatory employment costs). They will be reimbursed \$7.50 for each hour worked by the student. Organizations that receive funds from the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) or the Scientific Research & Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit may qualify for up to \$10 an hour, calculated as 50% of the hourly wage paid to the student.

Employers are eligible for a diversity bonus of \$1.50 per hour if they hire a student who self-identifies as Mi'kmaq or Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, a visible minority, a person with a disability, a woman in an under-represented occupation or an international student.

To confirm that the work experience will count toward the student's academic credit, positions must be endorsed by a Co-op Coordinator at a Nova Scotia post-secondary institution before it will be considered for funding. The positions must run for no fewer than 12 and no more than 16 weeks, except in cases where the academic program requires a longer term, as confirmed by a Co-op Coordinator.

Employers

Co-op funding is available to available to municipalities and private sector, government-funded, not-for-profit, social enterprise, and charitable organizations.

An organization may not receive funding for a Co-op position from any other government employment program while participating in the Cooperative Education Incentive.

Student-Employees

The student you hire must be enrolled in a work term as part of a co-operative education program at a Nova Scotia university or college.

The program will consider the hiring of family members only where it supports the employment of individuals from certain groups that are underrepresented in the labour market, and where the employer has followed a fair hiring process.

Individuals who self-identify as one or more of the following may be eligible:

- ▶ Mi'kmaq or Indigenous
- ▶ African Nova Scotians
- ▶ Visible minorities (including persons of African descent)
- ▶ Persons with disabilities (consisting of a physical, cognitive or mental impairment that presents a persistent barrier to work)

A fair hiring process includes:

- ▶ advertising the position, (which can include language that indicates a preference for candidates from one of the populations above);
- ▶ interviews; and
- ▶ a rationale for selection

Applying for the Cooperative Education Incentive

Ready to go?

Applications for the program are accepted three times a year. Application deadlines can be found on the [Co-op program web page](#).

You will make your application using the Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS). There is a one-time registration process to access the system using the LaMPSS External Access Form, which can also be downloaded from the website.

Once registered, users may log into their LaMPSS account to access the application form for Co-op.

To apply, you need:

- ▶ A description of your organization and its mandate
- ▶ A contact person at your organization who will be responsible for the agreement
- ▶ A job description for the position
- ▶ Endorsement from a Co-op coordinator

You may apply for more than one position. If you are applying for positions in more than one county, please create a separate application for each county.

Assessment and Approval

Once applications are received, our Agreement Managers and Youth Initiatives Director will assess your application. Decisions are normally made at least one month before the Co-op term begins.

Preference is given to employers who:

- ▶ Provide challenging, knowledge-intensive work opportunities
- ▶ Pay above-average wages
- ▶ Demonstrate commitment to innovation and a culture of learning
- ▶ Are internationally competitive (export-focused)
- ▶ Operate in Nova Scotia's growth sectors
- ▶ Hire graduates for permanent jobs

We will also consider

- ▶ the input of the Co-op coordinator
- ▶ the organization's commitment to diversity and employment equity
- ▶ the impact of the organization on the community
- ▶ an equitable distribution of opportunity throughout Nova Scotia

Once approval decisions have been made, your agreement manager will send you an email notifying you whether your agreement was successful. If your organization has been selected for funding, the email will direct you to download your Agreement Contract. The contract will show which of your requested positions have been approved.

We ask that you sign and return this contract within one week of receiving your approval. If some or all of your positions have not been approved, you can appeal the decision. A deadline for appeals will be given to you but is generally one week after the notification emails are sent.

When submitting an appeal, please provide additional information about the position and the tasks the student will be completing, clearly explaining what makes the experience valuable to a co-op program and transferable to other career-related positions.

Selecting your Student

Your organization is responsible for recruiting, selecting, and hiring a student, working closely with the Co-op staff at the institutions you have selected.

Once you hire your student, you need to send two documents to your agreement manager:

- ▶ A completed Student Information Form, which can be downloaded from our website. This is where the Student will self-identify for the 10% diversity bonus (if applicable).
- ▶ A copy of the student's transcript that shows they are enrolled in a Co-op program

If your selected hire belongs to one of the designated diversity groups listed above, Labour and Advanced Education has a range of resources and training available to help you create a welcoming and rewarding workplace. Please feel free to ask your Agreement Manager for more information on these resources.

Evaluation and Feedback

To make sure we are meeting our program standards and gather feedback about the program, we ask both employers and students to complete a survey at the end of the agreement period. We will send links to the surveys by email to the agreement contact. Surveys must be completed for us to issue payment.

All information we gather is confidential. While we report on program trends, identifiable information will not be shared without permission.

Your Agreement Manager may also contact you from time to time during the agreement to request feedback or collect additional information.

Financial Reporting

To make your reimbursement payment, we will ask you to provide proof of wages paid to the student. Please download and complete the Payroll Record available on the Co-op Website.

The hours worked by the student should match the hours approved in your contract. We may not issue payment if there are unexplained discrepancies. If you have concerns about the payroll record, please speak to your Agreement Manager.

Have your employee sign the Payroll Record and send it to your agreement manager via email. If the employee is not available to sign the Payroll record, please also send a copy of the employee's Record of Employment (ROE).

Contact Us

If you require any additional information, please contact a Youth Employment Program Officer:

yepinfo@novascotia.ca

(Toll Free) 1-800-424-5418

(Local) 902-424-6000

