



START

EXTERNAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

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Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration
Skills and Learning Branch
Employment Nova Scotia

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START Introduction

The START Program, “START”, is a wage incentive program administered by Employment Nova Scotia (ENS), a division of the Skills and Learning Branch of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI).

START is designed to foster successful job opportunities between employers with a labour need and ready-to-work unemployed Nova Scotians. It is intended to result in ongoing employment and/or valuable work experience.

The amount of financial support available through START is dependent upon the type of employment being offered, the skill level of the unemployed individual, the financial support being requested by the employer, and other factors. The amount of financial support made available through START is assessed by ENS on a case-by-case basis, to a maximum of \$25,000 per hire.

START is not intended to be used for more than one employee per application. Employers may contact ENS to discuss applications for more than one employee. These will be assessed by ENS on a case-by-case basis and, in exceptional circumstances, an employer may be permitted to hire more than one individual through START.

The following guidelines contain important details about START, including detailed employer and employee eligibility criteria, and how to apply.

The following support is available through the START Program

1. Funding to offset the salary and mandatory payroll deduction costs of a new hire
2. Funding to offset the training costs of a new hire (1 price quote is required)
3. Funding to offset the equipment and/or miscellaneous costs of a new hire (2 price quotes are required)

Up to a maximum of \$25,000 per hire, and at ENS’ discretion.

Pre-Application Conditions

Before applying for START, it is important to be aware of the following:

- An employer can submit only one (1) application for START.
 - A potential employee (or START “match”) must submit an application with the assistance of a local [Nova Scotia Works Centre](#). They cannot be approved for the START program without completing this step.
- A complete application must prove that the employer:

- Has workplace accident/injury insurance coverage for employees (coverage details must be provided on the application)
 - Is in compliance with the [Registry of Joint Stock Companies](#) requirements because most businesses and non-profits need to register before they start operating. (ENS will confirm this through a search of the [Registry Database](#).)
- ENS will not review incomplete applications.
 - Communication will be issued by ENS to the applicant confirming that the file is incomplete and has been closed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit a complete application and to contact ENS if they have questions during the submission process.

START Program

The information that follows will become part of an agreement with the Province of Nova Scotia. Anyone considering applying for START must read the following guidelines carefully.

Guiding Principles

- Both employers and newly hired employees should benefit from the START program.
- Individuals should be hired into positions that are part of the employer's normal business operations and not into jobs that have been specially created for the purposes of using START funding.
- Positions must not require ongoing funding from ENS in order to be sustainable.
 - Exceptions will be made if the purpose for creating a specific job is to provide short term on-the-job training to an unemployed Nova Scotian who will then transfer those skills to another employment situation.
- The START Program should ideally lead to a permanent job with the employer or, at minimum, a subsequent one with another employer.
- START will not be used to fund municipal, provincial or federal positions that would normally be considered part of the public service.

Roles and Responsibilities

Employment Nova Scotia (ENS)

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

- Designing the program and setting program policy.
- Developing reporting requirements and tools.

- Assessing applications and determining funding eligibility amounts.
- Providing advice and guidance that clarifies ENS' expectations.
- Monitoring and evaluating delivery performance against agreement commitments.
- Issuing funds and recovering overpayments where required.
- Providing employers with appropriate program guidelines.
- Working with employers and applicants on application and report submission.

ENS reserves the right to terminate an agreement at any time if the employer is not using the program in its intended manner or the employer has become dependent on ENS funding; meaning that the employer has only one source of income to meet its payroll obligations.

- In these cases, the employer may be required to return funds advanced nor will they be eligible for reimbursement for expenses incurred.

Employers

Employers are responsible for:

- Developing, supervising and providing a valuable work experience to eligible employee(s) hired through START.
- Recruiting and hiring eligible employee(s). See [Other Resources](#) if assistance is needed recruiting employees.
- Paying a full wage to the eligible employee(s) including the payment of mandatory (income tax, EI, CPP) and voluntary (pension, health benefits) payroll deductions.
- Providing feedback to Employment Nova Scotia on the program, including how participants are progressing and the impact of the program on the business/organization.
- Adhering to employment rights under the [Labour Standards Code](#) and [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).
- Practicing public health directives under the [Health Protection Act Order](#).
- Contacting ENS immediately if an employee is terminated, quits or is unable to continue in the position for which they were hired.

Early Termination of an Employee

If an employee is terminated, quits or is unable to continue in the position they were hired for, the employer must contact ENS immediately (within a maximum of 2 business days).

An assessment will be made based on the time elapsed, funds issued and reason for leaving, to determine if the employer will be required to reimburse Employment Nova Scotia.

Employers who terminate employees hired under the START program without just cause will be required to return funds paid by ENS.

Employers with unsafe working conditions as determined by ENS and/or Occupational Health and Safety Division could have their agreement terminated, and be required to repay funds to ENS.

Employer Eligibility

START is available to all businesses and organizations (Not for profit and Social Enterprises¹) including those under the direction and ownership of Band Councils in Nova Scotia that have business locations and jobs in Nova Scotia.

Companies with headquarters outside of Nova Scotia are eligible to apply **only** if they also have a physical location in Nova Scotia.

START funding is prioritized to assist small (less than 100 staff) to medium (less than 500 staff) sized enterprises.²

Individual Eligibility

To apply for the START Program as an individual, they must be:

- Unemployed and actively seeking full time or increasing employment, and
- A resident of Nova Scotia, and
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents who are legally entitled to work in Canada.
- They may self-identify as one or more of the following groups:
 - Mi'kmaq or Indigenous
 - Recent graduates (within the last three years)
 - Persons with disabilities
 - Recent immigrants (within the last three years)
 - African Nova Scotians
 - Visible minority (including Persons of African Descent)
 - Acadian and francophone Nova Scotians
 - Workers over 55 years of age
 - Youth
 - Women
 - Income assistance recipients
 - Persons who were formerly self-employed
 - Persons who have been out of the labour market for a length of time
 - Persons who are entering the labour market for the first time
 - Persons who have low levels of literacy and essential skills.

The START Program is also available to unemployed International Graduates who meet the following requirements:

¹ Social Enterprise – A business or organization operated for the purpose of addressing social, economic or environmental challenges.

² [Key Small Business Statistics — 2020 - SME research and statistics](#)

- Must have graduated from a Nova Scotia (NS) public post-secondary institution, such as a college, trade/technical school, university, or private post-secondary institution;
- **OR** a NS private institution that is authorized under the [Private Career Colleges Act](#) only if the graduate was enrolled in a program that led to a degree authorized by NS;
 - Not all programs of study authorized by private institutions are eligible for START.
- Graduates must have studied in NS for at least 2 years, but not necessarily consecutively.
 - This means the student graduated with a Canadian post-secondary credential that requires at least two academic years of study.
 - There is one (1) exception which applies only to one-year graduate degrees. One-year certificates and diplomas do not qualify for the exception. Graduates must meet the following criteria:
 - The graduate completes a one-year graduate degree in NS after completing another program of at least one academic year in Canada; and
 - Both credentials are from a post-secondary institution recognized by NS; and
 - The programs are completed within two years of each other.
- The Graduate must have a valid post graduate work permit;
- The Occupation must be a [NOC \(National Occupational Classification\)](#) code O, A or B (professional occupations);
- The position funded through START must be available for a minimum duration of one year.

Individual Applications

To apply for START, an individual must:

- Contact a Nova Scotia Works Employment Services Centre to schedule an appointment.
- During the appointment, individuals will be asked to provide details about their current employment situation, academic achievements, work history, and barriers to employment.
- If you are eligible for the START program, NS Works will help:
 - Develop a Return to Work Action Plan, and
 - Apply for a START Marketing Letter, and/or
 - Apply as an individual under the START Program when an employer offers work experience as an offer of employment.

START is not intended for students or persons who have removed themselves from the labour market.

Family Hiring Policy

Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) encourages a fair and transparent hiring and selection process for job placements. LAE will provide incentives to employers to support the hiring of immediate 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:

- African Nova Scotian
- Mi'kmaq or Indigenous
- Persons with disabilities (consisting of a physical, cognitive or mental impairment that presents a persistent barrier to work)
- Visible minority (including Persons of African Descent)

A fair hiring process includes:

- advertising the position, (which can include language that indicates a preference for candidates from one of the populations above);
- conducting interviews; and
- having clearly documented rationale to support the selection of the individual.

Immediate family member is defined as: father, mother (or alternatively stepfather, stepmother, foster parent or guardian), brother, sister, spouse (including common-law partner residing with the employer), child (including child of common-law partner), stepchild or ward of the sponsor, or any relative permanently residing in the employer's household.

Eligible and Ineligible Types of Employment

Eligible Employment

- Must be for a minimum of 30 hours per week
 - A minimum of 15 hours of employment per week may be considered for:
 - recently established small businesses creating a part-time position which will eventually develop into a full-time position, or
 - cases where special accommodations need to be considered for Persons with Disabilities, or
 - cases where this level of employment is the norm for the industry.

It is ENS' expectation that the wage incentive will lead to ongoing employment with the employer receiving START funding, or a subsequent employer. However, the incentive may be applied to a short-term job (one that has a defined start and end date with little likelihood of continuing), if:

- It is providing valuable work experience with transferable skills, **AND**
- It will significantly improve the employee's chances of obtaining subsequent employment with another employer.

OR

- The job is related to a priority sector (Ocean Technology, Information Communication Technology, Financial Services, Clean Technology, Aerospace and Defense, Life Sciences) or industry (Agriculture, Forestry) where a short-term contract is being implemented.

Ineligible Employment

- Employment that is paid strictly on a commission basis, or by the kilometer,

- Employment that is already funded through the Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA), Workforce Development Agreement (WDA), or through Department of Community Services (DCS),
- Employment that will displace current employees, or those on layoff, vacation, maternity leave and/or parental leave, or sick leave, and
- Summer employment.

Applying for START

Employers may be given approval to hire individuals prior to the START agreement being signed with ENS. This approval will be given in written form (letter or electronic mail). If such approval is provided, an employer must hire the individual at their own expense until the START approval process is finalized.

START is not intended to be used for more than one employee per application. Employers may contact ENS to discuss applications for more than one employee. These will be assessed by ENS on a case-by-case basis and, in exceptional circumstances, an employer may be permitted to hire more than one individual through START.

Employers may be eligible for an additional agreement six (6) months after the end date of their current agreement. This will require a new application.

Ensure You Have Access to LaMPSS

The Labour Market Programs Support System (LaMPSS) is a common system developed to administer labour market programs in Nova Scotia. LaMPSS provides applicants with online self-serve applications for funding for labour market programs. Required financial and activity reports can also be submitted online.

Before applying for START, your organization must be registered in LaMPSS. This is a one-time registration process completed the first time you apply for funding using LaMPSS.

Once registered, you will be provided with access to LaMPSS self-serve and can continue with your application.

To register with LaMPSS:

1. Download 2 forms from the LaMPSS website at <https://novascotia.ca/lae/lampss/lampss.asp>:
 - LaMPSS External Access form
 - Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form
2. Complete the LaMPSS External Access form. Make sure that:

- Your organization's legal name matches that which is on the Registry of Joint Stock Companies
 - Your organization's address is the actual address, not the address of an accountant or an owner/employee's home address
 - Your organization's name and address match those on the void cheque attached to the EFT form
3. Complete the Electronic Funds Transfer form. This form allows the provincial government to issue your payments by direct deposit. This form must be submitted with a bank teller's stamp or a void cheque.

Submit both forms together following the submission options listed at the top of the LaMPSS External Access Form.

Once your LaMPSS access has been granted, the person you identified as your primary contact on the LaMPSS External Access Form will receive an “Invitation for Access to LaMPSS” email invitation. The invitation link will expire within 30 days of when it was issued.

Once you click the invitation link, you are navigated to My NS Account. A My NS Account is required to access LaMPSS. If you currently do not have a My NS Account, you can create an account or you can log in to a current My NS Account by entering your login credentials.

Once you have entered the confirmation code that you have received via email, you will receive confirmation that your My NS Account is now linked to your LaMPSS account. Going forward, you will use your My NS Account username and password to log in to LaMPSS.

IMPORTANT: An incomplete LaMPSS External Access form and absence of the Electronic Funds Transfer Form will result in a delayed assessment of your LaMPSS application.

Select a Funding Program

To apply for START, go to the LaMPSS login page at <https://lampss.gov.ns.ca>.

Once you have logged in to LaMPSS, click on Programs and Services under Apply for Funding in the left navigation menu.

From the list of programs delivered in LaMPSS, select the Apply hyperlink for START. Clicking on the name of the program will display a window with a brief program description where you can also select Apply Now. You will be redirected to the online form portal.

Alternately, you may have been provided with a direct link to the START application. This link will open directly to the online form portal.

IMPORTANT: If you have not already logged into LaMPSS and are accessing the form through a direct link, you will be taken through the login screens.

The first screen will require you to enter your LaMPSS Organization ID and User ID, then the second screen will require you to enter your password and agree to the Terms of Use. If you have forgotten

your password, use the Forgot Password prompt to receive a new temporary password by email.

Review Program Application Overview

The landing page for the program will display key information about the program application:

- **Before you Begin** – Provides key information and instructions regarding the application form and program requirements.
- **Required Documents** – Provides a list of documents you will be required to submit as part of the application, if any.
- **Important Links** – Provides a link to the program website as well as any other important websites or resources.

Below this information is a Start Now button. Click Start Now to begin your application.

Form Link

Once you launch the application form, you will receive an email with a direct link to your newly created form. Use this link to return directly to the form without navigating through LaMPSS.

Form Access

When an application form is created, the user who creates it becomes the owner. Additional access for other users within your organization can be managed in LaMPSS.

Refer to the Form Access instructions at <https://novascotia.ca/lae/lampss/lampss.asp> for details on access management.

Application Form Section List

The first page of the application form is a Form Section list, providing quick navigation and an overview of your progress in completing the application.

At the top of the page will be several links:

- **Important Links** – Dropdown list of the links provided for the program.
- **Manage Access** – Link to the LaMPSS screen used to manage who within your organization can access and edit the application form.
- **Return to Overview** – Link to the previous screen with key information about the program application.
- **Exit to LaMPSS** – Link to navigate directly into LaMPSS.

You can use the Form Name field to enter a unique name for this form that can help you find it again later (e.g., Project XYZ or Fall 2021 Application). This may be useful if you have or plan to apply for

multiple programs in LaMPSS.

Finally, the Form Section list will display the sections required for the application form. The title of each provides a link to that section. As the sections are updated, the Last Updated and Last Updated By columns will display the date and user who most recently edited the section. Once a section has been saved, the Status column will update.

Select Save and Continue at the bottom of the page to begin the application or use the Form Section list to jump directly to a specific screen.

Some screens require a previous screen to be completed before the information can be updated. In this situation, an error message will display on accessing the screen.

Organization Information

This is the information you provided on your LaMPSS External Access form. Please complete a new form if the information is out of date.

Date Established in Nova Scotia	Provide the date your organization was established in Nova Scotia. If located outside NS, enter N/A.
Website	Provide your organization's website address.
Organization Mandate	In a couple of sentences or bullets, describe what your organization does, including product lines, services, and unique features.
NAICS Code	Select your organization's classification under the North American Industry Classification System. Details can be found at: https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/naics/2017/v3/index
HST Rebate %	If you are a not-for-profit, you must provide your HST rebate percentage to be considered for reimbursement. If you make profit, enter 0.
Service Language	Indicate your preferred language in which to receive service.
Correspondence Language	Indicate your preferred language in which to receive correspondence.

Employee Information

Provide details about your organization's employees. Indicate the number of employees working full-time, part-time, and seasonal.

Workplace Safety Information

Indicate if your organization has workplace / injury insurance coverage.

If yes, use the text box to provide additional details including the name of the insurance company and policy number.

If no, your application will be deemed incomplete.

IMPORTANT: ENS will only assess complete applications. Failure to provide workplace accident/injury insurance details will result in the application being deemed incomplete and will be closed.

Additional Funding

Indicate if your organization has received funding from any other sources in the past 12 months for this program.

If yes, use the text box to provide additional detail.

Contact Information

Specify the appropriate person in your organization who can be contacted with respect to this application (if required).

If the default information loaded is correct, click Save and Continue to proceed. Otherwise, select an existing contact from your organization's LaMPSS users using the dropdown menu or select the radio button to add a new contact.

Location

Identify the location(s) where the program, activities or work will take place. Multiple locations can be added. If the default information loaded is correct, click Save and Continue to proceed.

If any information is missing from an existing or added address, an error message will be displayed in red text at the top of the screen.

For each location, use the Edit button located to the right of the address to update the information. A popup window will appear for each location for you to update the location details or provide missing information (e.g., county). Click OK to close the popup window.

Position Information

Provide details for each position that you are requesting funding for as part of this application. If you are requesting funding for more than one position, use the Add Position option to add multiple activities.

For each position, a popup window will appear for you to program information. You will first be required to select the Position Type from a dropdown list. This list will display only the activities that are available for this funding program.

Click OK to close the popup window once complete.

Position Type	Select "Work Experience-START" from the drop-down menu.
Position Title	Enter the title for the position for which you are requesting financial assistance under the START Program.
Position Description/Qualifications	Describe the position and how filling this labour need will help your business/organization.
Work Location	Indicate the address information for the location of the position. If the desired address does not appear, return to the Locations section of the application form and add an additional address. If the location has not been secured yet, select your organization's address.
Position Start Date	Enter the proposed start date for the position. The agreement start date will be determined through negotiations with Employment Nova Scotia.
Position End Date	Enter the proposed end date for the position. The agreement end date will be determined through negotiations with Employment Nova Scotia.
Number of Weeks	Indicate the weeks you are requesting assistance for this position. Employment Nova Scotia will assess your application and determine the number of weeks to be supported through the START Program.
Seasonal Position	Indicate if this is a seasonal position.
Hourly Wage	Provide the hourly wage for the position.
Hours Per Week	Provide the number of hours per week for the position.
Annual Salary	Provide the annual salary for the position.
Designated Trade Position	Indicate if the position belongs to a designated trade.
Designated Trade	If yes, indicate what trade.
Federal/Provincial Assistance	Indicate if you are receiving federal/provincial assistance for the position.
Federal/Provincial Assistance Description	If yes, provide details.
Displaced Employee(s)	Indicate if there are any employees currently on lay-off, vacation, or leave of absence who previously held the position or performed these duties or will displace other employees.
Budget Information	The project budget is meant to help Employment Nova Scotia understand the costs associated with the hiring of a new employee and how much the employer is requesting for the START wage incentive. The final recommended amount will be determined by Employment Nova Scotia based on a number of factors, including but not limited to: the current skills of the participant, the nature of the employment, the location of employment, and the level of funding requested by the employer.
Salary Cost	Enter the expected salary cost. (hourly rate x hours/week x number of weeks = salary requested)
MERC	Provide the total of the Mandatory Employment Related Costs (MERC). These costs include Employment Insurance (EI) premiums, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and vacation pay. Consult Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) for rates.

Training Costs	Provide details of training costs, if any, being requested to support this position. One (1) quote may be provided with the START application. If not included with the application, the quote will be requested by ENS when training is identified.
Other Costs	Other supports may include equipment, software, and/or assistive devices. Two (2) quotes may be provided with the START application. If not included with the application, quotes will be requested by ENS when other costs are identified.
Other Costs Description	If other costs are entered, provide a description.
Known Hire	Respond 'Yes' or 'No'. If 'Yes', additional employee information will be requested in the following section. If "No", you may still complete and submit the START Application. However, you are encouraged to contact a Nova Scotia Works Centre in your area where staff can assist you in filling your labour need.
Employee Information	Provide details about the employee if a known hire.
Last Name	Enter the employee's last name.
First Name	Enter the employee's first name.
Family Member	Indicate if the proposed employee is an immediate family member of the applicant / business owner.
Worked for Organization	Indicate the organization the family member worked for.
Worked for Organization Detail	If an organization is entered, provide details.
Employee Supervisor	Indicate the supervisor for the employee.

Legal Signing Officers

Provide the appropriate signing officers for this project agreement as well as the Signature Conditions (i.e., legal signing requirements) for your organization.

Use the Add Legal Signing Officer option to add each signatory. Adding a person as a Legal Signing Officer does not create LaMPSS access for that individual.

For each person, a popup window will appear for you to provide details, including whether this person's signature is required for a legal agreement. Click OK to close the popup window once complete.

Supporting Documents

The table below outlines the documents that must be included with this application. Attach each of the listed documents separately using the Add button to the right of the document name.

Each of the mandatory documents must be attached before LaMPSS will allow submission of your

application. Additional documents can be attached as well, if desired.

A job description must be submitted with your START application.

Form Summary & Submit Your Application

The final screen provides the opportunity to view and download a summary of your application form. Click the View/Download Summary button to view the application information in a popup window.

The Download PDF button in the popup window can be used to save a copy to your device. Clicking Edit on any section in the popup window will navigate directly to that section of the application form.

If there are sections that have not been completed on the form a warning message in a blue box will display at the top of the Form Summary screen. The form cannot be submitted until all sections are complete.

Once all sections are complete, the Submit button will become available. Click the button to submit your application. Once the submission is complete you will receive a confirmation message.

Activity and Financial Reporting

The START Program requires employers to submit LaMPSS reports on the dates identified in their START agreement with ENS. Both an activity report and a financial report will be required at the end of the agreement with additional reporting dates selected at ENS' discretion based on the agreement length and agreement history.

Financial and activity reports for your agreement can be submitted using LaMPSS online. Refer to the self-serve guides at <https://novascotia.ca/lae/lampss/lampss.asp> for details on how to access and submit these reports.

START Follow-up

You will be contacted by ENS **within two (2) months of hiring an eligible employee** to respond to some questions for the purposes of monitoring your agreement. The questions will help ENS gather information about employment status and assist with program evaluation.

ENS may contact you, the employer, and the employee(s) more than once during the agreement to discuss the agreement activities.

At the end of the agreement, ENS will contact you, the employer, and employee(s) to discuss the

employee's progress and employment status.

You will be asked to provide payroll documents for the employee(s) hired through the START Program. The purpose of these documents is to prove actual wages paid and employee deductions. Proof may include, but not be limited to pay stubs, copies of cancelled cheques, or a copy of direct deposit reports.

Other Resources

[Nova Scotia Works Centres](https://novascotia.ca/works/) are located across the province (<https://novascotia.ca/works/>). These centres have experts on hand to help you discover all the talent our province has to offer. You are encouraged to learn more about the services available to you through these centres, and ENS' Employer Engagement Specialists.

Employer Services

Examples of the services available, include but are not limited to:

- Free job advertising on Nova Scotia Works' internal job board, Facebook page and website
- Help developing competency-based job descriptions
- Recruitment and referral of potential job candidates
- Help matching employee's skills with employer's needs
- Employee transition support during closure or layoffs
- Employment maintenance support and retention
- Information on wage subsidy programs
- Job fair coordination and promotion support for employers

Individual Services

Examples of the services available, include but are not limited to:

- Return to Work Action Plan development
- Employment workshops – resume writing, interview skills, job search, etc.
- Access to the Nova Scotia Works' internal job board, Facebook page and website
- Job fairs
- Transition support during closure or layoffs
- Information about wage subsidy programs and referral to potential employers
- Information about skills development programs