

Newfoundland and Labrador

Annual Plan | 2025-26

Canada - Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce
Development Agreement (WDA)

Overview

In 2025-26, Newfoundland and Labrador's notional WDA allocation is \$9,479,183.

As outlined in the WDA, Newfoundland and Labrador may retain and carry forward up to five per cent of the contribution paid into the next fiscal year. This equates to \$473,959 allowable for carry forward into fiscal 2025-26. While all carry forward will be confirmed with the audited financial statements, for planning purposes here, the province of Newfoundland and Labrador will not project using the carry forward provision.

Newfoundland and Labrador will allocate \$619,800 to administrative costs in 2025-26.

As required under the WDA, Newfoundland and Labrador must contribute an allocation towards persons with disabilities. For 2025-26, this is projected to be a minimum of \$3,811,400. As a result, the federal/provincial programming outlined in this document totals \$9,638,800.

Labour Market Challenges and Priorities

The economy of Newfoundland and Labrador performed well in 2024. The labour market was strong, with positive employment growth and near-historically low unemployment rates. In 2024, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador supported over 7,500 individuals for permanent residency. This is the highest number of individuals supported for permanent residency by the province in its history.

We continue to see an increase in the number of job postings in the province, with a higher proportion of postings in retail trade; administrative and support and waste management and remediation services; finance and insurance; health care and social assistance; professional; scientific and technical services; and accommodation and food service.

Newfoundland and Labrador is poised for significant industry growth. The Provincial Government has established Crown land reserves for six companies in the wind hydrogen sector. In the oil and gas sector, Equinor continues to assess the project business case for its deepwater Bay du Nord oil project and continues to invest in exploration drilling in the associated offshore region. The topsides and concrete gravity structure associated with the West White Rose project are expected to be installed offshore in 2025 with developmental drilling beginning later in the year.

In the mining sector, the Voisey's Bay Mine Expansion project is expected to wrap up this year, while opportunities exist for iron ore expansion in Labrador, with Champion Iron releasing a resource estimate study for the Kamistiatusset (Kami) project earlier this year. Additional gold projects are advancing, with Calibre Mining nearing the completion of its gold mine in central Newfoundland.

The fishery and aquaculture sector continues to be a significant contributor to the economy, with fishery landings and landing values increasing. The Provincial Government is also working proactively with stakeholders in the technology and film, and television sectors to create more opportunities and accelerate growth within those industries.

More recently, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has announced a Memorandum of Understanding with Quebec for hydroelectric generation in Labrador, which outlines several new development projects, including Gull Island, Churchill Falls Expansion, Churchill Falls Upgrades, as well as the enabling transmission.

The four projects together are expected to generate an average annual of 3,000 direct jobs during construction, and a peak of 5,000 direct jobs. When including indirect and induced employment, the projects are expected to generate an average of 5,000 jobs during construction and a peak of 9,500 jobs.

With approximately \$12.4 billion in major capital spending planned/underway in the province, and the potential for the wind/hydrogen construction phase to see an average demand of over 6,500 jobs per year from 2026 to 2028, there will be significant competition for labour over the next five-to ten-year period. Compounding this, 5,900 construction workers are expected to retire between now and 2033, and only 4,000 local new entrants are forecasted to replace them.

These positive developments across many different areas of Newfoundland and Labrador's economy will necessitate the training and upskilling of workers, as well as the attraction of new and unique talent to fill skills gaps. At the same time, Newfoundland and Labrador continues to be impacted by an aging workforce and population. Twenty years ago, there was just over one youth ready to enter the labour market for each potential retiree. This is forecasted to drop to 0.3 youths by 2031 and remain there until 2043. Similarly, in 2004, there were 4.5 core age people for each senior. This is now forecasted to decrease to 1.6 core age people for each senior by 2038 (and remain there up to 2043).

Such trends suggest increasing pressure on workers to provide goods and services to a growing/aging population. These pressures may be mitigated through increased immigration, as well as greater investment in skills development. With the changing skill needs of sectors, Newfoundland and Labrador is well-positioned to meet these needs through a responsive public and private post-secondary education system based on regular programming (along with reactive and proactive micro-credential offerings).

The Labour Market Transfer Agreements (LMTAs) remain the primary funding source utilized in Newfoundland and Labrador to improve worker skills and employment, help employers find skilled workers, and increase workforce participation by groups furthest from the labour market. Adequate and sustained investment in LMTAs will be key to the province's future economic and labour market success.

Details on how the province intends to assist with these challenges for 2025-26 is outlined in the [Description of Planned Programs: Workforce Development Agreement \(WDA\)](#) section of this report. Programming will help respond to employers' and industry groups' ongoing needs for assistance in accessing required skills and labour, as well as the support individuals in quickly adapting to meet these emerging demands. All of this further reiterates the need for continued federal and provincial collaboration, including funding agreements such as the LMTAs.

Description of Planned Programs: Workforce Development Agreement (WDA)

Program: Labour Market Integration for Newcomers	Projected expenditures: \$1,000,000
<p>Brief description of program - Areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding to support employers, employer or employee associations, community groups and communities in developing and implementing labour market strategies and activities for dealing with labour force adjustments and meeting human resource requirements. The focus is on supporting innovative approaches to increasing capacity and enhancing services for newcomers to the province. The program is designed to enable service-providing organizations and communities to develop and/or deliver programs to expedite the attachment of newcomers to the labour market. 	
<p>Target Client Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Newcomers, immigrants and refugees. 	
<p>Benefits and expected results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better connections between newcomers and local employment opportunities will be made. Newfoundland and Labrador employers will be assisted to find the skilled labour they need to address workforce shortages through provincial immigration pathways. Approximately 20 projects will be supported in 2025-26. 	

Program: Summer Employment Program for Students	Projected expenditures: \$1,575,000
<p>Brief description of program - Areas of focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The program provides a subsidy to assist private sector and not-for-profit organizations, which include school districts and municipalities to create summer jobs for high school and post-secondary students entering or returning to studies in the upcoming school year. Students benefit by gaining valuable work experience that will facilitate future labour market participation. 	
<p>Target Client Groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students seeking summer employment. 	
<p>Benefits and expected results:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality work experiences for youth is provided. Access to the labour market for youth is increased. Opportunities for youth to develop and improve their skills is provided. It is anticipated that over 600 students will become employed in 2025-26. 	

Program: Employment and Training Supports	Projected expenditures: \$500,000
Brief description of program - Areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides eligible clients with support to participate in pre-employment training that may include personal life skills development, career planning, employment readiness, or job maintenance. As well, the program provides eligible clients with work related supports to assist them with seeking, obtaining, or maintaining employment (e.g., work boots). Provides financial support for short-term training of less than 12 weeks in duration. This includes supports to attend literacy/academic upgrading and Advanced Level Apprenticeship training. Support can also be provided for an educational assessment to identify areas of strength and areas of need with respect to academic and cognitive functioning. It can be used to identify a learning disability, an intellectual disability, or giftedness. An educational assessment can be considered when an individual is experiencing academic or workplace learning difficulties for which there is need to obtain greater understanding to the underlying cause for these difficulties to assist with the facilitation of the client employment planning process. To be considered for funding, individuals must be engaged in a case management and have an employment plan developed. 	
Target Client Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who are unemployed or underemployed. Individuals who are receiving Income Support or Income Support eligible. Individuals who have low literacy or are low skilled. Unrepresented groups, such as Persons with Disabilities, youth, Indigenous population, women, and other priority groups that may be identified throughout the fiscal year. 	
Benefits and expected results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The labour market participation of Newfoundland and Labrador residents will be enhanced, including low-skilled workers and under-represented groups. Individuals' ability to find long-term employment opportunities through training and education will be enhanced. Apprentices will be supported to obtain the formal instruction required for certification in designated trades and to progress in their chosen occupation. Approximately 660 individuals will be supported in 2025-26. 	

Program: Wage Subsidies	Projected expenditures: \$853,483
Brief description of program - Areas of focus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage subsidy programs are designed to bring employers and employees together by providing funding to employers to create employment opportunities for unemployed/underemployed individuals, including recent graduates, apprentices, and persons with disabilities. Eligible individuals may be provided employment supports related to the subsidized position, including tools, equipment, and short- term training. The Apprenticeship Wage Subsidy Program assists apprentices to gain work experience in their skilled trade, and progress to journeyperson certification by providing a wage subsidy to employers who hire apprentices. Funding is also provided to Community Coordinators that promote and manage wage subsidy agreements to assist specific client groups. The Employment Enhancement Program is a wage subsidy program designed to support employers in the forestry, aquaculture, agriculture, and fishing sectors engaged in value-added secondary processing by providing funding to employers to create sustainable, long-term or seasonal employment, and a training allowance to support new employees. 	
Target Client Groups:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed or underemployed individuals. Unrepresented groups, such as Persons with Disabilities, youth, Indigenous population, women, and other priority groups that may be identified throughout the year. 	
Benefits and expected results:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals will be provided opportunities to gain work experience and increase workplace skills. Employers will hire unemployed individuals with minimal work experience whom they would not normally hire in the absence of a subsidy. It is anticipated that employers will hire approximately 100 individuals in 2025-26. 	

Program: Opening Doors	Projected expenditures: \$1,000,000
Brief description of program - Areas of focus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities has a mandate to increase the number of persons with disabilities employed in the public sector through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Opening Doors Program is comprised of full time, permanent positions designated for persons with disabilities and is limited to members of this employment equity group. ○ The Student Summer Employment Program, which provides career-related work experience for post- secondary students with disabilities for their future entry into the labour market. ○ Career support services, which provides practical job search and career counseling assistance to persons with disabilities registered with the Office. • The Opening Doors Program is an employment equity initiative that supports the hiring of persons with disabilities through the provision of wage subsidies. 	
Target Client Groups:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed or underemployed persons with disabilities. 	
Benefits and expected results:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals with disabilities will be provided opportunities to gain work experience and increase workplace skills. • Employers will hire unemployed persons with disabilities whom they would not normally hire in the absence of a subsidy. • Over 80 positions for persons with disabilities will be supported across the province through the Opening Doors Program in 2025-26. • It is anticipated that the Office of Employment Equity for Persons with Disabilities will provide over 250 career and employment counselling sessions with participants. 	

Program: Work Related Disability Supports	Projected expenditures: \$242,400
Brief description of program - Areas of focus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program provides persons with disabilities work related supports to assist with seeking or maintaining employment. • Supports can include workplace accommodations, adaptations, assistive technology devices, and technical equipment to a maximum of \$5,000. 	
Target Client Groups:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employed or unemployed individuals with disabilities. 	
Benefits and expected results:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individuals are provided with supports needed to seek and maintain employment. • Approximately 10 individuals will be supported in 2025-26. 	

Program: Grants for High Needs Students	Projected expenditures: \$100,000
Brief description of program - Areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This program assists individuals to cover education-related costs associated with a permanent disability that exceeds the amount available from the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Students with Permanent Disabilities. • Students will be automatically assessed for the Grant when applying to Student Financial Services. 	
Target Client Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed and underemployed, students with disabilities pursuing post-secondary education. 	
Benefits and expected results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students with permanent disabilities are provided with supports required to access and successfully complete post-secondary education. • Students supported in 2025-26 will be based on identified need. 	

Program: Community Partnerships	Projected expenditures: \$1,296,300
Brief description of program - Areas of focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding provided to community-based organizations to support opportunities for persons with disabilities to prepare for, attain, and maintain employment. • This program provides support to community agencies to work with individuals to enhance their employment readiness. 	
Target Client Groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed individuals with disabilities. 	
Benefits and expected results: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An individual's ability to obtain and maintain employment will be increased. • Increased employment of clients in unsubsidized employment or return to school for academic upgrading or skills training. • Increased self-reliance through employment plan success. • In 2025-26, six organizations will be provided funding to assist over 350 persons with disabilities to prepare for, attain, and maintain employment. 	

Program: Supported Employment	Projected expenditures: \$8,000,100
Brief description of program - Areas of focus:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Employment Corporations offer supported employment services to adults with developmental disabilities to allow these individuals to participate in meaningful employment within their communities. Supports for individuals are provided to ensure their success in employment and that all duties are performed to the employer's satisfaction. Supports available range from orientation and work analysis to the full-time support from a job trainer. The School to Work Transitions Program provided high school students with developmental (intellectual) disabilities the support necessary to assist with making the transition from school to work by providing access to after school/summer work opportunities with the assistance of a Job Trainer. 	
Target Client Groups:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unemployed and underemployed individuals with developmental disabilities. 	
Benefits and expected results:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Trainers will provide individuals with intellectual disabilities with provision of one-on-one support in the workplace. Community Employment Corporations will assist individuals with intellectual disabilities to participate in employment. In 2025-26, 18 Community Employment Corporations throughout the province will deliver the Supported Employment Program, with projections of over 600 individuals obtaining/maintaining employment. Approximately 45 high school students will also be supported to find employment. 	

Consultation Process

The department regularly engages with industry, labour, community, and education partners to inform policy and budget priorities and to ensure programs and services are effective and relevant.

In addition, through JIG's Employment Centres and affiliated community partners delivering labour market programs, JIG regularly obtains information from service delivery staff and management to gain a better understanding of client and employer needs. This provides important insight into current and future government-supported programming.

The province's Workforce Innovation Centre regularly engages with workforce and labour market partners in the province, including underrepresented groups. Findings and feedback from these engagements are helping to inform program and policy development.

Several key themes have emerged from these engagement activities, including:

- Increased collaboration and partnerships.
- Continued emphasis on immigration and attracting talent, including the recognition of foreign credentials.
- Improved access to labour market information.
- Closing skills gaps through skills development and mentorship opportunities, in particular in priority sectors such as healthcare, construction, and renewable energy.
- Preparing individuals and supporting employers in emerging sectors and advancing technologies, including automation and artificial intelligence.
- Enhanced awareness and access to programs and services.
- Promotion of inclusive and diverse workplaces, particularly as it relates to our newcomer population.

With the shifting nature of work, it is critical that the Provincial Government's employment and training programs and services continue to evolve. Given that the responses envisioned by Newfoundland and Labrador are as multidimensional as the challenges themselves, continued engagement and collaboration with partners will be instrumental in allowing the province to promote new economic growth as well as address existing and future labour market challenges.

Examples of Partners	
Employers	Including Newfoundland and Labrador Health Services, World Energy GH2, DF Barnes Fabrication, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, Newco Metals, and small to medium sized enterprises.
Community Groups	Including organizations supporting persons with disabilities, such as Community Sector Council, Stella's Circle, Choices for Youth, Heritage Foundation of NL, Association for New Canadians, and Supported Employment Newfoundland and Labrador.
Indigenous Partners	Including Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership, First Light (St. John's Native Friendship Centre), and Nunatukavut Community Council.
Business and Industry Associations	Including Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association, Community Business Development Corporations, Newfoundland and Labrador Board of Trade, Hospitality NL, NL Forestry Industry Association, techNL, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, Oceans Advance, Alliance of Manufacturers and Exporters – Newfoundland and Labrador, and econext.
Provincial Government	Including other departments, such as Departments of: Education and Early Childhood Education; Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture; Industry, Energy and Technology; and Families and Affordability.
Educational Institutions	Including Memorial University, Marine Institute, College of the North Atlantic, Association of Building Trades Educational Colleges, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Newfoundland and Labrador, College of Registered Nurses of Newfoundland and Labrador, and private training institutions.
Official Language Minority Community	Including Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de Terre-Neuve- et- Labrador (RDÉE TNL), and La Fédération des francophones de Terre- Neuve et du Labrador (FFTNL).
Labour Organization	Including Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Fish, Food and Allied Workers, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.
Youth Groups	Including the Conservation Corps NL, Community Youth Network, Skills Canada, and St. John's Boys and Girls Club.
Municipal Government	Including Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, towns, and local service districts.
Federal Government	Including Employment and Social Development Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.