

Youth Hiring Handbook

Halifax is a city brimming with young talent— local and international graduates and young professionals with the drive and enthusiasm to make an incredible impact on your business. Hiring youth not only drives innovation, it encourages diversity and inclusion in the workplace. We want emerging talent to stay close to home and there are many programs available to help employers in hiring youth.

Experiential learning opportunities are a beneficial way for businesses and organizations to connect to a talent pool of youth looking to gain valuable work experiences. These programs and initiatives help foster a culture of collaboration and growth. Organizations across Halifax and Nova Scotia are collaborating to provide enhanced learning experiences and support ongoing entrepreneurship, applied research, discovery, and innovation.

Why Should Businesses Hire Youth?

- Students and recent graduates can offer fresh perspectives and new ideas for businesses.
- Hiring a student is a low-risk way to assess students as potential employees.
- It's an opportunity for staff to develop and grow critical skills including leadership
- Businesses can expand their networks and build strong ties to post-secondary institutions.

Experiential learning programs give students and graduates opportunities to work and stay in our province. Businesses need to keep hiring and connecting our youth opportunities and local professional networks to support retaining young talent in Nova Scotia.

There are dozens of programs many of which offer incentives for businesses to participate. Businesses can take advantage of the programs and incentives best suited to their organizational needs. Below, you will find a full list of the types of programs available along with funding and eligibility information.

Information is provided by the [Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education](#)



Flex-term Programs (short and long-term)

Program	What You Get	Highlights	Eligibility
NRC Industrial Research Assistant Program	Salary sharing opportunities to cover intern salaries (varies depending on applicant qualifications)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help build innovation capacity in the STEM sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be a small to medium-sized enterprise with 500 or less full-time equivalents • Students or graduates must be between 15-30 • Internships must last 6-12 months
One Journey Work and Learn	Salary subsidy to support hiring in industries with labour shortages (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support skill development and employment opportunities for unemployed or underemployed Nova Scotians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers must have identified need for labour • Employer must be a corporation, partnership, sole proprietorship, First Nations and/or Tribal Council or an Industry Association/Union
Science and Technology Internship Program	Up to a 50% salary incentive to support intern salary in a natural resources sector (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships last up to 12 months • Supporting businesses working with the Science and Technology sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer must be a for-profit, non-profit, indigenous group, or government agency • Must be between 15-30 years of age and not receiving EI
Science Horizons Youth Internship Program	Salary subsidy up to \$15,000 for internships in the environmental and clean technology sector (graduates only):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire university or college graduates in STEM roles • Provide hands on work experience on environmental projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer must be a small to medium size enterprise, post-secondary, NGO, Aboriginal organization or association, government institution/agency, or Crown Corporations • Internships must last up to 12 months
Skills Link	Financial subsidy up to \$25,000 for hiring and training youth (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer eligible activities to youth facing barriers to employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer must be a non-profit organizations or businesses engaged in not-for-profit activities
START	Financial incentives vary depending on type of employment offered and skill level of employee to be hired (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to hire Nova Scotians requiring work experience • Quick and easy online application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must have business locations and jobs available in Nova Scotia • Company must be small to medium sized

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Work Smarts	50% salary subsidy for hiring a recent graduate: Up to \$8.50/hour up to 35 hours/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps retain educated youth in Nova Scotia Quick online application 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer must provide an additional 11.58% coverage of MERC Internships must provide up to 26 weeks of employment
Young Canada Works at Building Careers	Financial subsidy for hiring English and French speaking recent graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support programs working in both English and French sectors Help graduates develop career skills to transition to job market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must hire an un-employed or under-employed college or university graduate, or a grad that graduated within the last 24 months Work up to 40 hours/week for 12 months
Young Canada Works	Salary subsidy for hiring students or graduates with two streams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer Job (up to \$8,000) Youth Internship (50%- 70% of employment costs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides funding to create summer jobs for students and internships for graduates Offers a in-depth guide Employer Guide 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summer job must be 6-16 weeks and support organizations with a heritage mandate Internship program is for unemployed or underemployed college or university grads and be between 4-12 months
Neil Squires Fund - Working Together	Salary subsidy to promote inclusive hiring for either students or graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with qualified candidates and hire an individual with a disability part-time or full-time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must offer employment for a minimum of 6 months
R&D Youth Employment Program	Financial subsidy to hire graduates: Up to \$30,000 per graduate (up to two)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote research and the development of new technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be Canadian business with up to 500 employees For graduates between 15-30 years old only Must offer employment for 6-12 months
Venture for Canada Internship	Financial subsidy to hire students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with qualified students Allows interns to contribute to new initiatives and add value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be a small to medium size enterprise, start-up, social enterprise, non-profit or charity with less than 500 workers
Youth Employability Program (CEED)	Salary subsidy to support youth employment in HRM (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Empower youth to explore their interests and achieve their goals through access to education and employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student must be 15-21 years old Student must be connected to income assistance, or living in foster care/group home

Short-term Programs (less than 8 months)

Program	What You Get	Highlights	Eligibility
Co-op Education Incentive	Financial subsidy for hiring co-op students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$7.50/hour up to 40 hours/week • \$9.00/hour if they are from a designated diversity group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support employers hiring post-secondary co-operative education students for work placements • Application is online and simple to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be private sector, government-funded or a non-profit organization • Student must be enrolled in a co-op program at a Nova Scotian university or college • Company must provide a co-op of 12-16 weeks • Student must be paid at least \$15.00/hour
Energy Nova Scotia	50% salary incentive for employing students or recent graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$7.50/hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a co-op non-co-op student or recent grad • 12-17 week work term in the energy sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers can have up to 500 employees • Must be based in Nova Scotia • The work experience must be directly related to the student's field of study
Government of Canada: Summer Jobs	Salary subsidy for students or graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 100% for non-profits • Up to 50% funding for public and private employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create quality summer work experiences for young people aged 15 to 30 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be a not-for-profit, public-sector, or private sector organization with 50 or less full-time employees • Youth must be paid at least minimum wage
Student Summer Skills Incentive (SKILL)	Financial subsidy for hiring summer co-op students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$9.10/hour up to 35 hours/week • \$10.10/hour if they are from a designated diversity group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund non-profits and charitable organizations wishing to hire a student for 8-14 weeks between April and August • Online applications submitted by the end of January will receive a response in March 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be a non-profit organization or Registered Charity • Not receiving funding from any other government employment program for the same position • Student must be paid at least minimum wage
Student Work Placement Program (SWPP)	Salary subsidy for hiring students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50% per student (up to a maximum of \$5,000) • 70% for under-represented students (up to \$7,000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives post-secondary students experience related to their field of study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be a registered business in Canada and hiring for a net new position • Must be employed between 12-16 weeks • Student must be enrolled full-time in a STEM or Business program

Program	What You Get	Highlights	Eligibility
Access-Ability	Pay for performance salary subsidy. 100% coverage for up to 20 weeks of work experience (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote inclusivity and hire a person with a disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work term must be a minimum 35 hours/week up to 30 weeks; \$15.00/hour Employer must provide coverage of mandatory employment related costs (CPP, EI, Vacation)
BioTalent Canada	Student co-op salary subsidy for bio-economy employers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 50% up to \$5,000 maximum 70% up to \$7,000 maximum for first-year students and under-represented groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase job-readiness of students registered in STEM or business program Help align biotechnology post-secondary programs to the bioeconomy needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer or job position must have a biotechnology focus Students must be in a STEM or business program at a Canadian post-secondary Work term meets minimum of 16 weeks, 5 days a week, 7.5 hours/day
Clean Leadership Program	60% salary subsidy to hire summer students or graduates in a clean tech or environmental position	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to accelerate a vibrant green economy through a 15 or 9-week summer internship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be involved in the clean tech or environmental sector
ICTC Career Connect Program	50% salary subsidy for hiring a recent graduate up to \$14,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internships must last at least 3 months and be 30 hours/week Application is online and quick to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Position must be of the digital economy labour force National Occupation Classification Employer must be a private sector employer operating in a high demand sector
Mitacs	Financial incentives for a research project with students or graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding starts at \$15,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get matched with a student and a supervising professor to develop a research project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be a for-profit or a select not-for-profit corporation in Canada Research idea is new and broadly applicable Internship must be at least 4 months
Options Youth	Salary subsidy to cover the costs of hiring priority youth (students or graduates) up to \$8,787	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help youth facing employment barriers access the workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be a small or medium sized business in Nova Scotia 35 hours/week for 20 weeks at \$12.55/hour
Student Employment Initiative	Supports for inclusive hiring in the workplace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 20 students with disabilities to secure employment in the fall and summer terms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employers must pay \$13.00/hour

Long-term Programs (greater than 8 months)

Program	What You Get	Highlights	Eligibility
Community Support for Black Canadian Youth	Financial contribution to initiatives supporting Black Canadian Youth (students or graduates): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to and over \$250,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides project funding to address unique challenges faced by Black Canadian youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be a not-for-profit, non-federal public institution, crown corporation, government agency or private sector organization
Graduate to Opportunity Program (GTO)	2-year salary subsidy for hiring a recent graduate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25% of the graduate's Year 1 salary (35% if they are from a designated diversity group) 12.5% of the Year 2 salary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunity to retain educated young people in Nova Scotia Online application is easy to complete and are typically turned around in 5 business days 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be a small business (under 100 employees), non-profit, start-up or social enterprise Permanent, full-time position with minimum annual salary of \$30,000, based in Nova Scotia Must hire a post-secondary graduate who graduated in the last 12 months
Innovate to Opportunity (ITO)	3-year salary subsidy for hiring a recent master's or PhD graduate. Two streams are available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35% of salary in Year 1; 20% in Year 2; 12.5% in Year 3 50% of salary in Year 1; 25% in Year 2, 12.5% in Year 3 10% diversity bonus for Year 1-2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help well-educated graduates start their careers Supports businesses to become innovative and export oriented Online application is simple to complete with a turn-around of 2-3 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Company must be a small or medium sized business with less than 500 full time employees Permanent, full-time position with minimum annual salary of \$60,000, based in Nova Scotia The grad must have completed a master's or PhD program within one year of when the employer's application is received
Apprentice Job Creation Tax Credit	10% tax credit for the salary of a Red Seal student apprentice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to \$2,000 per year per apprentice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offset the early stage hiring and training costs of new apprentices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprentice must work in a prescribed trade in the first two years of their contract Apprentice contract must be in a program to certify or license individuals in the trade
Canadian Women's Foundation	Annual grant of up to \$65,000 for 5 years (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help participants learn a skilled trade, start a business, or gain work experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer must be a non-profit organization or a First Nations Band as designated by the CRA Priority for applicants that are women, girls, Two-Spirit, or non-binary peoples

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CIRA Community Investment Program	Research grant of \$25,000-\$50,000 Maximum of \$100,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund projects that support the development or enhancement of the internet for the benefit of all Canadians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Company must be a charity, non-profit, or research group affiliated with a University • Organization must be based in Canada and projects must benefit Canadians
Divert NS	Funding to support solid waste diversion in Nova Scotia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$8,000 for undergraduate students • Up to \$15,000 for graduates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore new projects, research, and technologies related to solid waste diversion • Applications available online and are quick to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must be undergraduate honours or master's students at Nova Scotia post-secondary institutions • Applicants and/or project activities must be based in Nova Scotia
Eco Canada: Youth Employment	Subsidy up to \$20,000 to cover staff overhead costs for positions in STEM or Natural Resources (students or graduates)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internship runs between 8-12 months 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must hire a youth in STEM or natural resources • Youth must be currently un-employed or under-employed, and younger than 30 years
GradWorks	Funding for hiring a qualified NSCC graduate for up to a one-year period: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 66% salary support (maximum of \$25,000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows graduates to gain valuable experience and training • Job postings frequently updated on NSCC website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employer must be a small to medium enterprise in Nova Scotia • Must hire a NSCC graduate who graduated in the last 3 years from Human Resource Management, Industrial Engineering Technology or Occupational Health & Safety
ICTC Career Connect Program	50% salary subsidy for hiring a recent graduate up to \$14,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internships must last at least 3 months and be 30 hours/week • Application is online and quick to complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position must be of the digital economy labour force National Occupation Classification • Employer must be a private sector employer operating in a high demand sector