



Building More Equitable Pathways II

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Introduction and Context

The business case for an equitable, diverse, accessible, and inclusive apprenticeship system is clear. Inclusive workplaces allow equity-seeking individuals to bring their whole selves including new ideas, increased opportunities for collaboration, and enhanced safety to the skilled trades. Diversity at work fosters respect, exposes workers to different viewpoints, and brings a variety of strengths, talents, and perspectives to the job. Workplace diversity gives employers an edge in a competitive global marketplace. An inclusive system is a better system for all.

Women represent the largest source of skilled trades workers in Nova Scotia. The economy itself may have the biggest stake in female inclusion in the trades. In addition, Indigenous and African Nova Scotian youth constitute a growing population. An ongoing skilled trades labour shortage threatens the long-term health of these industries, which are critical to the overall health of the economy. Including more women and diverse individuals in these industries will fill in the gaps, strengthen the workplace, and help the economy thrive.

Beyond the business case; however, is the very essence of what it means to be Canadian, to be a Nova Scotian. Never has there been a more relevant time in our history than now to commit to changing the skilled trades landscape. #MeToo's unveiling of the prevalence of misogyny and sexual violence in our society; Black Lives Matter's critical response to vicious, endemic injustice, religious intolerance and

violence against Muslims and Jews, the surge in violence against Asian Canadians, and the uncovering of mass graves of Residential School Children speak to a groundswell for collective action and change.

Every Nova Scotian, every newcomer to our province has the right to live, work and play without fear of violence. Every apprentice, trades practitioner and certified journey person is entitled to work and learn throughout their apprenticeship journey and skilled trades career with dignity, safety, and respect.

As the agency responsible for apprenticeship and certification in the skilled trades, NSAA is continuing on the journey to usher in a more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and safer experience for our skilled trades workforce. This renewed framework represents NSAA's commitment to continue to change from within and champion equitable systemic change that prioritizes the inclusion of all.

Current State

The Agency has been working diligently to increase participation of equity-seeking apprentices in the system. In 2016-2017, 6.9% of apprentices were from equity-seeking groups¹ and that number climbed to 15.8% as of March 2021. The number of female apprentices has doubled in the last 10 years and represent 7.8% of all registered apprentices.

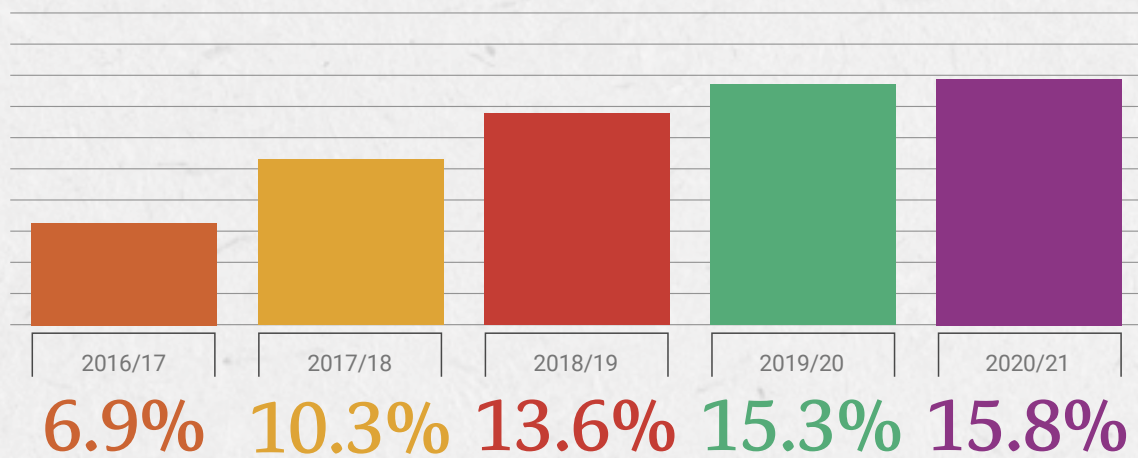
¹ *Equity-Seeking Groups*

The four Designated Groups (Aboriginal/Indigenous, Persons with Disabilities, Members of Racially Visible Groups and Women in under-represented occupations) in addition to groups whose members experience violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on any other grounds identified in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

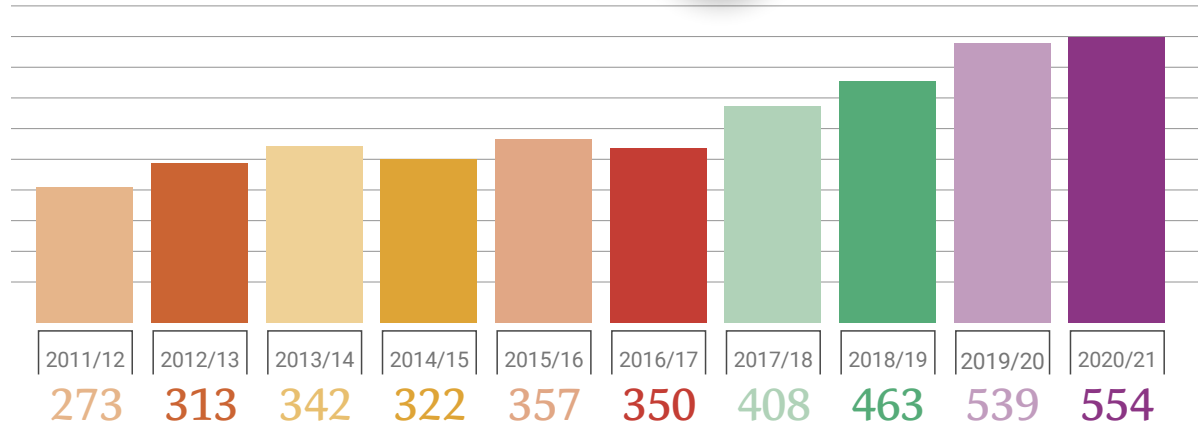


Equity-seeking apprentices in the system

5
YEARS

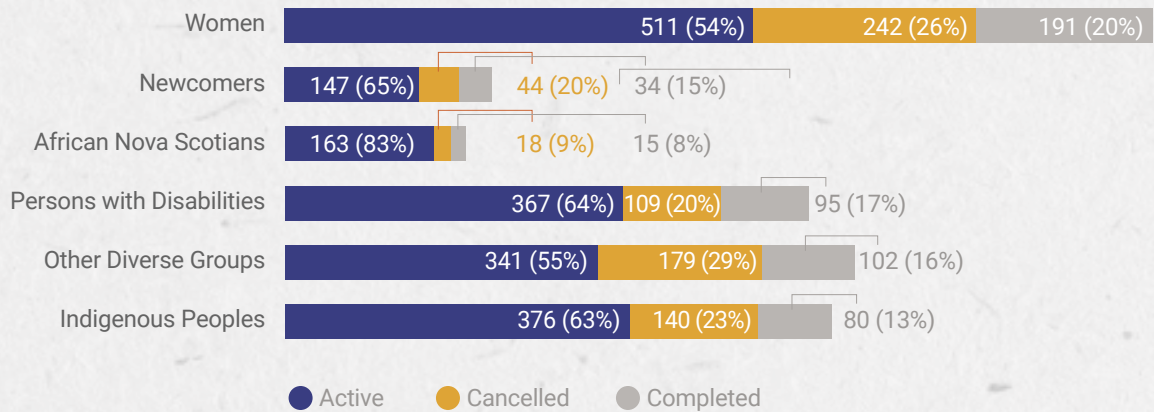


Female Apprentices in Nova Scotia



Although the number of equity-seeking apprentices has increased over the last 5 years, certification of those apprentices remains a challenge. In April 2021, the Agency completed a cohort study of all equity-seeking apprentices who registered from 2010-2020 to determine success. As noted in the adjacent chart, only between 13 and 20% of apprentices from the equity-seeking groups have completed their apprenticeship and achieved certification. However, apprentices who do complete, complete in a timely manner.

Many equity-seeking apprentices remain active as apprentices longer and are unlikely to complete their apprenticeship if they are in the system more than six years. It is evident that early intervention from Agency staff, employers who create workplaces that are welcoming and training providers who have safe learning environments are critical to increasing success of equity-seeking apprentices.





Mandate of the NSAA

The Agency is responsible for stewarding and operating a relevant, accessible, and responsive industry-led trades training and certification system and improving access to and participation in the system for Indigenous Peoples, African Nova Scotians, Persons with Disabilities, Newcomers, Women, and members of other equity-seeking groups.

Key Concepts

EDI

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) encompasses the symbiotic relationship, philosophy and culture of acknowledging, embracing, and supporting equity-seeking groups.

Accessibility

The prevention and removal of barriers (physical, attitudinal, technological, or system) to allow equitable participation for persons with disabilities or others who experience barriers to accessibility (Nova Scotia Post-Secondary Accessibility Framework).

Diversity

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. Characteristics of identity intersect and are not always fixed but also can be fluid. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other characteristics.

Equity

Ensuring everyone has a fair chance to access, participate and succeed in all that society has to offer. This does not necessarily mean treating everyone equally or the same. The principle of equity acknowledges that systemic barriers exist, and that action is needed to address historical imbalances in order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Equity-Seeking Groups

The four Designated Groups (Aboriginal/Indigenous, Persons with Disabilities, Members of Racially Visible Groups and Women in under-represented occupations) in addition to groups whose members experience violence, harassment, discrimination, exclusion, stigmatization, and prejudice based on any other grounds identified in the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act.

Inclusion

The process of improving the terms of participation in society, particularly for equity-seeking groups, through enhancing opportunities, access to resources, voice and respect for rights. This creates a sense of belonging, promotes trust, fights exclusion and marginalization and offers the opportunity of upward mobility and results in increased social cohesion in society².

²Adapted from: *Leaving no-one behind: the imperative of inclusive development, Report on the World Social Situation, 2016, United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs*

Vision, Mission, Values, and Goals

Vision

Apprenticeship is an equitable, accessible, and inclusive post-secondary training system where everyone can work and learn with a sense of belonging and an expectation of safety and respect.

Mission

NSAA will lead change and reconstruct its policies, programs, and services to cultivate an equitable, diverse, accessible, and inclusive culture across the apprenticeship and trades qualifications system.

Values

- **Accountability** – We will deliver on our commitment to advancing equity, diversity, accessibility and inclusion.
- **Cultural Humility** – We will acknowledge, celebrate, and embed cultural ways of knowing and learning.
- **Flexibility** – We will be responsive to individual and community needs.
- **Respect** – We will honor differences, celebrate community, and work together towards common good.

Goals

- Champion Culture Change
- Lead System Innovation
- Attract and Retain Diverse Skilled Trades Talent

Goals and Strategies

Champion Culture Change

Lead change that embraces universal design principles, values and celebrates differences, is actively anti-racist and prioritizes the psychological and cultural safety and wellness of participants in the apprenticeship system

STRATEGIES

- Actively build and nurture relationships of reciprocity to advance a more equitable, inclusive, accessible, and safer apprenticeship system
- Ensure equitable access and participation in the skilled trades/apprenticeship that is inclusive of gender, gender identity and sexual orientation
- Foster allyship and strengthen a culture of anti-racism across the apprenticeship system
- Achieve a fully accessible apprenticeship system that upholds and embeds universal design principles
- Facilitate psychologically and culturally safe work and learning environments that foster the well-being of all and amplify innovation and productivity in the skilled trades

Lead System Innovation

Advance a reimagined post-secondary apprenticeship system built upon the principles of equity, cultural proficiency, accessibility, and inclusion

STRATEGIES

- Define apprenticeship as a post-secondary system that challenges the status quo and successfully supports equity-seeking apprentices through on-the-job skills

- development and technical training
- Explore and embed ways of knowledge sharing and learning into the apprenticeship and trades qualifications system that support the success of equity-seeking individuals in the skilled trades
- Develop equitable programs and services rooted in community expertise that increase inclusivity, accessibility and safety in the apprenticeship and trades qualifications system
- Build reciprocal partnerships with equity-seeking communities and organizations to grow capacity and meaningful opportunities in the skilled trades

Attract and Retain Diverse Skilled Trades Talent

Promote the representation of equity-seeking apprentices and certified journeypersons working successfully in the skilled trades

STRATEGIES

- Attract skilled trades talent from equity-seeking communities leading to a more diverse and inclusive apprenticeship system
- Foster the retention and successful completion of equity-seeking apprentices and trades practitioners
- Acknowledge and incorporate the experiences and expertise of equity-seeking communities and individuals to enhance the experience of the journey to certification
- Recognize and celebrate the achievements and the ongoing contributions of equity-seeking apprentices and certified journeypersons to Nova Scotia's social and economic prosperity



Putting it into Action

Champion Culture Change

- Reinforce the need for cultural change with relevant learning opportunities, including discussion groups, film/video examples, and case studies
- Explore innovative ways to collaborate with employers and industry partners to develop an understanding of their roles in the apprenticeship system which enhance equity, inclusion, accessibility, and safe work environments
- Prioritize workplace safety and inclusion, including psychological and physical safety, to build awareness and increased commitment to culture change

Attract and Retain Diverse Skilled Trades Talent

- Provide funding to equity-seeking organizations to support the attraction and retention of apprentices from under-represented communities
- Inform and train employers on the benefits of hiring under-represented apprentices
- Develop learning and language supports to increase success in apprenticeship technical training and on exams
- Work with technical training providers and workplace mentors to support awareness and incorporation of options for diverse learning styles

Lead System Innovation

- Regularly invite communities to first voice consultations and authentic engagement to improve existing and elicit new opportunities
- Ensure a social equity, anti-racist and accessibility lens is utilized in policy and program development, and service delivery which ensures inclusivity.
- Pursue trades expertise from equity-seeking journeypersons to advise the creation of new trades, trades standards and curricula

Measuring Success

- Increase representation from under-represented communities in the trades by 10%
- Strive for 20% of all apprentices to be women
- Increase the participation of equity-seeking apprentices in technical training
- Equity-seeking apprentices complete their program at a rate higher than the national average (currently 50%)
- Apprentices who identify as under-represented report a more positive experience with the apprenticeship system
- Increase participation of employers in creating respectful workplaces that value diversity and inclusion of apprentices and certified trades professionals
- Increase the positive perception of employers and apprentices towards equity-seeking apprentices in the skilled trades



Abafay

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RESTAURANT

