



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT
PROGRAMS
**GRADUATE TO
OPPORTUNITY (GTO)**

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Department of Labour and Advanced Education
Youth Initiatives
Skills and Learning Branch
Youth Employment Programs



NOVA SCOTIA



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1.0 PROGRAM INTRODUCTION

The Graduate to Opportunity (GTO) Program supports recent Graduates by providing funding to organizations that employ them in permanent, full-time jobs. Graduate to Opportunity is administered by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education, through the Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS).

2.0 PURPOSE

The Graduate to Opportunity program is designed to help strengthen Nova Scotia's workforce and retain well-educated young people in the province by encouraging Nova Scotia employers to hire recent graduates for permanent, full-time jobs in their field of study.

GTO reimburses employers with 25% of the first year's salary and 12.5% of the second year's salary for each new hire. If the new grad identifies as an aboriginal Canadian, a racially visible person, a person with a disability, a woman in an under-represented occupation or an international student graduate, employers receive 35% of the first year's salary.

Applications are accepted on a continuous basis through the Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS). Once an application for a position has been approved, the employer enters into a funding agreement with the Department. Once the employer hires a qualifying graduate, they provide details on their new employee to the Department.

3.0 FUNDING DURATION

Funding agreements between the Department and the Employer span 2 years, beginning on the date the Graduate is hired. The starting salary must be at least \$30,000 in order to be considered for the program. Employers receive 25% of the graduate's annual salary in Year 1 (35% if the graduate self-identifies as an immigrant or a member of a diversity group), and 12.5% of the graduate's annual salary in Year 2, up to an annual salary of \$60,000.

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Youth Employment Programs – Graduate to Opportunity Roles and Responsibilities

Defines the program, sets baseline standards for service delivery and quality. This includes:

- Designing the program and setting program policy
- Developing reporting requirements and tools
- Assess applications and determine funding eligibility amounts
- Providing advice and guidance that clarifies Youth Employment Program – Graduate to Opportunity expectations
- Ensuring transparency and accountability by monitoring and evaluating delivery performance against agreement commitments and guideline compliance
- Issuing funds and recovering overpayments where required
- Providing employers with appropriate program guidelines
- Work with employers and applicants on application and report submission

4.2 Employers Roles and Responsibilities

Employers are responsible for:

- Recruiting and hiring a qualifying graduate for a job related to their field of study
- Providing permanent, full-time employment based in Nova Scotia
- Paying a full wage to the participant plus mandatory employer-related costs
- Completing a survey and otherwise providing feedback to Youth Employment Programs on the Graduate to Opportunity program, how participants are progressing and the impact of the program on the business
- Ensuring all required documentation is completed in full
- If the new employee leaves the hiring organization for any reason within two years of his or her start date, the employer must submit a copy of the employee's Record of Employment and a copy of their last pay stub and clearly indicate the reason the employee left. If the employee resigns, the salary contribution through the Graduate to Opportunity program will be pro-rated to reflect the time of employment. If the employee is laid off within two years of the start date, the employer is required to repay all salary contributions provided under the program.

5.0 ORGANIZATION ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Graduate to Opportunity is available to businesses of fewer than 100 full-time employees; start-up companies incorporated within two years of the application date; social enterprises; not-for-profit organizations and registered charities with recognized standing.

Employer organizations must create a new, permanent full-time position with a minimum annual salary of \$30,000.00.

Once approved, the organization must hire the Graduate within 90 days of the date listed on the Agreement Contract. The Graduate must begin employment within 6 months of the date listed on the Agreement Contract.

Federal, provincial, and municipal governments and their agencies, health authorities and school boards are not eligible for this program.

5.1 Graduate Eligibility Requirements

A recent graduate is an individual who has successfully completed a post-secondary program from a recognized college or university within a year of the date that the employer's application is received by Youth Employment Programs. They must live and work in Nova Scotia as a new full-time employee of the organization. The recent graduate must not begin employment until final approval is granted through the program. You can view a list of post-secondary institutions recognized under this program at: <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/post-secondary/designated-schools.html>. Members of the employer's family, project contacts, board members, and senior administrators are not eligible employees for this program.

5.2 Application Requirements

Applicants are required to apply for funding through the Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS) and must follow the directions in this guide.

Applicants must attach all required documents listed throughout this guide.

6.0 APPLYING FOR GRADUATE TO OPPORTUNITY FUNDING THROUGH LaMPSS

6.1 Applying Online Using LaMPSS Self-Serve

All organizations entering into an agreement for GTO must first complete the LaMPSS External Access Form to be a LaMPSS organization. This is a one-time registration process. Once registered, it will provide you with the ability to utilize the LaMPSS self-service capabilities. If your organization has not previously registered with LaMPSS, you can register your organization here.

6.2 Completing an Application Form

This section provides supporting information required in completing the application form for the Graduate to Opportunity Program.

The application form is available through LaMPSS. Once logged in, select 'Organization Homepage', and then 'Programs and Services' on the left navigation pane. You will find a list of programs delivered through LaMPSS, and you will select 'Graduate to Opportunity'. Please ensure that you complete a separate application for each county you are applying in.

6.2.1 Organization Information

The name and mailing address of your organization will be pre-populated (or automatically entered) in the application. If your organization's name or mailing address has changed, please complete the LaMPSS External Access form, and select 'Update Access'. Send the completed document to lampss@novascotia.ca and the LaMPSS team will update your information.

6.2.2 Organization Mandate

In this section, please briefly explain what your organization does and its current impact on and benefit to your community.

6.2.3 Agreement Contact

You will see a drop-down bar in this section, which will allow you to choose contacts already associated with the login information you are working with. At this time, add the relevant contact who will be directly involved with the position(s) being applied for, if they aren't already in the prepopulated list.

Please note that you cannot edit an existing contact, you can only add a new contact.

6.2.4 Work Locations

Here you will see the address associated with your organizations registration information. You are able to add or remove additional locations. To add another location, click the 'Add Location' button at the bottom of the page.

6.2.5 Position Information

Position Type – select 'WageSubsidy-GTO'.

Position Title – be as specific as possible when naming the position.

Position Description – in this section, enter the job description.

Estimated Start Date – enter the day you expect your student to start.

You will enter 1 in # of Positions Requested – only 1 position per application is accepted. If you have more than 1 position you would like funding for, you will need to download, complete, and submit a separate application form for each position.

Annual Salary – enter the salary that you will offer your graduate. The starting salary must be at least \$30,000 and the employee must be paid at least that amount, excluding vacation pay and other benefits in order to be considered for the program. Employers receive 25% of the graduate’s annual salary in Year 1 and 12.5% of the graduate’s annual salary in Year 2, up to an annual salary of \$60,000.

Work Location – select the location the graduate will primarily be working from in the drop-down menu.

Is the organization receiving federal / provincial assistance for this position? – select yes or no. If yes, explain the funding that you are in receipt of. Organizations are not eligible for this incentive if they are in receipt of other government funding for the position, although they may receive funds for projects.

6.2.6 Legal Signing Officers

Enter the legal signing officers who are required to sign all legal documents.

6.2.7 Supporting Documentation

All organizations are required to attach a T4 Summary for their organization. Select ‘Supplementary Information’ as your document type.

7.0 APPLICATION ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Youth Employment Program Officers, and the Youth Initiatives Director will assess your application. Approval decisions for complete applications are normally made within ten days, and are based on salary and available funding.

8.0 POST APPROVAL

Once you have been approved for the Graduate to Opportunity Program, you will receive an Agreement Contract through email. Organizations will be required to have both contacts sign and return the contract within 2 weeks of the date the letter was issued. The employer will then have 90 days to complete the hiring process.

9.0 GRADUATE DOCUMENTATION

Once you hire your chosen graduate, you will need to submit three documents to your Agreement Manager:

- A copy of the graduate's degree/diploma or a letter from their university or college stating they have completed and passed all program requirements. The letter must include the date courses were completed and passed.
- A signed copy of the employment agreement or letter of offer of employment between your organization and the graduate stating the position offered is new, permanent, and full-time.
- A completed Graduate Information Form, which can be downloaded from our website. This is where the Graduate will self-identify as aboriginal Canadian, a visible minority, a person with a disability, a woman in an under-represented occupation or an international student graduate so the employer will be eligible to receive 35% of the first year's salary.

9.1 Surveys

The graduate and the organization's primary contact will both be required to fill out surveys throughout the agreement. The first survey will be due at the 6-month anniversary and the second at the 18-month mark from the graduate's start date. Both individuals will be emailed a link that will direct them to the survey.

9.2 Financial Reporting using LaMPSS

You will be required to provide proof of wages paid to the graduate at the 6-month, 18-month and 24-month marks. You can download and submit the Financial Report(s), including all required documentation online through your LaMPSS account.

You will login to LaMPSS using your organization ID, username and password that were given to you upon registration with LaMPSS. To submit the report, you will need to use this credential information to complete the process.

On your Agreement Homepage, you will see an 'Action Required – Financial Report Due' notification. You will click on the hyperlink which will open a PDF form.

On this form, you will attach documentation of all wages paid to your graduate to date. Documents we can accept are a most recent pay stub that has Year-to-Date (YTD) amounts, or a computerized payroll run that has YTD on it. You will submit your Financial Report in the same way that you submitted your application form – input your Organization ID, username, and password, and click submit.

9.3 Surveys and Payments

At the 6 and 18-month mark, you will receive your first and second payments respectively, providing surveys have been submitted and proof of wages have been verified.

At the 30-month mark, the graduate will be sent a final link to a survey.

All information gathered in the surveys will remain confidential and will be used to evaluate and monitor the Graduate to Opportunity program.



10.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

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

sepinfo@novascotia.ca
(Toll Free) 1-800-424-5418
(Local) 902-424-6000