



Government of Newfoundland and Labrador Canada-NL Labour Market Development Agreement 2020-21 Annual Plan

Labour Market Transfer Agreements Overview

The Government of Canada provides approximately \$3 billion annually in funding to provinces and territories (P/Ts) to deliver a range of training and employment programming for Canadians. The programs and services funded under labour market transfer agreements are designed by P/Ts to meet the needs of a wide variety of clients, including unemployed workers eligible for Employment Insurance (EI), unemployed workers not eligible for EI, low-skilled employed workers, persons with disabilities, older workers, and other underrepresented groups.

The latest generation of labour market transfer agreements support flexibility in meeting the evolving needs of employers and individuals, including expanded eligibility and increased flexibility for employer sponsored training under Labour Market Partnerships, Labour Market Development Agreement (LMDA). Through the Workforce Development Agreement (WDA) we continue to respond to local labour market needs and promote better outcomes for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

As industry and workplace demands evolve, funding provided annually to the provinces and territories under the labour market transfer agreements continues to assist Newfoundlanders and Labradorians seeking employment opportunities. This is achieved by providing clients with more prospects to upgrade their skills, gain experience, start their own business, and plan their careers.

Note on the Annual Plan

Information on Newfoundland and Labrador's labour market is collected from numerous sources, including accessible federal and provincial information on labour market trends, the economy and population statistics.

Provincial Labour Market Overview and Conditions

Newfoundland and Labrador is a place of contrasts: rich resources and innovative people, but also persistent demographic, employment and health status challenges. Newfoundland and Labrador is made up of many small regions, each with its own demographic profile, community dynamics, economic demands and pressures.

Our province has a diverse economy consisting of many industries that service local, provincial, national, and international needs. In total, there are almost 16,000 businesses, ranging in size from one to over 500 employees (with almost 98 per cent of businesses having less than 100 employees).

Government's latest occupation projections, released by the Department of Finance in August 2019, forecast that the main factor affecting employment opportunities in Newfoundland and Labrador over the next decade will be attrition, mostly from retirements. As a result, approximately 62,000 job openings are forecasted for 2019-28. Annual employment openings are anticipated to be highest in 2019 and 2024, but will remain high during the forecast period out to 2028.

Aside from attrition, job openings due to new labour market demands are anticipated in sales and service; natural resources, agriculture and related production; and manufacturing and utilities. While contraction is expected in construction-related occupations over this period, this will be countered by opportunities created due to higher levels of attrition in the trades and related occupational groupings as workers exit the workforce.

Through collaboration with industry, labour, community and education sectors, our government has committed to ongoing investment to grow the provincial economy, including sustainable employment opportunities that are matched with a skilled workforce.

Addressing these different challenges requires a multi-pronged set of solutions that consider the interrelated impacts of our economic, social and fiscal policy decisions.

- In November 2016, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador unveiled the first phase of a comprehensive set of policy actions, *The Way Forward: A Vision for Sustainability and Growth*. This strategic plan focused on rapidly implementing initiatives to reduce spending and to support economic growth through four broad objectives: a more efficient public sector, a stronger economic foundation, better services, and better outcomes to promote a healthy and prosperous province.
- Released in March 2017, *The Way Forward: Realizing our Potential* outlined our province's commitments for fiscal year 2017-18 and focuses on actions to reverse negative socio-economic indicators that prevent economic growth and drive up public expenditures.

- Released in April 2018, The Way Forward: Building for Our Future continued the work carried out under the previous two phases to further strengthen our economic foundation and improve public-sector efficiency, while improving services and outcomes for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

Through The Way Forward, Newfoundland and Labrador has adopted a government-wide approach to improving outcomes and growing the economy in a manner that facilitates the inherent potential of collaboration.

The Labour Market Development Agreements

LMDAs remain a crucial source of funding for skills and employment training, providing essential supports for citizens to build better futures, and in producing positive outcomes and impacts on clients, employers, and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Each year, the Government of Canada invests over \$2 billion through the LMDAs with provinces and territories so they can support Canadians with EI-funded skills training and employment assistance. Entirely sourced from the EI premiums paid by employees and employers, the agreements provide funding to design and deliver employment and training programs to EI-eligible clients, as well as employment services to all unemployed Canadians.

Canada and Newfoundland and Labrador share a common vision to support the employment and training needs of the Canadian labour market through an integrated, client-centered, outcomes driven, employment and training model which is responsive to the evolving needs of individuals, employers, and communities.

Newfoundland and Labrador continues to effectively and efficiently implement programming and services under labour market transfer agreements through the:

- Fostering of inclusive labour market participation by helping individuals access labour market opportunities and by supporting successful integration of individuals facing obstacles to finding and maintaining employment;
- Alignment of skills with labour market needs to help workers and employers access the skills required to adapt to the changing requirements of jobs and the labour market, and by encouraging employer involvement in training and continuous learning opportunities for workers; and
- Creation of efficient labour markets by supporting strong and responsive labour market infrastructure to allow for timely and effective labour market programming, which contributes to improved productivity and economic growth.

Newfoundland and Labrador adheres to the principles which guide the agreement by providing flexible, responsive and innovative programs and services designed to:

- Support economic growth;
- Prepare residents to address labour market demands;
- Support workers displaced or negatively impacted by labour force adjustments and company closures; and
- Address new and ongoing challenges and opportunities in the delivery of services, for service improvement, program transformation and economic growth.

Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour 2020-21 Annual Plans

The Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour 2020-21 Annual Plan outlines priority objectives and strategic investments, which the LMDA will support during the period from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021.

With over 62,000 job openings forecasted for the next decade, access to a strong foundation of education, skills and experience will be required for individuals to take advantage of these opportunities.

Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to supporting flexibility in eligible programming under the following areas of focus:

- Training: Improve levels of literacy, essential and work-related skills, and support upskilling for the employed and underemployed;
- Supports: Provide a continuum of needs-based services to maximize potential impact of training, and continue to support persons with disabilities to enter and stay in the labour market;
- Employment Partnerships: Work in partnership with employers and other stakeholders to promote awareness and expand the availability, accessibility and quality of employment opportunities; and
- Building Knowledge: Inform priorities with labour market information to better meet skills needs and market demand, enhance the knowledge base to support continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs, and support new and innovative approaches to meet the diverse needs of clients, including under-represented groups.

Government has initiated a number of activities in recent years to support flexibility, growth and diversification, including:

- Bringing a wide range of industry and education stakeholders together with government to discuss sector challenges and determine future actions to address these challenges;
- Sector-specific human resource research activities;
- Greater career exploration programming within the Kindergarten to Grade 12 education system to better align with future industry demands;
- Initiatives related to immigration, education, and adult literacy to increase and strengthen the province's available labour supply for future labour demands;
- Actions to build upon the quality, availability, and benefits of labour market information; and
- Steps to support the role of the community sector in improving residents' labour market outcomes while also contributing to economic development.

The Way Forward on Workforce Development

Newfoundland and Labrador is competing for talent nationally and globally. As the provincial economy evolves, the province must determine how our population and labour supply will meet existing labour demands, as well as those of the future.

On November 15, 2019, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador released The Way Forward on Workforce Development, our plan for strengthening the province's workforce, and supporting a productive, knowledge-based economy. It is a five-year action plan which will prepare Newfoundland and Labrador for future labour market opportunities, by identifying anticipated skills gaps, addressing training needs, and building recruitment and retention strategies to address those gaps.

Four priority focus areas have been identified for The Way Forward on Workforce Development:

1. Engaging Locally;
2. Attracting Talent;
3. Being Better Informed; and
4. Closing Skills Gaps.

Our Province's focus is not only on preparing for future forecasted opportunities, but also creating new, unrealized opportunities. For example, government has recently embarked on a provincial economic review, targeting key sectors and identifying priority business opportunities and markets; as well as established the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, working with the aquaculture, agriculture, oil and gas, technology, mining, forestry and community sectors to stimulate new business activity and create new jobs. The Way Forward on Workforce Development will build upon these important pieces of work and implement further actions that complement these ongoing activities.

As labour markets and priority areas continually evolve, the plan will be revisited annually to ensure it remains current and relevant. Significant efforts are already underway to support both human resources activities and workforce development, including the development of labour market recruitment and retention strategies through the Cabinet Committee on Jobs. Activities stemming from The Way Forward on Workforce Development aim to complement such efforts, supporting and expanding on them where appropriate.

Development and Delivery of Programs

The LMDA, through a diverse array of programs and services, has consistently demonstrated positive outcomes for a wide variety of clients, employers, and communities in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Investments made through the LMDA enable the province to capitalize on a variety of economic and advanced educational opportunities leading to job creation and growth. Clients develop skills, obtain, and maintain employment as a result of their participation in employment and skills training programs.

As per Budget 2016, the definition of “EI Client” has been expanded to include those individuals that have paid EI premiums in at least five of the last 10 years. These changes have resulted in a broadening in client eligibility for LMDA programs and services and those seeking employment and training supports through the LMDA.

Newfoundland and Labrador’s program and service delivery models contribute to a stronger economic and labour environment by:

- Ensuring the province has the skilled workforce and highly educated graduates to participate in and contribute to their communities;
- Strengthening the workforce through education, training, financial and social supports;
- Creating and equipping the province’s workforce to meet current and future provincial labour market demands;
- Providing guidance and support to employers to recruit and retain the necessary workforces to grow their businesses;
- Offering guidance and support to residents in order to achieve the greatest benefit from the opportunities that exist in the province;
- Enhancing client case management;
- Supporting residents with career decisions and securing and retaining employment; and
- Providing guidance and support for the development of policy and procedures on employment and training programs.

During fiscal year 2020-21, Newfoundland and Labrador will deliver the following benefits and measures:

- Wage Subsidies – Newfoundland and Labrador will provide funding to employers to encourage them to hire EI-eligible clients whom they would not normally hire in the absence of a subsidy.
- This will include the continuation of enhanced supports and services to encourage employers to create employment opportunities, including jobs for apprentices. Newfoundland and Labrador may also provide related employment supports to eligible individuals, including tools, equipment and short-term training.

- Job Creation Partnerships – Newfoundland and Labrador will provide financial support, in partnership with employers and/or community organizations, to projects that provide EI-eligible clients with work experience and skills to achieve ongoing labour market attachment.
- Self-Employment Assistance – Newfoundland and Labrador assists EI-eligible clients in establishing their own businesses and becoming self-employed by providing services, such as entrepreneurship training, customized coaching, ongoing advice, and client supports.
- Skills Development – Newfoundland and Labrador will provide a benefit for the education and training of EI-eligible clients so they can obtain the skills necessary to attach to the labour market. This benefit will include direct financial assistance to EI-eligible clients participating in training, as well as the incremental costs associated with these individuals attending a provincially approved training institution.
- Employment Assistance Services – The Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour has engaged in a partnership with College of the North Atlantic to expand employment planning services to college campuses across Newfoundland and Labrador. The increase in service capacity is funded through federal contributions under the Labour Market Development Agreement and supports a provincial commitment to enhance the college's ability to serve as local and regional economic generators and community hubs. Immigration, Skills and Labour will continue to provide Employment Assistance Services to assist unemployed persons and job seekers in preparing for, attaining and maintaining work. Services may include needs determination, employment counseling, job search training, and provision of labour market information.
- Labour Market Partnerships – Newfoundland and Labrador will provide 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. Labour Market Partnerships may be used to provide assistance for employed persons who are facing loss of employment.
- Research and Innovation – Newfoundland and Labrador will continue to support activities that address policy and program issues or research questions related to strategic priorities; research and/or design projects that are practical and that identify innovative and better ways of helping Newfoundlanders and Labradorians prepare for, find, return to, or maintain sustainable employment. This work is advanced through the Workforce Innovation Center.

NOTE: COVID-19 continues to impact program and service delivery, as well as priority areas of focus for 2020-21. See Annex A for an overview of service delivery impacts and implications in Newfoundland and Labrador.

LMDA Investment Plan, Accountabilities and Targets

In 2020-21, Newfoundland and Labrador's notional LMDA base allocation is \$127,279,214 with \$8,937,456 in administrative funding. Newfoundland and Labrador's 2000-2021 notional allocation of the additional funding announced in Federal Budget 2017 is \$14,138,744 for a total of \$150,355,41. *

Expenditures and program accountabilities for 2019-20 are listed as planned or forthcoming in this document. Finalization of these numbers will coincide with the release of the EI Monitoring and Assessment Report 2019-20 in March 2021.

*Any carry forward as a result of COVID will be confirmed with audited financial statements.

LMDA - Provincial Investment

Benefits and Measures	Planned Investment and Expenditure											
	2016-17 Expenditure		2016-17 Expenditure		2017-18 Expenditure		2018-19 Expenditure		2019-20 Forecasted		2020-21 Planned	
Skills Development	\$92.6	77.0%	\$96.0M	75.3%	\$91.3M	70.4%	\$91.7M	68.2%	\$89.1M	65.3%	\$90.2M	63.8%
Labour Market Partnerships	\$1.0M	0.8%	\$2.7M	2.1%	\$4.5M	3.5%	\$7.6M	3.9%	\$6.8M	4.9%	\$7.2M	5.2%
Wage Subsidies	\$7.4M	6.1%	\$5.9M	4.6%	\$5.8M	4.5%	\$7.6M	6.3%	\$8.4M	6.1%	\$9.7M	6.9%
Self-Employment Assistance	\$5.3M	4.8%	\$6.2M	4.9 %	\$7.4M	5.7%	\$6.6M	5.7%	\$7.5M	5.5%	\$8.0M	5.7%
Job Creation Partnerships	\$8.1M	6.7%	\$9.8M	7.9%	\$8.5M	6.6%	\$8.6M	7.6%	\$11.0M	8.1%	\$11.0M	7.9%
Employment Assistance Services	\$5.3M	4.4%	\$6.3M	5.0%	\$6.8M	5.2%	\$10.1M	7.2%	\$11.0M	8.1%	\$11.5M	8.2%
Research and Innovation	\$0.0M	0.0%	\$0.0M	0.0%	\$5.3M	4.1%	\$3.1M	1.1%	\$2.8M	2.0%	\$3.0M	2.1%
Total	\$119.7M		\$127.5M		\$129.6M		\$135.3M		\$136.6M		\$141.4M	

Active EI Claimants Accessing Newfoundland and Labrador Employment and Benefit Support Measures (EBSM's)

	Active EI Claimants Accessing NL EBSMs					20-21 (Proposed)
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Targets	9,400	9,200	9,000	9,000	9,000	8,000
Actuals	8,941	9,308	11,760	7,716	TBD*	

*2019-20 results to be reported on in the 2019-20 EI Monitoring and Assessment Report.

EI Claimants Returned to Employment

	EI Claimants Returns to Employment					20-21 (Proposed)
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Targets	5,600	5,600	5,600	4,000	4,000	3,500
Actuals	3,331	3,696	2,795	TBD**	TBD**	

**2018-19 and 2019-20 results to be reported on in the EI Monitoring and Assessment Report.

Savings to the EI Account

Savings to the EI Account as a result of active EI claimants becoming employed before making a full draw on their insurance entitlement.

	Savings to the EI Account					20-21 (Proposed)
	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	
Targets	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$24.0M	\$20.0M
Actuals	\$22.3M	\$23.2M	\$17.5M	\$16.2M	TBD***	

***2019-20 results to be reported on in the 2019-20 EI Monitoring and Assessment Report.

Stakeholder Engagement

The Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour works to ensure the province has a highly educated and skilled workforce to meet evolving labour market demands. The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador regularly engages with a broad array of general public and client groups to inform policy and budget priorities and to ensure programs and services are effective and relevant. This includes creating and sustaining a collaborative climate which is conducive to economic growth, competitiveness and prosperity.

Partnerships and collaboration with the business sector will continue this year as the Provincial Government works with the mining, forestry, and community sectors to generate new economic activity and foster job creation. This work will follow the new model of engagement established in previous years with the province's aquaculture, agriculture, and technology sectors.

Much of this work has been coordinated through the Cabinet Committee on Jobs where the government of Newfoundland and Labrador partners with industry in joint decision making aimed at stimulating new business activity and creating new private sector jobs for residents throughout the province.

The 2020-21 LMDA and WDA annual plans have been informed via ongoing strategic planning and information sharing with key partners as part of normal program and policy development. Key partners include:

- Employers such as Verafin, Anaconda Mining, DF Barnes Fabrication, Corner Brook Pulp and Paper, and Newco Metals;
- Community groups such as Community Sector Council, Vera Perlin, Stella's Circle, Choices for Youth, and Supported Employment Newfoundland & Labrador;
- Official language minority representatives such as 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);
- Indigenous partners such as Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership, St. John's Native Friendship Centre, and Nunatukavut Community Council;
- Labour organizations such as Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour, Fish, Food and Allied Workers, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers;
- Business and industry associations such as Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Association, Community Business Development Corporations, Newfoundland and Labrador Employers Council, Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses, techNL, Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters – Newfoundland and Labrador, and Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association;

- Educational institutions (private and public) such as Memorial University, Marine Institute, College of the North Atlantic, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Career Colleges, Association of Building Trades Educational Colleges, and Academy Canada;
- Youth groups such as Premier's Youth Council, Conservation Corps, and St. John's Boys and Girls Club;
- Municipalities Newfoundland and Labrador, towns, and local service districts;
- Federal Government departments such as Employment and Social Development Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; and
- Other Provincial Government departments such as Departments of: Education; Fisheries, Forestry and Agriculture; Industry, Energy and Technology; Children, Seniors and Social Development; and Executive Council.

Examples of engagement and other related activities that have informed the development of the annual planning process to date include:

- Workforce Innovation Centre - In 2017, government established the Newfoundland and Labrador Workforce Innovation Centre at College of the North Atlantic's Corner Brook campus. The Centre's goal is to support research, testing, and sharing of ideas and models of innovation in workforce development that will positively impact people's employability, entrepreneurship options, and attachment to the workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Future Skills Centre - In 2018, the Federal Government announced \$225 million over four years, and \$75 million per year thereafter, for the Future Skills initiative. Ryerson University, the Conference Board of Canada and Blueprint were selected to partner and operate Canada's new Future Skills Centre which will fund projects that develop, test and measure new approaches to skills assessment and development on both national and regional levels.
- Public Engagement and Planning Division - A unique and innovative Provincial Government entity, which engages the public in dialogue about sustainability issues and challenges, and supports collaboration between and among rural stakeholders including governments.
- Pre-Budget Consultations - As part of the budget process, the Department of Finance engages with people and organizations throughout Newfoundland and Labrador to help identify government spending priorities, and how to strike a balance between the province's financial situation and the need to deliver programs and services.
- The Way Forward on Adult Literacy - A five-year action plan developed through engagement with key stakeholders such as adult learners, adult literacy service providers, community organizations, public libraries, and Indigenous, industry, labour, and post-secondary education institutions. Supported by a \$60 million investment, the plan identifies 30 actions government and its partners will take to make sure Newfoundlanders and Labradorians have the opportunity to acquire and enhance these skills.

- The Way Forward on Workforce Development - Through The Way Forward, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador committed to the development of a Comprehensive Human Resource Plan to support sector diversification and foster a productive and knowledge-intensive economy.
- The Way Forward on Immigration – Launched in March 2017, The Immigration Action Plan outlines 39 actions Government is taking to achieve better outcomes in attracting and retaining skilled immigrants, as well as international students and graduates.
 - In April 2019, a further 24 new initiatives were launched from year three of the Immigration Action Plan. These 24 new initiatives further complement the 39 existing initiatives launched in 2017.
- The Way Forward Sector Specific Plans - As part of The Way Forward, industry and the Provincial Government have partnered, through the Cabinet Committee on Jobs, to support economic growth and foster private sector job creation.
 - Agriculture - The Provincial Government and the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture have jointly developed the Agriculture Sector Work Plan. It includes actions that each of the partners will take to achieve the collective goal of growing the agriculture industry and stimulating new private sector employment.
 - Aquaculture - The Provincial Government and the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association have jointly developed the Aquaculture Sector Work Plan. The Aquaculture Sector Work Plan includes actions that each of the partners will take to achieve the collective goal of growing the aquaculture industry and stimulating new private sector employment.
 - Technology - The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, techNL, the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Industry Association, the Atlantic Canada Aerospace and Defense Association and the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters Newfoundland and Labrador have led the development of the Technology Sector Work Plan.
 - Advance 2030 - A Plan for Growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Oil and Gas Industry - The continued growth and development of Newfoundland and Labrador's oil and gas industry requires collaboration and the collective actions of governments, industry, labour, education, training and research institutions, and other stakeholders.
 - Mining The Future 2030 - A Plan for Growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador Mining Industry - Newfoundland and Labrador currently ranks fifth in Canada for value of mineral production and contributes 46 per cent of iron ore and 26 per cent of nickel nationally. Mining in Newfoundland and Labrador offers a variety of opportunities for careers requiring different levels of training and education. The future of our industry depends on educating, training, recruiting and retaining people, building technical and leadership skills, and strengthening Indigenous and women participation rates.
 - Forestry - The forestry sector work plan includes actions that each of the partners and other industry stakeholders will take to achieve the collective goal of growing the forest industry and stimulating new private sector employment.
 - Community - Often called the voluntary, non-profit sector, or social profit sector, this work plan includes actions that each of a number of public and community sector partners will take, individually and jointly, to achieve the collective goal of recognizing and strengthening the social and economic contributions of the community sector.

- Autism Action Plan - Developed with the Autism Action Council, representatives include individuals and families with lived experience, the Autism Society of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Newfoundland and Labrador Association for Community Living, health care and education professionals, as well as the departments of: Health and Community Services; Children, Seniors and Social Development; Education; Immigration, Skills and Labour; and Justice and Public Safety. The plan will provide increased services and supports for individuals living with autism spectrum disorder. The Autism Action Plan has 46 actions which will be completed over the short, medium, and long-term. The majority of actions will be completed by March 2021.

Engagement Themes:

The Department of Immigration, Skills and Labour has participated in numerous engagement activities towards the development of the various phases of The Way Forward, including specific to the Immigration Action Plan, the Adult Literacy Plan, and the Comprehensive Human Resource Plan (now The Way Forward on Workforce Development), through the activities of the Workforce Innovation Centre, as well as through day to day program and service delivery. A number of key themes and focus areas have emerged specific to workforce development, including:

- Increased collaboration and partnerships;
- Continued emphasis on immigration and attracting talent;
- Improved access to labour market information;
- Closing skills gaps through skills development and mentorship opportunities;
- Enhanced awareness and access to programs and services; and
- Promotion of inclusive and diverse workplaces.

ANNEX A – COVID-19 Implications and Perspectives

The ongoing impacts and disruptions arising from COVID-19 have affected millions of Canadians and their jobs, with some regions, sectors, companies, and workers hit especially hard. While all areas of Canada have been affected by the economic fallout of COVID-19, the situation in Newfoundland and Labrador is particularly challenging and distinct.

Prior to the emergence of COVID 19, Newfoundland and Labrador was and continues to face challenges associated with fiscal realities, anticipation of declines in labour force due to an aging population and out-migration, and a labour force which is spread across a large geography.

COVID-19 has affected many key industries in Newfoundland and Labrador, with significant impacts not yet fully understood. These disruptions continue to impact the oil and gas, hospitality, and retail sectors. In some cases, the impacts are compounding existing drivers of change such as the use of digital technologies, the automated creation and application of technology to monitor and control the production and delivery of products and services, outsourcing, and offshoring. These effects are reshaping the landscape of skills demands with potential far-reaching consequences for workers, employers, and overall labour market.

In order to better understand the long term impacts of COVID-19 and develop plans for recovery we must first acknowledge challenges such as overall job losses, the ability for individuals to be rehired and therefore re-enter the workforce, job search (effectively connecting people with jobs and employers with people), and the provision of opportunities to inform, retrain, and reskill for maximum relevance and impact as the province seeks to recover.

Service Delivery

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, access to employment assistance was traditionally a combination of online, telephone, and in-person delivery structure to access services. However, the primary engagement tool for individuals was in-person services. The pandemic shut down brought forth challenges in program and service delivery with the suspension of in-person access for the general public and working from home arrangements for staff. All program delivery models had to be reviewed and revised to accommodate an individual's ability to access a complete, alternative, on-line delivery process for both internal and external stakeholders. The transition included online forms; policy and procedural change; and a virtual approach to case management. Notably, post-secondary training institutions in Newfoundland and Labrador were nimble to transition to online courses. This permitted many individuals to continue studies towards their employment goals during these unprecedented times.

Rose was recommended and approved for funding to attend Adult Basic Education beginning January 6, 2020. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these classes transitioned from in-class studies to studying online at home. Rose faced many challenges while studying at home, including time management and childcare. Despite these challenges and through the supports received from the Canada – Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Market Development Agreement, she successfully completed Adult Basic Education on August 14, 2020. Rose is in the process of applying to attend the Medical Laboratory Assistant program to further her education.

Sarah is a single parent who wanted to pursue post-secondary training in order to gain skills to make a long-term attachment to the labour market. She began an Office Administration Technology program, but with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Sarah's program transitioned to on-line learning for the duration of her program. Upon successful completion of her program, Sarah began a work term placement with a subsea engineering company and was offered a full time position upon completion of the program.