



ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

2024-25

Labour, Skills and Immigration

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Accountability Report 2024–2025

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Accountability Statement

The Accountability Report of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration for the year ended March 31, 2025, is prepared pursuant to the Finance Act and government policies and guidelines. The reporting of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration outcomes necessarily include estimates, judgments, and opinions by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration's management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration's 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 2024-25 Business Plan*.

Original signed by:

Original signed by:

Hon. Nolan Young
Minister

Ryan Grant
Deputy Minister

Measuring Performance

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration's (LSI) mandate is to grow Nova Scotia's population and provide a fair, equitable, safe, productive, and inclusive environment in which to live, learn, and work. This includes:

- regulatory responsibility for occupational health and safety, technical safety, labour relations, labour standards, apprenticeship and trades qualifications system and the Workers' Advisers Program;
- improving access to labour market information, employment and career planning services, work experiences and quality learning programs that support skills development, and labour market attachment and growth;
- strategic action to match individual skills with employer needs, supporting employment and workplace productivity in Nova Scotia;
- providing opportunities for adult learning and skills development programs;
- promoting the province as an attractive and welcoming immigration and newcomer destination in which to live, learn and work; and
- delivering immigration programs that support strategic population growth and retention, fulfill labour market needs and contribute to Nova Scotia's economy.

This mandate is delivered through the following Department branches:

- Immigration and Population Growth
- Labour Services
- Safety
- Skills and Learning
- Corporate Policy and Services
- Engagement, Equity and Belonging

LSI's 2024-25 Accountability Report provides information on performance measures and reflects on the outcomes achieved in relation to the goals and priorities established in the [2024-25 Business Plan](#).

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA/Agency) is responsible for operating a responsive industry-led trades training and certification system. An agent of the Crown, it developed its own Business Plan for 2024-25. NSAA publishes an Annual Report on its commitments and is available at www.nsapprenticeship.ca. LSI's 2024-25 Accountability Report also includes progress on Agency priorities.

Performance Measures

Create opportunities for sustainable population and economic growth	2024-25 Target - from Business Plan	2024-25 Results
*# of net interprovincial migrants per calendar year	10,000	**1,913
# of new immigrant landings per calendar year	7,000	14,234
# of NS Nominee Program certificates issued per calendar year	3,500	3,570
# of endorsements in the Atlantic Immigration Program per calendar year	2,500	2,373
Advance inclusion, learning and employability for all	2024-25 Target	2024-25 Results
# of new employers in the apprenticeship system	200	288
# of new apprentices	1650	2429
# of new journeypersons	1000	985
% of apprentices who identify as belonging to equity-deserving communities, including women	25%	25.5%
# of clients receiving employment services, education and training supports	18,000	19,304
Enable safe, fair, diverse, welcoming and productive workplaces	2024-25 Target	2024-25 Results
***# of inspections conducted in sectors which employ foreign workers	+50	+14

Explanatory Notes:

*Regarding the difference between the target +10,000 for interprovincial migration and outcome +1,913:

- Interprovincial migration is affected by several factors, including economic conditions in NS and across Canada.
- Interprovincial migration increased strongly in 2020/21 and 2021/22, likely due to COVID-19 pandemic and has slowed since.
- Net interprovincial migration 2022, +9,830; 2023 +5,614; 2024 +1,913 - note these numbers are calendar year.

** +19,071 interprovincial migrants, -17,158 interprovincial outmigrants=+1,913 interprovincial migrants

*** Regarding the difference between the target (+50) for the number of inspections conducted in sectors which employ foreign workers and the outcome (+14):

- This outcome reflects the need to have balanced efforts between answering inquiries from the public by phone, email and in person, processing complaints and conducting inspections. These inspections continue to be a priority for the Labour Standards Division.

Create opportunities for sustainable population and economic growth

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
<p>Continue to increase applications approved through the Provincial Nominee Program and Atlantic Immigration Program to fill employer needs, with a focus on recruitment and retention of skilled workers in the construction and healthcare sectors.</p>	<p>Note: all numbers in this section below reference the <u>2024 calendar year, not fiscal, unless otherwise stated.</u></p> <p>In 2024, the Immigration and Population Growth Branch (IPG) approved 5,943 immigration applications, using 94% of the 6,300 allocations.</p> <p>Nova Scotia received 11,633 applications through the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) and Nova Scotia Nominee Program (NSNP), a 38% increase from 2023. 40% (2,373) of approved candidates were through AIP (employer stream), which added 313 new employers in 2024. The remaining 60% (3,570) were approved via NSNP (individual applicants), all with job offers or relevant experience.</p> <p>IPG attended 37 recruitment events, meeting 3,427 candidates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 669 in healthcare • 1,462 in construction • 1,108 Francophones (across sectors) <p>Healthcare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1,045 candidates approved in health-related roles—up nearly 30% • 58 physicians were approved, a 57% increase over 2023 • Nurse aides and similar roles were top approved occupations • Healthcare/social assistance – 25.4% (1,510) of approvals <p>Construction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 512 approvals (8.6%), a 126% increase over 2023
<p>Actively promote recruitment and labour mobility of healthcare professionals in several key occupations through initiatives like the Welcome Collaborative and Nova Scotia’s International Community of Healthcare Workers Engagement (NICHE) in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness, the Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment, and the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care.</p>	<p>The Welcome Collaborative, launched in 2023, supports internationally trained physicians new to Nova Scotia. It offers orientation, mentorship, and community support. 182 physicians have been placed over a two-year period, since the program began.</p> <p>The NICHE project (2025–2028) aims to streamline employment and licensure for 370 internationally educated health professionals in five key fields, including nursing and pharmacy. The first cohort began licensing exams in May 2025, and a pharmacist pathway is in development.</p> <p>In 2024, IPG funded YMCA and Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) to support international healthcare workers, collaborated with health agencies on recruitment, and hosted five immigration webinars attended by 136 professionals. Its compliance unit also investigated fraud in healthcare and construction applications.</p>

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
<p>Continue to support settlement service provider organizations across the province to meet the growing need for services for newcomers and increase the provincial rate of retention.</p>	<p>Nova Scotia’s 5-year newcomer retention rate was 62% in 2024, slightly down from 63% in 2023, but still among the highest in Atlantic Canada.</p> <p>For the 2023-2026 settlement funding cycle, IPG allocated \$8.625M to 25 organizations. Beginning 2024-25, an additional \$3M in funding was allocated to expand support for language learning, healthcare workers, Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP) candidates, and new community-based programs.</p> <p>From April 1, 2023 (when this settlement funding cycle began) to March 31, 2025, over 16,458 newcomers had been supported. Community Navigators managed funding agreements and helped address emerging needs.</p>
<p>Continue to attract and retain francophone newcomers throughout the province, in line with the Growing Nova Scotia’s Francophone Population, An Action Plan for Success 2022-25.</p>	<p>IPG and the Office of Acadian Affairs and Francophonie (OAAF), partnered with several Acadian and Francophone partner organizations to implement Growing Nova Scotia’s Francophone Population, An Action Plan for Success 2022-25.</p> <p>In 2024–25, the final full year of the Francophone Population Growth Action Plan, IPG and OAAF partnered with Acadian and Francophone organizations to support several new recruitment and retention initiatives. For example: CDENE (Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse) received funding to recruit and retain Francophone newcomers in Clare. This funding supported the development of a recruitment platform, hiring of staff, and a campaign that reached 3.9 million impressions by February 2025.</p> <p>In June 2024, IPG, OAAF, and CDENE attended Mobility Days in Brussels and Tunis, collecting 408 candidate contacts. Over 700 completed the Nova Scotia Survey, including 200 in education, 100 in healthcare, and 50 in construction. IPG continues to update the liveinnovascotia.com website in both French and English.</p>

Advance inclusion, learning and employability for all

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
<p>Support the implementation of the Minister’s Panel on Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) Pre-Apprenticeship and Trades Training recommendations focused on promotion of the trades, pathways to the skilled trades, preparing students for success and completion of their college programs, participation in trades programs by equity-deserving individuals, and promoting excellence in trades training.</p>	<p>Through the Minister’s Panel work, 18 recommendations were presented to the Minister of LSI in July 2023. Since then, a team including the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency, NSCC, industry and community partners, as well as members from provincial departments, have created an implementation plan for each recommendation.</p> <p>Status of the 18 recommendations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 complete • 2 modified and in progress • 10 in progress and/or on-going • 3 not selected to advance, following an analysis of both the Actions and the Minister’s Panel recommendations, these were found to be out of scope <p>Highlights of work completed in 2024-25 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanded technology/skilled trades education offerings in middle schools and high schools. • Created summer and March Break Youth Skilled Trades Camps for students in grades 7-9 throughout the province (approximately 500 youth have attended the camps to date). • Accelerated pre-apprenticeship training, includes Fast Track Carpentry, Plumbing and Construction Electrician. Programs to be evaluated in fall 2025. • Created bursaries at NSCC for high demand trades (319 issued in 2024 - year one of a two-year commitment).

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
<p>Implement Actions for Accelerating the Growth of Skilled Trades in Nova Scotia, which will get more apprentices into and through the system faster, increase the diversity of the skilled trades workforce and remove barriers for students and apprentices to be successful in the skilled trades. The focus on new programs and support is for both the attraction and retention of skilled trades professionals, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating and offering new programs to enter, connect and explore skilled trades. • Creating and expanding financial support, incentives and grants for students, apprentices, employers and certified trades professionals. • Offering enhanced training delivery models that serve apprentices throughout the province (especially in areas outside of HRM) to certify apprentices faster. 	<p>Progress on Growing the Skilled Trades:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On track to add up to 5,000 new apprentices by 2026 – with 3,318 already registered between Oct 2023 and March 2025. (October 2023 – March 2025) • In 2024, a financial incentive for journeypersons to mentor apprentices was introduced. To date, over 1,200 journeypersons have completed the training to become a mentor. (Fiscal 2024-2025) • The Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency is aiming to certify 1,000 trades professionals each year by 2026. In 2024-25, 985 were certified. (Fiscal 2024-2025).
<p>Support the implementation of the Nova Scotia Microcredentials Framework, connecting more Nova Scotians to available learning opportunities that supports their entry into in-demand sectors and advancement in the workplace.</p>	<p>The Nova Scotia Microcredentials Framework has been successfully implemented by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching the Microcredentials Fund of \$2M which funded 16 innovative projects co-developed and co-facilitated by industry and post-secondary partners (April 2024 - ongoing). • Re-launching the province-wide Microcredentials Community of Practice. This group focuses on sharing and advancing best practices (May 2024 - ongoing). • Through the Atlantic Workforce Partnership, an Atlantic-wide Rapid Skills Training Framework focused on building quality standards and best practices for the development and recognition of microcredentials across the region (January 2025 - June 2026).

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
Provide pre-arrival employment programs and services to families of military personnel who are transferring to Nova Scotia, in support of the Seamless Canada Initiative to enable successful attachment to employment for in-demand sectors.	<p>Nova Scotia Works – PeopleWorx is regularly connecting to 14 Wing Royal Canadian Air Force community in Greenwood to provide services including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participating in a Welcome Expo event and a Job Fair in September 2024 that targeted military families (including youth), transitioning members and veteran families. • Attending the Second Career Assistance Network sessions (SCAN) that are held twice annually (in-person or virtually) at the base. These sessions are put on by the military for transitioning members.

Enable safe, fair, diverse, welcoming and productive workplaces

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
Minimize regulatory and administrative burden for skilled workers seeking to have out-of-province and international credentials recognized so they can live and work in NS, especially those working in housing construction.	<p>The Free Trade and Mobility in Canada Act was passed on March 26, 2025. Individuals with equivalent licenses from reciprocating jurisdictions are entitled to certification in Nova Scotia within 10 business days, upon proof of good standing. LSI has and continues to work closely with regulatory bodies to minimize barriers to labour mobility and foreign credential recognition.</p> <p>LSI’s Technical Safety branch published plain-language guides for five trades—gas operators, amusement device technicians, crane operators, elevator/lift technicians, and power engineers—to help skilled workers understand licensing and certification requirements under the <i>Fair Registration Practices Act</i>.</p>
Continue to promote compliance with workplace and technical safety regulations and advance work to review and update regulatory requirements in priority areas to reduce the occurrence of accidents, injuries, and occupational illnesses.	<p>The Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act, passed in September 2024, expanded the definition of workplace health and safety to include psychological well-being and mandated all employers implement anti-harassment policies effective September 1, 2025. A promotion campaign was launched in the spring of 2025 and provided references to supports.</p> <p>LSI also helped amend legislation to allow the Offshore Petroleum Board to regulate offshore renewable energy and updated Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) regulations to align with national standards.</p>

2024-2025 Business Plan Priority Action	Results
	Two Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) were renewed with the federal government for inspections in federally owned buildings. LSI also launched initiatives like drone inspections and targeted safety outreach to improve compliance.
Support the Worker’s Compensation Review Committee, which will provide recommendations on improvements to NS’s workers’ compensation system based on consultations and public engagement sessions.	<p>In 2024–25, LSI supported the Workers Compensation Review Committee, which gathered input from over 1,000 Nova Scotians and identified 10 priority areas for system improvement. Following the committee’s recommendations, LSI introduced changes through the <i>Stronger Workplaces for Nova Scotia Act</i>, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new purpose statement in the <i>Workers Compensation Act (WCA)</i> • Mandatory five-year system reviews • Enhanced return-to-work support • Full cost recovery for <i>Occupational Health & Safety Act</i> administration from the Accident Fund. <p>Additionally, the <i>Workers’ Compensation Act</i> General Regulations were amended in July 2024 to define workplace harassment and bullying.</p>
Continue to promote Nova SAFE, NS’s safety mobile app, which provides up-to-date information on topics concerning the health and safety of every worker in NS and the technical safety information required by workers, owners, and contractors.	Improvements were made to the Nova SAFE web application with the addition of new topics. Nova SAFE currently has 45 safety topics and over 50,000 users. Google Translate was integrated into NovaSAFE to provide translation in 200 languages.
Translate key labour standards resources to help foreign workers better understand their rights and responsibilities under the legislation. Ensure employer compliance with and understanding of their responsibilities under labour standards by increasing the number of inspections in sectors which employ foreign workers.	<p>The Safety Branch created an information card highlighting key areas of the legislation and translated it into Spanish, Arabic, Simplified Chinese and French.</p> <p>14 inspections were completed in sectors that employ foreign workers.</p>
Expand the suite of employer services available through Nova Scotia Works Online to include an integrated, digital HR Resource Toolkit that guides businesses through effective recruitment and retention practices and building a welcoming, accessible, and inclusive workplace for all employees, with a focus on youth and equity-deserving workers.	The expansion of employer services through the Nova Scotia Works Online platform is under development. A review of content, needs, research and jurisdictional scans has been completed, and LSI is working closely with industry sector councils to ensure there is alignment on the digital platform.

Financial Results

Financial Summary and Variance Explanation

Departmental Expenses Summary (\$ thousands)

<u>Programs & Services</u>	<u>2024-2025 Estimate</u>	<u>2024-2025 Actuals</u>	<u>2024-2025 Variance</u>
Administration	919	1,111	192
Engagement, Equity & Belonging	504	447	(57)
Corporate Policy & Services	9,077	8,428	(649)
Safety	19,968	19,483	(485)
Labour Services	8,653	8,394	(259)
Skills and Learning	127,403	130,019	2,616
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency	61,883	61,410	(473)
NS Immigration & Population Growth	13,237	13,235	(2)
Total - Departmental Expenses	<u>\$241,644</u>	<u>\$242,527</u>	<u>\$883</u>

Additional Information:

Ordinary Revenues	(2,235)	(2,199)	36
Fees and Other Charges	(841)	(1,089)	(248)
Ordinary Recoveries	(118,898)	(122,790)	(3,892)
Total: Revenue, Fees and Recoveries	<u>(\$121,974)</u>	<u>(\$126,078)</u>	<u>(\$4,104)</u>

TCA Purchase Requirements	0	0	0
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Funded Staff (# of FTEs)

Department Funded Staff	267.6	246.0	(21.6)
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Revenue, Fees and Recoveries Explanation:

The Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration revenue, fees and recoveries were \$4.1M or 3.4% higher than estimate primarily due to: \$2.2M in Skills and Learning and Apprenticeship client overpayments, reinvested back into programs; a \$1.0M increase in the Labour Market Transfer Agreements (Federally funded); \$411 thousand for the Nova Scotia Service Design Initiative, recoverable from the Toronto Metropolitan University; \$277 thousand for the Atlantic Workforce Partnership Secretariat, recoverable from the Council of Atlantic Premier; and \$212 thousand in increased fees and revenue.

TCA Purchase Requirements Variance Explanation:

N/A

Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Variance Explanation:

FTEs were (21.6) lower than the budget primarily due to temporary vacancies.

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

Information Required under Section 18 of the Act	Fiscal Year 2024-25
The number of disclosures received	0
The number of findings of wrongdoing	0
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