

# Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities

## Annual Report 2011-12

December 3, 2012





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## Ministers' Message

The Province of Nova Scotia is pleased to present the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Annual Report 2011-12. The report provides Nova Scotians an update and overview of Nova Scotia's commitments, investments and programs intended to support Nova Scotians with disabilities in their efforts to participate successfully in the labour force.

The release of this report each year on December 3 commemorates the United Nations International Day of Persons with Disabilities. Removing barriers to create an inclusive and accessible society for all is the 2012 theme for the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. This annual observance aims to encourage better understanding of disability issues to reduce the stigma that is often associated with disabilities, and to promote the inclusion of persons with disabilities in our communities. Furthermore, the province is working to reduce stigma among those with mental health issues and addictions, through the recently issued mental health and addictions strategy, *Together We Can*.

We know that the full inclusion of people with disabilities in our community will not only improve their quality of life, it will also make Nova Scotia a stronger and more diverse province. People with disabilities have unique, diverse and sometimes complex needs. Government-sponsored labour market programs for persons with disabilities are intended to address the additional employment, education and training challenges that people with disabilities face in their lives. The key is to help those with disabilities meet their full potential.

In Nova Scotia, the departments of Community Services, Labour and Advanced Education, and Health and Wellness work together to offer programs and services supporting the employability of people with disabilities. We know this is the right thing to do. These programs have made, and continue to make, a profound difference in the lives and families of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

The Nova Scotia government is committed to working together with the disability community, the Government of Canada and other partners to offer services that meet the current and future needs of Nova Scotians with disabilities.

Denise Peterson-Rafuse  
Minister of Community Services

David Wilson  
Minister of Health & Wellness

Marilyn More  
Minister of Labour & Advanced Education



## Introduction

The government of Nova Scotia understands the importance of ensuring that persons with disabilities experience social inclusion in all aspects of their lives within their communities. Employment is a key component of social inclusion. Canada and Nova Scotia recognize that persons with disabilities would like, and are able, to make significant contributions to their communities. Consequently, governments have offered many programs over the years to help persons with disabilities find meaningful employment.

The province of Nova Scotia has partnered with the Government of Canada for more than 45 years delivering cost-shared programs to assist persons with disabilities initiate the progression to greater economic and financial independence through employment. This partnership began with the Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Agreement in 1962, which was replaced in April 1998 with the Employability Assistance for Persons with Disabilities Agreement [EAPD]. In 2003-04 EAPD was succeeded by the current Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities [LMAPD]. The Multilateral Framework provides the basis for bilateral agreements between individual provinces and the Government of Canada. The bilateral agreement between Canada and Nova Scotia has been extended to March 2013.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Development Agreement for Persons with Disabilities [C-NS LMAPD] provides joint funding for programs and supports for persons with disabilities in Nova Scotia. In fiscal year 2011-12, Nova Scotia spent approximately \$29.24 million on programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD. The federal share is capped at \$8.34 million annually.

Nova Scotia made a commitment to release an annual public report about the programs and services funded under the agreement. This is the eighth edition of the annual report. This report describes the programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD agreement, including program objectives, descriptions, target populations and cost-shared expenditures for the April 2011 to March 2012 fiscal period.

Nova Scotia considers the achievements made through this partnered, cost-shared agreement beneficial to the well-being of the individual recipients of

program services and to their communities. Employment and education related programs and services targeted to persons with disabilities have helped Nova Scotians with disabilities to enter the labour force, maintain employment and improve their quality of life.

## Background

In November 2002, Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services approved a process to guide the negotiation of a successor agreement to the EAPD agreement. The Multilateral Framework for Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities was approved on December 5, 2003 and became effective on April 1, 2004. Subsequently Canada and Nova Scotia signed a bilateral agreement regarding the transfer of federal money to Nova Scotia to support programs and services identified as eligible for cost-shared funding under the multilateral and bilateral agreements.

The goal of the LMAPD agreement is to improve the employment situation for people with disabilities. The Agreement attempts to meet this goal by:

- enhancing the employability of persons with disabilities
- increasing the employment opportunities available to them
- building on the existing knowledge base

The 2004-05 federal budget announced an additional \$30 million for the LMAPD initiative. As a result of the additional funding, Nova Scotia received an increase of \$845,128 in funding (based on a per capita funding formula), bringing the total amount of federal recoveries to approximately \$8.3 million per year. The Province's annual investment in the programs funded under the bilateral agreement exceeds the cost-matching requirements for the federal funds. The programs and services funded under the agreement are targeted to employability and disability supports for Nova Scotians living with disabilities.

The Province of Nova Scotia offers a wide range of programs and services to support people with disabilities. These programs and services are delivered by the Department of Community Services, Department of Labour and Advanced Education, and the Department of Health and Wellness. This report includes descriptions of the programs and services funded under the C-NS LMAPD, expenditure data and societal indicators during the 2011-12 fiscal year.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Baseline Report 2004 - 05 was publicly released on December 3, 2004. Subsequent annual reports have been released each year on or about December 3, the International Day of the Disabled Person. This report builds on the previous annual reports, and fulfills Nova Scotia's commitment to report annually on activities under the C-NS LMAPD agreement.

## Persons with Disabilities in Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup>

In 2006, Statistic Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey [PALS] estimated 179,100 persons or 20 percent of Nova Scotians had a disability. This is the highest incidence of disability in Canada. The percentage of Canadians reporting a disability was 14.3 percent in 2006. Approximately 113,000 Nova Scotians required an assistive device. The 2006 PALS estimated that 63 percent of Nova Scotians living with a disability had mild to moderate disability and 37 percent had severe or very severe disability. Among the Nova Scotians living with a disability, 103,730 were working aged and 54,560 were active<sup>2</sup> in the labour force in 2006. Approximately 12,000 working aged persons with disabilities, or 11.5 percent were in receipt of income assistance and 47,270 (45.5 percent) had earned income in 2006.

## Labour Market in Nova Scotia<sup>3</sup>

The labour market in Nova Scotia has experienced very little growth since 1990. The annual growth in the working aged population has fallen below half of 1 percent since 2000. A decline in population growth reflects a variety of demographic factors, primarily a lower birth rate combined with the out-migration of working aged people.

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<sup>1</sup> All the data in this section are from Statistic Canada's Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS) 2006. Persons living in residential care facilities and on First Nations reserves are not included in the data.

<sup>2</sup> Active in the labour force includes people who are employed and unemployed people actively looking for work

<sup>3</sup> The data in this section are from the *Labour Market Bulletin Nova Scotia* Annual Edition 2011 and the Conference Board of Canada *Provincial Outlook Summer 2012: Economic Forecast*.

The Nova Scotia labour force declined in 2011, after remaining stable in the previous year. Employment in the province has stagnated in recent years, with no employment growth evident in the province as a whole between 2006 and 2011. As an example, the labour force in Nova Scotia declined between 2010 and 2011 by 0.4 percent from 498,800 to 496,600. Also, there has been a decline in full-time work in the province – full-time work peaked in Nova Scotia in 2009 and has dropped each year since.

Although the unemployment rate decreased in Nova Scotia from 2010 to 2011, this is primarily due to the declines in the labour force. The 2011 annual average unemployment rate remained relatively high at 8.8 percent. As a reflection of the continued weakness in the labour market, the average duration of unemployment has risen significantly over the most recent years and is well above the lows experienced in the mid 2000's. The Conference Board of Canada<sup>4</sup> predicts the provincial job market will improve slightly in 2012 and 2013 propelled by a growth in employment causing a reduction in the unemployment rate to an average 8.2 percent in 2013. The faint recovery in the labour market is forecast on the basis of a new natural gas exploration project, the multi-decade combat ships contract for the Canadian navy and a forecast recovery in the forest products industry. The mild recovery in the provincial job market will not be sufficient to bring the jobless rate back to pre-recession levels. The overall real GDP in Nova Scotia is expected to advance by 1.8 percent in 2013.

The bright spot in the provincial labour market continued to be the Halifax region, which experienced employment growth of 2.8 percent in 2011 over 2010. Unfortunately employment rates declined in most other areas of the province. Halifax very much tends to be a service-oriented economy, and the strongest employment gains were found in service industries.

Persons with disabilities have not been immune to the economic downturn of the mid-2000's and the slow recovery. As the Societal Indicators show [pages 56-65], person with disabilities face higher rates of unemployment and lower rates of labour force participation and employment than other working aged Nova Scotians.

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<sup>4</sup> *Provincial Outlook Summer 2012: Economic Forecast*

# Programs & Services

## Community Services

Operating under the Canada/Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities, the primary objective of the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities (LMAPD) program offered by the Department of Community Services is to enhance the employability of people with disabilities. This is achieved through the provision of employment related services and supports that lead to full or part time employment in the competitive labour market.

To be eligible for LMAPD services provided by the Department of Community Services, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- be disabled to the extent that they are unable, at the time of requesting services, to seek any meaningful job because of a physical or mental disability, and there is a realistic possibility of benefiting from LMAPD services; or
- the disability makes it difficult to complete the work requirements of the job; or
- the disability makes it difficult to undertake training which would lead to employment; and
- be at least 16 years of age; and
- not participating in the public school system at the time of requesting services; and
- be a Canadian citizen or a landed immigrant who is a resident of Nova Scotia; and
- must not be applying for the reimbursement of a good or service acquired prior to being approved both under the LMAPD program and/or (in the case of a vocational crisis request) approved for that good or service;

Applicants are considered ineligible under the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Program provided by the Department of Community Services if they:

- have a claim under the Workers' Compensation Act, Canadian Veteran's Rehabilitation Act, or through private insurance companies; or

- are eligible for services under the Labour Market Development Agreement or CPP; or
- are currently receiving active medical/psychiatric treatment which would interfere with the rehabilitation process; or
- are currently under the jurisdiction of the provincial education (public school) system.

Employment Caseworkers work with eligible individuals to ensure they have access to the following services which are available through the Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities Program:

- Information and direct referral - access to information and referral to support agencies;
- Assessment - access to vocational assessments, career assessments, academic assessments, etcetera;
- Employment and Career Development Services - access to employment support services, career development services, case management and navigation support;
- Skills and educational supports - access to upgrading and short term training programs;
- Provision of required technical aids - funding is provided for the purchase of eligible technical aids;
- Job Coaching - funding to provide on-the-job support and training for a defined time period;
- Wage Subsidy - funding provided to employers to facilitate a direct job placement for an individual;
- Self-employment - assistance related to self-employment is in the form of support for goods & services directly related to supporting the person's disability, i.e. the adaptation of disability specific tools and equipment required to operate an approved business.

Individuals who have a disability and are currently employed are not eligible for services unless they are deemed to be experiencing a 'vocational crisis'. Individuals are considered to be in a 'vocational crisis' if:

- the circumstances with regard to the existing disability have changed and now prevent the individual from performing a job they once performed; or
- the nature of the work has changed and the individual needs support to adapt to the changed needs of the job.

## Technical or Medical Aid Supports

The program provides disability-related supports to assist individuals as part of their employment plan or to individuals defined to be in a vocational crisis. An eligible support includes a medical or technical aid, or good, or service that would enable an individual to enhance their employability and/or continue in their employment. Medical and/or technical aids or goods or services are not provided to the individual for personal use only, but are provided to support the training and/or employment needs of individuals.

The following are considered eligible supports:

- Orthotic appliance - an apparatus used to support, align, prevent or correct deformities, or to improve the function of moveable parts of the body. Such appliances may include braces, splints, shoe modifications, and special seating molds for wheelchairs
- Canes, Crutches, Walkers - a mobility aid
- Wheelchairs and Similar Equipment - such mobility aid appliances include manual and electric wheelchairs, power carts and scooters. Requests for purchases of power or ultra-light wheelchairs or scooters are considered based on medical necessity and to avert a vocational crisis.
- Appliances for the Hearing Impaired - such as hearing aids or personal FM systems;
- Appliances for the Vision Impaired such as computers and software to support the disability, tape recorders, reading equipment, Braille calculator, high intensity lamps, braille and in some cases, special lenses may also be provided.
- Modifications to Vehicles - modifications can be provided when an individual does not have access to accessible public transportation and needs a car or van to avert a vocational crisis. Vans may be converted to accommodate wheelchair use by the provision of a wheelchair lift. Driving controls may also be adapted.
- Tools and Equipment - the purchase of special equipment or modifications to tools and equipment to support an individual's disability
- Interpretative and Other Support Services - funding is available to purchase a limited number of hours of interpreting services from an approved source in the community to assist with training or employment opportunities.

- Wage Subsidy - a wage subsidy can be provided for an individual that is ready to work. The subsidy is provided for a defined period of time.
- Job Coaching - funding is available to provide the services of a job coach, or other types of work site training to help people deal with issues of the job. This support is generally provided when an individual is beginning a job.

## **Project Support**

In addition to supporting individuals living with disabilities directly, a number of projects were funded through LMAPD. Examples of funded projects include providing support for individuals having a mental illness to gain skills that will move them toward employment to job coaching services that support individuals to attach to, or remain attached to, the labour market.

On a yearly basis, the Department of Community Services, Employment Support and Income Assistance Program staff serves a caseload of approximately 44,200 individuals and families. Approximately 45 percent of this caseload has been identified as individuals living with a disability. During the 2011-2012 fiscal year, caseworkers provided various types of support to these individuals including support for the development of employability plans as a means to attach to the labour market. Other direct services provided include:

- Assessment Services
- Employment and Career Counseling
- Referrals to appropriate service providers
- Referrals for training programs
- Support for individuals requiring a job coach
- Support for employment participation

In addition to the direct services provided, approximately 193 interventions were made through the LMAPD program to support individuals to receive the technical aids, tools, training and other supports they required to participate in their employment plans or to remain employed.

The primary objective of the LMAPWD program administered by the Department of Community Services is to enhance the employability of persons with disabilities. This is achieved through the provision of employment related supports and services that assist disabled individuals to obtain and/or maintain full or part time employment in the competitive labour market.

A portion of LMAPWD funding dollars were dedicated in fiscal 2012 to providing organizations committed to supporting Persons with Disabilities who offer pre-employment and employment focused programs. One organization, reachAbility provided two programs, One Step Closer and Rhythm. One Step Closer assists participants to successfully address concerns regarding confidence and conflict management issues. The second program, RHYTHM is designed to support youth at risk to develop social skills, self-confidence, and technical knowledge all in a unique environment - while learning to DJ. RHYTHM ensures participating youth are moving forward towards a positive self-image and improving their transferable, technical, and employability skills.

*“June’ (not her real name) is a single mom with one child. June is challenged by ongoing mental health problems and had found going back to work a huge barrier. As a result of the support of the One Step Closer program, June was able to arrange for daycare and pursue employment. The good news is she is now working full time after a long period of being in receipt of income assistance.*

*- Reprinted with the permission of “June”, a client of One Step Closer*

*‘Sue’ (not her real name), a single mom with 3 children struggled with anxiety and depression her whole life. After attending One Step Closer she went on to get her GED and a job working part time at her school. When one hears of her journey, you cannot help but be inspired by all Sue has gone through and what she has accomplished since attending One Step Closer.*

*- Reprinted with the permission of “Sue”, a client of One Step Closer*

*‘Michael’ (not his real name) is a single man who is known as a true gentle giant of a person who has lived with cognitive and mental health challenges his whole life. He is in his early 20’s and first heard of reachAbility through a RHYTHM outreach session. He joined RHYTHM only because of his love for music. But it led to much more. Feeling more empowered by his RHYTHM experience he decided to join the Gateway program (where he received his first ever job placement). After completing the program successfully, he was taken on full time by his Gateway employer and works fulltime today. Additionally Chris’ love of music led him to join the musicAbility weekend held at Camp reachAbility. There Michael experienced his love of music and an opportunity to socialize with other music lovers/musicians. In addition to enjoying the experience he also met his present*

girlfriend through the program. Today he volunteers with reachAbility, and is expressing his creativity through photography and music and is living independently in his own apartment for the first time ever.

- Reprinted with the permission of “Michael”, a client of Rhythm Project

## Program Indicators

<b>Table 1: Community Services LMAPD Program Indicators</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Number of participants completing a program where there is a specific start and end point to the intervention</b>	<b>Number of participants who maintained or obtained employment</b>
Rhythm Project	44	44	not available
One Step Closer	90	90	not available
Affirmative Industries Association	73	73	not available
Assessments	1	1	not available
Technical Aids & Services	160	not available	160
Training	11	11	not available
Post-secondary Education	22	not available	not available
Employment Support Services	19,890 <sup>5</sup>	not available	not available

<sup>5</sup> Estimate based on program administrative data

## Labour and Advanced Education

### Post-Secondary Disability Services (PSDS)

The mission of PSDS is to assist students with permanent disabilities in achieving individual success in their post-secondary studies by reducing or removing educational-related barriers through the provision of grants, services and equipment. PSDS serves adult Nova Scotians who live with permanent disabilities studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia

### Grants, Equipment and Service

- Provision of funding to Nova Scotia Universities and the Nova Scotia Community College for on-site disability service delivery
- Financial grants for students to increase participation and reduce debt load based on financial need determined by Nova Scotia Student Assistance
- Funding of equipment (computers, assistive devices, ergonomic equipment) and services (tutors, note takers, etc.)
- Funding for American Sign Language Interpreters
- Funding for an adult daily-living needs attendant
- Provision of funding to the Collaborative Partnership Network for short term training programs leading directly to employment
- Provision of funding to Autism Nova Scotia for a Pre-Vocational Workshop program

### Partners

- Nova Scotia Student Assistance Office
- Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC)
- 9 Nova Scotia Universities
- Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians (SDHHNS)
- Independent Living Nova Scotia (ILNS)
- Collaborative Partnership Network (CPN)
- Autism Nova Scotia

### Disability Services

Disability Services are provided at nine Nova Scotia Universities and thirteen campuses of the Nova Scotia Community College. Institutions provide direct on-site supports and services for students with disabilities including orientation,

instructor-student liaison, tutoring, note-taking, assistive technology provision, and exam accommodations.

Disability Services improve the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities, and enhance the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities<sup>6</sup> who are studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia. Students may apply each year when they make a Nova Scotia Student Assistance Application.

- Student applies and checks Permanent Disability box annually
- Submits medical form (first year only)
- Medical reviewed by PSDS for eligibility (first year only)

### **Provincial Access Grant**

Provincial Access Grants are a financial-need based tuition grant provided to increase participation in post-secondary education and training for students with disabilities by reducing debt load. Students with disabilities frequently take a decreased course load as a disability accommodation, increasing the length of their studies and simultaneously increasing their debt. The maximum grant is \$2,000 per year if an eligible student is attending university and \$1,000 per year if the student is attending college. Funding for this grant is limited. The Nova Scotia Student Assistance Office will assess the financial need of adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who make application for a Nova Scotia student loan. This assessment will determine eligibility for a Provincial Access Grant. The grants improve access to post-secondary education and the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills among persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who are studying in the province or studying outside Nova Scotia.

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<sup>6</sup> Permanent disability means a functional limitation caused by a physical or mental impairment that restricts the ability of a person to perform the daily activities necessary to participate in studies at a post-secondary school level or the labour force and is expected to remain with the person for the person's expected life.

### **Equipment and Services Access Program**

Funding for assistive technology/adaptive equipment and services such as tutoring and note-taking are provided to Nova Scotian students with disabilities enrolled in post-secondary education and training. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Target population is adult Nova Scotians with permanent disabilities who make application for a Nova Scotia student loan and have exhausted or are ineligible for the Canada Student Grant for Services and Equipment for Persons with Disabilities.

### **Interpreting Services**

American Sign Language interpreting and CART services are provided to Nova Scotian students with disabilities participating in post-secondary education through partnership with the Nova Scotia Society of Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Adult Nova Scotians in post-secondary education who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Attendant Care Services**

Self-managed attendant care services are provided for eligible students through partnership with Independent Living Nova Scotia. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. Adult Nova Scotians with disabilities who require educational-related attendant care to participate in post-secondary education.

### **Direct Skills Link**

Short term skills development interventions are provided for unemployed persons with disabilities in the Province of Nova Scotia served by the Collaborative Partnership Network of Agencies. Through this funding source, clients with disabilities will have an avenue to apply for financial resources for skills development opportunities. These training programs will be of short term duration, not eligible for student loan funding and available through local educational organizations and institutions as well as on-line. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. It also enhances the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. The target population is adult Nova Scotians with

disabilities who are ineligible for Human Resource Investment Fund (HRIF) seeking short term training programs that are not student loan eligible.

### **Autism Works – Pre-Vocational Program**

Autism Nova Scotia's Pre-Vocational Workshop program provides on-site job coaches, training modules and supportive infrastructure for pre-vocational students with autism to succeed in the workplace. This program improves the level of basic and post-secondary education and work-related skills for persons with disabilities. It also enhances the knowledge base, which contributes to continuous improvement of labour market policies and programs for persons with disabilities. Target population is high school students with autism who are seeking successful employment or transition to a relevant post-secondary environment.

*'Jocelyn' (not her real name) was born and lives in rural Nova Scotia. At birth, it was discovered that Jocelyn had Cerebral Palsy and was going to have many challenges in her life. Throughout elementary school and junior high Jocelyn had mobility challenges which meant she had to use an electric wheelchair and had difficulties with her speech. However, she prevailed in the mainstream school system. It was discovered in her last year of high school that Jocelyn also had a learning disability which affected her reading and comprehension and her long and short-term memory. In 2000, Jocelyn graduated from Eastern Shore District High School and in the following fall, attended St. Mary's University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Over the next six years Jocelyn was successful in completing a Bachelor of Arts degree with a double major in psychology and sociology.*

*Jocelyn furthered her post-secondary endeavors and spent the next four years completing her Bachelor of Social Work at the Maritime School of Social Work in Halifax. This was not the end of her education path as she continued on to do her Masters of Social Work also at the Maritime School of Social Work where she will graduate in October 2013.*

*Because of Jocelyn's disabilities, she relied on many types of supports to overcome her learning and mobility challenges. During her time at St. Mary's University as well as at Dalhousie University in the Maritime School of Social Work, Jocelyn has relied on an attendant to assist her in the classroom by taking notes and helping her with any mobility challenges that she faces. She also relies on tutorial support*

*because of her learning challenges. This support has included assisting her with completing research papers and preparing for tests and exams. She was provided funding for the supports through Post-Secondary Disability Services with the Department of Labor and Advanced Education. Jocelyn also relied on the educational institutions to provide her accommodations such as extra time to write tests and exams and also a proctor or scribe to assist her with these examinations. Jocelyn would not have been successful in her post-secondary studies without these supports and her will and determination has persevered after spending over 25 years in the education system.*

*When Jocelyn graduates next October, she would like to utilize her skills as a Social Worker in working with persons with disabilities. She would like to use her education and personal experience in helping persons with disabilities overcome their challenges and barriers in their life. As demonstrated in her story, Jocelyn will not stop until these goals have been obtained.*

*- included with the permission of the author 'Melissa', a post-secondary student*

## **Program Indicators**

### **Participation and Graduation**

Each year since 2004-05 the number of students with disabilities attending and self-disclosing their disability to their post-secondary institute has risen. In 2011-12 the number grew to 3463, an increase of 116 percent over 2003-04. Table 2 provides the number of post-secondary students who self-identify as having a disability.

As can be seen in Table 3 between the 2004/2005 school year and the 2011/2012 school year there was a 93 percent increase in the number of students with disabilities graduating from post-secondary training. The trend is positive; each year more persons with disabilities are making the commitment to attend post-secondary training and graduating.

<b>Table 2: Number of self-identifying Students with Disabilities (SwD) attending post-secondary training from 2003/2004 to 2011/2012</b>		
School year	Number of self-identifying students	Percent Increase
2003/2004	1600	Baseline year
2004/2005	1949	21.8%
2005/2006	2273	16.6%
2006/2007	2469	8.6%
2007/2008	2738	11%
2008/2009	2927	6.9%
2009/2010	3124	6.7%
2010/2011	3314	6.1%
2011/2012	3463	4.5%

<b>Table 3: 2004/2005 to 2011/2012 student with disability graduates</b>		
School year	Number of graduates	Percent Increase
2004/2005	369	baseline
2005/2006	517	41%
2006/2007	537	4%
2007/2008	578	8%
2008/2009	574	0%
2009/2010	659	15%
2010/2011	652	0%
2011/2012	712	9%

## Employment

In March of 2007 the Canadian Council on Learning and the Department of Education represented by the Post-Secondary Disability Services Division agreed to collaboratively engage in a five year study on student success, employment related outcomes and life's experiences of graduating and non-graduating students with disabilities. In the summer and fall of 2011, the fifth in a yearly series of one year post-graduation or withdrawal follow-up surveys of students with disabilities was completed.

## Results at a Glance

Results from the 2011 survey provided measures of employment and satisfaction outcomes of Nova Scotia post secondary students with disabilities one year after program graduation or withdrawal. In comparing overall results of this survey to those of the 2010 one-year survey, the labour force participation rate increased slightly to 83 percent and the employment rate decreased to 81 percent. Participants of the 2011 survey reported a 3 percent increase in earnings for full-time directly related positions at \$38,742; 93 percent of survey respondents live and work in Nova Scotia and 66 percent of respondents experience employment relatedness. Respondents continue to express a high degree of satisfaction with their learning program and overall experience at their institution, with 79 percent of respondents reporting that they would recommend their program and 90 percent stating they would recommend their institution.

The overall results of this survey are summarized below, with a comparison to the results of the 2009 and 2010 one-year follow up surveys:

The survey population included all of the students who attended the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), one of nine universities in Nova Scotia, or a college or university outside the province of Nova Scotia who were supported by the Department of Labour and Advanced Education's Post-Secondary Disability Services Division (PSDS) during the 2009-10 academic year. PSDS provided the names of 581 former students eligible to participate in the study. These students either graduated or withdrew from their studies in that year, and they received services or supports to accommodate a disability through their institution and PSDS. Of the 581 graduates and leavers included in the sample, 396 attended a college, 163 attended a university in Nova Scotia, and 22 were enrolled at a college (4) or university (18) outside Nova Scotia. The survey sample included 322 students who had graduated (55 percent) and 259 who had withdrawn (45 percent) from their institution before completing their studies.

All eligible participants were emailed a letter in July 2011 inviting them to participate in the survey. Each letter was personalized and provided the recipient with a unique log-in ID to a web-based survey hosted on an NSCC web server. To ensure that all potential participants could participate in the survey regardless of their disability, alternative ways of completing the survey were offered. This included a printed version that could be post-mailed or e-mailed to the participant, or an offer to have the survey completed by telephone with project

staff. In addition, the web-survey text was tagged to allow most text-reader applications to “read” the survey aloud to respondents while they were logged in to the survey. For eligible participants who could not be reached by email, project staff attempted to contact them by post-mail and/or telephone to invite them to complete the survey.

In total, 273 surveys were completed from the 581 eligible participants. Seventy percent were completed online and the remaining 30 percent were completed by telephone. With 273 respondents from a population of 581, there is a margin of error of 4 percent using a 95 percent confidence interval. This margin of error assumes that the respondents are representative of the eligible population. Caution is advised when interpreting or using survey findings, particularly where sample sizes are small, as sampling and selection bias may affect the reliability of results.

### Respondent Profile

The breakdown of survey respondents by institution type is provided in Table 4. Overall, 70 percent of the survey respondents had studied at a college, while 30 percent had studied at a university. As shown in Table 5, when the respondents are broken down by program status, 68 percent had graduated while 32 percent had withdrawn from their program.

<b>Table 4: Respondent Profile by Institution Type</b>		
<b>Institution type</b>	<b>Respondent profile</b>	
College	190	70%
University	83	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Table 5: Respondent Profile by Program Status</b>		
<b>Program status</b>	<b>Respondent profile</b>	
Graduated	187	68%
Withdrew	86	32%
<b>Total</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>100%</b>

As outlined in Table 6, the total survey participation rate was 47 percent (273 responded to the survey invitation). Participation across institution type was

nearly equal at 46 percent for those who had attended university and 48 percent for those who had attended college.

<b>Institution type</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Participation</b>
College	400	190	48%
University	181	83	46%
<b>Total institution type</b>	<b>581</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>47%</b>

Of the 581 graduates and leavers of post-secondary institutions, 396 attended a college in Nova Scotia and 4 enrolled in a college outside Nova Scotia; 163 attended a university in Nova Scotia, and 22 were enrolled at a university outside Nova Scotia (Table 6). The survey sample included 187 students who had graduated from their program and 86 who withdrew from the institution prior to program completion (Table 5).

### **Employment Outcomes**

The survey included a series of questions related to employment status, labour force participation, employment relatedness, and employment earnings.

### **Employment Status**

The breakdown of the employment status of survey participants is shown in Table 7 and detailed in the following sections.

<b>Employment Status</b>	
Labour force participants - employed during the reference week (June 19-25, 2011)	65%
Labour force participants - employed after the reference week (June 19-25, 2011)	3%
Labour force participants -unemployed	15%
Non-labour force participants	17%
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Labour Force Participation**

Overall, 83 percent of respondents indicated they were participating in the labour force<sup>7</sup> (Table 7). The labour force participation rate is the same for university and

<sup>7</sup> Respondents who were employed during or after the reference week or unemployed and looking for work

college respondents and is higher among graduates than those who withdrew before completion of their program.

Respondents not in the labour force were asked why they were not engaged in the labour market. Overall, 48 percent of these respondents reported the reason they were not in the labour force because of a medical or disability circumstance, while 30 percent of respondents indicated they were attending school.

### Employment Rates

Among the respondents (Table 7), 65 percent indicated they were employed during the reference week of the survey and another 3 percent started employment after the reference week. Fifteen percent of respondents reported they were unemployed but seeking employment.

As evidenced in Tables 8 and 9, the employment rate during the reference week is higher for university respondents as compared to those who attended college, and nearly equal between graduates and leavers.

<b>Employment rate</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Started employment after July 1	5%	2%	4%
Seeking employment	16%	12%	15%
Employed	79%	86%	81%
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Employment rate</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>Withdrew</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Started employment after July 1	5%	2%	4%
Seeking employment	14%	17%	15%
Employed	81%	81%	81%
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Unemployed-Respondent Profile

Table 10 shows a summary profile of the 21 percent of survey respondents who indicated that they had never been employed for a period of six weeks or more in their work history. Of these respondents, 63 percent were non-labour force participants and 37 percent were in the labour force actively looking for employment.

**Table 10: Summary Profile of Unemployed Respondents**

Unemployed-respondent profile	Status			
	Unemployed - labour force participant (n=21)	Unemployed – non-labour force participant ( n=35)	Total - unemployed respondents( n=56)	Total - all survey respondents (n=273)
<b>Average age</b>	30 years (n=19)	32 years (n=32)	31 years (n=51)	29 years (n=261)
<b>Median age</b>	25 years ( n=19)	26 years (n=32)	26 years (n=51)	25 years (n=261)
<b>Gender</b>	Male 42% (n=8) Female 58% (n=11)	Male 47% (n=15) Female 53% (n=17)	Male 45% (n=23) Female 55% (n=28)	Male 49% (n=129) Female 51% (n=132)
<b>Institution type</b>	College 81% (n=17) University 19% (n=4)	College 71% (n=25) University 29% (n=10)	College 75% (n=42) University 25% (n=14)	College 70% (n=190) University 30% (n=83)
<b>Program status</b>	Graduated 57% (n=12) Withdrew 43% (n=9)	Graduated 60% (n=21) Withdrew 40% (n=14)	Graduated 59% (n=33) Withdrew 41% (n=23)	Graduated 68% (n=187) Withdrew 32% (n=86)
<b>Average debt owed</b>	\$12,303 (n=12)	\$18,711 (n=20)	\$16,308 (n=32)	\$17,122 (n=167)
<b>Median debt owed</b>	\$7,050 (n=12)	\$5,425 (n=20)	\$5,725 (n=32)	\$10,000 (n=167)
<b>Most commonly reported disability</b>	Learning disability 32%	Learning disability 23%	Learning disability 26%	Learning disability 46%

Of the unemployed respondents, the majority of labour force participants tended to be female (58 percent), and 57 percent of labour force participants had graduated from their program. The gender of non-labour force participants tended to be equal (53 percent female, 47 percent male), and 60 percent of the non-labour force participants graduated from their institution. Of the unemployed, the average debt owed by the non-labour force participants was 52 percent more than that amount owed by the labour force participants, at \$18,711 and \$12,303 respectively.

### Comparative Rates

Statistics Canada’s “2006 Participation and Activities Limitation Survey” (PALS) provides data on labour force activity for adults with and without a disability in Nova Scotia. Table 11 provides comparative data from the 2006 PALS and 2009 “Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics” (SLID) to provide comparisons to the employment results observed in this survey.

			2006 PALS data for NS, age 25-54		2009 SLID data for NS	
Comparative Employment Statistics	2011 survey of post-secondary education graduates and leavers with a disability	May 2011 labour force survey, Nova Scotia, age 25-54, with post-secondary education	With a disability	Without a disability	With a disability	Without a disability
Labour force participation rate	83%	88%	62%	88%		
Not in labour force	17%	12%	38%	12%	34%	13%
Employment rate of total survey population	68%	84%	55%	83%	46%*	64%*
Employment rate of labour force participants	78%	95%	91%	94%		
Unemployment rate of labour force participants	22%	5%	9%	6%		

\* There are some differences in the nature of these three data sources that affect the comparability across data sets. The main differences in the SLID data are that it reports on all ages (15-64), all levels of education and employment statistics include only full-year, full-time employment. The PALS data reports only for ages 25-54 to approximate the age cohort included in the PSE graduates and leavers survey but does not account for differences in education levels. Additionally, PALS and this longitudinal survey use a reference week in reporting employment status and labour force participation includes full- and part-time employment for both surveys.

Overall, the labour force participation rate for the 2011 survey of post-secondary graduates and leavers was 83 percent. When compared with the Nova Scotia 2006 PALS data (for the population aged 25-54), this is higher than what was reported for adults with a disability (62 percent) and lower than what was reported for adults without disabilities (88 percent). The employment rate of labour force participants for the 2011 survey respondents (78 percent) is lower than what was reported in the 2006 PALS data for adults both with and without a disability (91 percent and 94 percent respectively).

When compared with results from the 2011 labour force survey (for the population aged 25 to 54 with some post-secondary to completed post-secondary education), both the labour force participation rate (83 percent) and the employment rate (78 percent) for the 2011 survey respondents are lower than the larger Nova Scotia population (at 88 and 95 percent respectively).

## Relatedness of Employment to Studies

Respondents who indicated they were employed were asked about the relatedness of their employment to their field of study. Overall, 66 percent reported they were working in employment that is either directly or indirectly related to their program of study.

For the university sector, 69 percent of respondents experienced employment relatedness, while college respondents experienced employment relatedness at 64 percent. When compared by program status, there was a substantial difference for those who graduated versus those who withdrew. Graduates were more likely to be employed in a field related to their program of study (77 percent) compared to those who withdrew (36 percent).

## Comparative Data

Table 12 compares the employment relatedness (both direct and indirect) of respondents who had graduated from either college or university with the most recent data from follow-up studies of Nova Scotia university and NSCC graduates. Within the college sector, graduates with a disability reported 9 percent lower employment relatedness than the overall results from the NSCC “One Year Graduate Follow-Up Study”. Within the university sector, graduates with a disability experienced a higher employment relatedness than the graduates reported in the Maritime Provinces Higher Education Commission (MPHEC), “Two Years On: A Survey of Class of 2007 Maritime University Graduates”. These results should be interpreted with some caution, given the small sample size and differences in the survey methodologies.

<b>Graduate employment relatedness</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>
Survey respondents (graduated)	74% (n=70)	85% (n=33)
2010 NSCC graduates	83%	
2007 NS university graduates		81%

## Earnings of Respondents

Survey respondents who reported full-time employment or indicated self-employment during the reference week were asked about their annual earnings. The average annual earnings are summarized by employment relatedness in

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<sup>8</sup> Survey Respondents Who Graduated Compared to University and College Graduate Follow-up Studies

Tables 13 (by institution type) and 14 (by program status). The average annual earnings of college survey participants saw an increase in earnings as employment became more related to their studies, ranging from \$24,045 in unrelated occupations to \$33,554 in directly related occupations. The average earnings of university participants employed in positions directly related to their field of study was \$45,284, higher than the salaries reported by those employed in positions indirectly (\$29,237) and unrelated (\$31,612) to their field. Table 14 indicates that graduated respondents are more likely to earn more if they are employed in an occupation related to their field of study, while the opposite relationship is observed in those who withdrew from their program – the wages for leavers ranged from \$22,627 in directly related occupations to \$29,828 in positions unrelated to their studies.

When annual earnings are reported by the median, both college and university survey participants experienced an increase in salary as relatedness of studies increased. When compared by program status, the same relationship is observed for graduates, while leavers tended to experience higher salaries in unrelated and directly related occupations as compared to indirectly related employment. When comparing average and median salary results, average annual salaries are higher than median annual salaries overall for all employment groups (direct, indirect and unrelated). When comparing by institution type and program status, the greatest variation appears in university respondents of directly related studies, with average salary of \$45,284 (Table 13) and median salary of \$36,400.

<b>Table 13: Average Salary by Employment Relatedness and Institution Type*</b>			
<b>Employment relatedness</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Directly related	\$33,554 (n=29)	\$45,284 (n=23)	\$38,742 (n=52)
Indirectly related	\$25,591 (n=7)	\$29,237 (n=7)	\$27,414 (n=14)
Not related	\$24,045 (n=21)	\$31,612 (n=8)	\$26,132 (n=29)

<b>Table 14: Average Salary by Employment Relatedness and Program Status*</b>			
<b>Employment relatedness</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>Withdrew</b>	<b>Overall</b>
Directly related	\$40,844 (n=46)	\$22,627 (n=6)	\$38,742 (n=52)
Indirectly related	\$29,255 (n=8)	\$24,960 (n=6)	\$27,414 (n=14)
Not related	\$22,172 (n=14)	\$29,828 (n=15)	\$26,132 (n=29)

\*It is difficult to account for these differences from this data alone. Caution should be used in interpreting these results for two reasons: 1. a small number of graduates and leavers earning significantly more or less than the average could skew the results; and 2. annual earnings are self-reported by the respondents and may be under- or over-reported.

## Comparative Findings

In this longitudinal survey, graduated university respondents with a disability who are working full-time or self-employed in directly related employment reported average annual earnings of \$48,035. This is higher than the findings from the MPHEC 2009 Survey of 2007 Maritime University Graduates where the reported average annual earnings of full-time employment were \$43,499. The NSCC 2011 Graduate Follow-Up Study (of 2010 graduates) reported average annual earnings of \$33,841, slightly less than the average annual earnings of the graduated college respondents in this study at \$34,804. These results should be interpreted with some caution, given the small sample size and differences in the survey methodologies. Nevertheless, the data does suggest that the employment earnings of the respondents of this survey are comparable to that of respondents from colleges and universities generally.

<b>Table 15: Comparative Employment Earnings, University</b>	
<b>Employment earnings, university</b>	<b>Annual full-time earnings</b>
MPHEC 2009 Survey of 2007 Maritime University Graduates employed first-degree holders	\$43,499
University respondents in directly related employment, 2011 (graduates)	\$48,035
University respondents in directly related employment, 2011 (graduates and leavers)	\$45,284

<b>Table 16: Comparative Employment Earnings, College</b>	
<b>Employment earnings, college</b>	<b>Annual full-time earnings</b>
NSCC 2011 Graduate Follow-Up Study, graduates without a disability in related employment	\$33,841
College respondents in directly related employment, 2011 (graduates)	\$34,804
College respondents in directly related employment, 2011 (graduates and leavers)	\$33,554

## Location of Employment

A summary of respondents' employment location by institution location is outlined in Table 17. Overall, 92 percent of respondents were living and working

in Nova Scotia at the time of the survey. This percentage is lower than that of employed respondents who had studied at a Nova Scotia institution (97 percent). Of those living in Nova Scotia, over one-half are working in the province's two metropolitan areas: Halifax Regional Municipality (44 percent of respondents) and Cape Breton Regional Municipality (11 percent). Of the 8 percent of respondents who are working outside the province, 29 percent are employed in Alberta. Generally, university respondents are concentrated in Halifax Regional Municipality, while college respondents are more distributed in counties throughout the province.

<b>Table 17: Respondent Employment Location by Institution Location</b>			
<b>Status</b>			
<b>Employment</b>	<b>In-province</b>	<b>Out-of-province</b>	<b>Total</b>
Outside Nova Scotia	7% (n=12)	33% (n=2)	8% (n=14)
Nova Scotia	93% (n=165)	67% (n=4)	92% (n=169)
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100% (n=177)</b>	<b>100% (n=6)</b>	<b>100% (n=183)</b>

Table 18 shows that college respondents are more commonly working in Nova Scotia (97 percent) than are university respondents (83 percent). When compared by program status (Table 19), both graduates and leavers tend to be employed in Nova Scotia at the same rate (92 percent).

<b>Table 18: Employment Location by Institution Type</b>			
<b>Status</b>			
<b>Employment</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Total</b>
Outside Nova Scotia	3% (n=4)	17% (n=10)	8% (n=14)
Nova Scotia	97% (n=121)	83% (n=48)	92% (n=169)
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100% (n=125)</b>	<b>100% (n=58)</b>	<b>100% (n=183)</b>

<b>Table 19: Employment Location by Program Status</b>			
<b>Status</b>			
<b>Employment location</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>Withdrew</b>	<b>Total</b>
Outside Nova Scotia	8% (n=10)	8% (n=4)	8% (n=14)
Nova Scotia	92% (n=121)	92% (n=48)	92% (n=169)
<b>Respondent total</b>	<b>100% (n=131)</b>	<b>100% (n=52)</b>	<b>100% (n=183)</b>

### **Overall Satisfaction with and Evaluation of Learning Experiences**

The survey included a series of questions about overall satisfaction with the learning experiences. To measure satisfaction, survey respondents were asked whether or not they would recommend the institution and/or program to other students with a similar disability who were considering post secondary studies.

Overall, 76 percent of respondents would recommend both their program and institution. This satisfaction is consistent across institution type but higher for graduated respondents (81 percent) than those who withdrew from their studies (64 percent).

<b>Please think about your learning experiences at your college/university and indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
(i) I felt that I was treated with dignity and respect by the disability services staff on campus.	4% (n=11)	7% (n=17)	34% (n=88)	55% (n=141)
(ii) Disability services staff on campus responded quickly and effectively to my requests for supports.	6% (n=14)	9% (n=22)	36% (n=91)	49% (n=123)
(iii) I felt that I was treated with dignity and respect by my instructors / professors.	5% (n=14)	11% (n=29)	39% (n=101)	44% (n=114)
(iv) I was able to access the supports I needed to assist me with my disability related learning needs.	6% (n=15)	9% (n=21)	42% (n=103)	44% (n=108)
(v) Having access to the supports I needed allowed me to focus on learning.	6% (n=15)	8% (n=19)	42% (n=101)	44% (n=105)
(vi) My disability affected socializing and studying with other students.	18% (n=45)	37% (n=91)	29% (n=70)	16% (n=39)
(vii) I was comfortable asking for additional help with my courses when it was needed.	6% (n=14)	13% (n=33)	45% (n=114)	36% (n=91)
(viii) I came to my institution well prepared to be a successful student.	5% (n=13)	10% (n=25)	45% (n=116)	40% (n=102)
(ix) My family and friends were supportive of my learning goals.	4% (n=10)	2% (n=6)	39% (n=99)	54% (n=136)
(x) My overall learning experience was positive.	6% (n=17)	14% (n=36)	39% (n=100)	41% (n=105)
(xi) I feel I was given equal or fair (non-discriminatory) opportunities as the other students.	7% (n=18)	6% (n=16)	43% (n=109)	43% (n=108)

<b>Table 21: Ratings of Learning Experiences</b>					
<b>On a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 equals poor and 10 equals excellent, how would you rate your learning experiences in preparing you to:</b>	<b>Status</b>				
	<b>Graduated (average score)</b>		<b>Withdrew (average score)</b>		<b>All respondents (average score)</b>
	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>College</b>	<b>University</b>	
(i) Get started on a new career path?	7 (n=126)	7 (n=54)	5 (n=52)	5 (n=27)	7 (n=259)
(ii) Develop or improve your skills for a desired occupation?	8 (n=126)	8 (n=54)	6 (n=51)	5 (n=26)	7 (n=257)
(iii) Develop strategies and skills for everyday life?	7 (n=125)	7 (n=54)	5 (n=50)	5 (n=27)	7 (n=256)
(iv) Increase your earning potential?	8 (n=126)	7 (n=54)	5 (n=52)	6 (n=27)	7 (n=259)
(v) Gain confidence in your abilities?	8 (n=125)	8 (n=54)	6 (n=52)	6 (n=27)	7 (n=258)
(vi) Gain confidence in advocating for needed accommodations?	8 (n=120)	7 (n=54)	5 (n=51)	6 (n=27)	7 (n=252)
(vii) Enrich your family or home life?	7 (n=120)	6 (n=54)	5 (n=48)	5 (n=27)	6 (n=249)
(viii) Reduce your financial dependence on others?	7 (n=123)	6 (n=53)	5 (n=50)	4 (n=27)	6 (n=253)
(ix) Actively participate in community and volunteer experiences?	6 (n=118)	6 (n=54)	4 (n=44)	5 (n=27)	6 (n=243)
(x) Improve your overall quality of life?	7 (n=125)	7 (n=54)	5 (n=52)	6 (n=27)	7 (n=258)

Respondents were asked to evaluate their learning experiences by reporting the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with various statements. Table 20 provides an overview of the average score and distribution of responses to each of the eleven statements. Overall, the results are positive, with the majority of respondents reporting either “Agree” or “Strongly agree” to each statement (i.e., 85 percent reported that they were able to access the supports needed to assist with disability related learning needs. Eighty-six percent felt that disability

services staff on campus responded effectively to support requests. An exception to this pattern is the response to the statement that looked at the connection between disability and student interaction (“My Disability Affected Socializing and Studying with Other Students”) – more respondents tended to disagree (55 percent) with this statement.

The survey included a series of questions that asked the participants about the ways in which their learning experiences impacted their life. Participants responded to each question on a scale of 1 to 10. Table 21 shows the average score of each question. Overall, respondents who graduated from their program rated their learning experiences as having a more positive life impact than those who withdrew from their program.

## Summary

The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education and the province’s universities and community college have made considerable investments over the past nine years to increase the opportunities for adults with a disability to access post-secondary education. The 2011 survey results demonstrate that the overall employment and quality-of-life outcomes that former students experienced following their studies at university or college are favourable. This study continues to offer evidence that provincial investments provide long-term benefits to the economy of Nova Scotia by enabling a large number of working-age adults with a disability the opportunity to move into the labour force.

Summary results of the 2011 survey include the following:

- Labour force participation of respondents was 83 percent compared to 88 percent for all adults in Nova Scotia’s labour force (aged 25-54 with post-secondary education).
- An employment rate of 81 percent was observed for the reference week of June 19-25, 2011, while another 4 percent reported having started a job in the four-month period during the survey data collection.
- Overall, 66 percent of the employed respondents (graduates and students who withdrew before graduation) reported working in employment related to their field of studies. This rate improved to 77 percent for respondents who had graduated from the institution in the study year.
- Of the employed respondents who studied at a Nova Scotia institution, 93 percent were living and working in Nova Scotia at the time of the survey.

In addition, the survey participants expressed a high degree of satisfaction with their learning experiences at their institutions:

- 79 percent of respondents would recommend their program.
- 91 percent of respondents would recommend their institution.
- 85 percent of respondents were able to access the supports they needed to assist with disability related learning needs.
- 86 percent of respondents reported that disability services staff at their institution responded quickly and effectively to their requests for supports.

## Health and Wellness, Mental Health Services

The Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) funds the District Health Authorities (DHAs) to deliver mental health services to Nova Scotians. Located across the province, the services available under Community Supports include *Mental Health Employability Programs* which can be accessed through Clubhouses, Clubhouse-inspired programs, Employment Skill Development and Support Programs, and community-based rehabilitation programs. Typical participants in these Mental Health Employability Programs include working age adults who are living with severe and persistent/recurrent mental illnesses that impacts day to day functioning in the community and who have the potential for employability. The participants are encouraged and supported to attain personal goals throughout their participation in the employability programs.

There continues to be a focus in Nova Scotia on developing and delivering services to help working age adults prepare for and attain waged employment. Several Clubhouses and Clubhouse-inspired programs are involved in supported housing activities which support individuals in their employment by reducing stress caused by the lack of stable, safe housing. The Clubhouse programs operate by a set of international standards and believe that work is a deeply regenerative & re-integrative force in our lives, that employment is a fundamental right of citizenship, and that employment opportunities need to be available to all members regardless of diagnosis or disability.

In Nova Scotia, Clubhouses, Clubhouse-inspired programs, Employment Skill Development and Support Programs, and community-based rehabilitation programs are located in Amherst, New Glasgow, Sydney, Dartmouth and Halifax. These programs address all or some of the five LMAPD priority areas, and provide varying degrees of the following:

- On-site skill development: participation in a “work ordered day” and peer support activities
- Vocational development: supported employment, transitional employment and independent employment
- Job readiness: resume writing, job search, interviewing, crisis vocational counseling and communication skills with employers and peers; career exploration, job shadowing

- Literacy support and support to access formal education (Nova Scotia Community College, university, high school equivalency/GED (general education development)).

The Employment Skill Development and Support Programs are located in Sydney and in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. These programs provide the following: assistance in the development of vocational skills to obtain employment; opportunities to develop work skills for employment; assistance with learning new skills to start one's own business; assistance for participants to gain confidence in their own ability to seek job opportunities and obtain satisfactory work. The Employment Skill Development and Support Programs address all five LMAPD priority areas and provide varying degrees of the following:

- Job readiness skill development
- Work skill development
- Vocational training
- Entrepreneurial skill development.

Employment is a key determinant of health and steps to develop marketable employability skills in persons with mental health disabilities is a priority of community supports programs. The Mental Health Employability Programs are taking action to change the way employers view persons with mental illness and reduce associated stigma. Through the Mental Health and Addictions Strategy *Together We Can*<sup>9</sup> the province will focus on reducing the stigma people with mental illness face, through greater public awareness. Stigma is a real and significant barrier to people seeking to regain a normal lifestyle. Many Clubhouse and Clubhouse-inspired programs now offer “transitional” and “supported” employment opportunities for individual members, and have implemented processes for attaining job placements with employers. The long term goal for many people in recovery from mental illness is the attainment of employment. However, short term successes such as regular attendance and participation on an individual basis in the above programs and services, are also recognized as important steps along the way to employment. The structure of the employability programs allows for activities with both set time periods and ongoing participation in the work ordered day program. Movement from one activity to another may depend on an individual's choice and his/her readiness for more structure.

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<sup>9</sup> Available on-line at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/mhs/mental-health-addiction-strategy.asp>

## **Program Indicators**

For the fiscal year 2011-2012, each Mental Health Employability Program reported on the total number of individuals who regularly attended, and actively participated in their programs and services. The total number of individuals who regularly attended and participated in the employability programs is eight hundred and nineteen (819). In Nova Scotia, most programs/services offered through Clubhouses, Clubhouse-inspired and community-based rehabilitation programs described in this report are open-ended; that is, they do not have specific start- and /or end dates for these programs/services. However, where possible, some of the employability programs were able to report on the number of participants completing a program or service where there was a specific start and end point to the intervention. A total number of fifty-one (51) participants completed such programs/services. Data was also collected on the number of participants who obtained or were maintained in employment where the employability program or service supported this activity. The total number of individuals obtaining or maintaining employment was two hundred and thirty (230). For some individuals, ongoing assistance of the mental health program to remain employed was required (See Table 22).

<b>Table 22: Mental Health LMAPD Program Indicators</b>			
<b>Program</b>	<b>Number of participants in program/ service</b>	<b>Number of participants completing a program/service (with specific start and end point to the intervention)</b>	<b>Number of participants who obtained or were maintained in employment where the program/service supports this activity</b>
New Hope/ Community Supports for Adults	168	*	22***
Crossroads	160	31	61
Connections Halifax	270	*	112
New Beginnings Dartmouth	221	7 **	35
All LMAPD funded programs	819	51	230

\* Programs are open-ended.

\*\* All groups/ programs with the New Beginnings Dartmouth have been open-ended groups except for one group which had a start and an end point (n=7 completers). No other groups/ programs have an end point. The support is ongoing in all the components/ service they offer.

\*\*\* Reflects CSA clients who achieved then maintained employment during report period as a result of participation in program/service (n=22). Does not include those clients gainfully employed prior to admission to program/service.

## **Mental Health Employability Programs in Nova Scotia**

### **➤ Community Supports for Adults Program/ New Hope Psychosocial Rehabilitation Site- New Glasgow, Nova Scotia (Mental Health Services, Pictou County Health Authority)**

The Community Supports for Adults Program (which includes the New Hope Psychosocial Rehabilitation Site) is a Clubhouse-inspired psychosocial rehabilitation program for adult clients (19 years and older) of Pictou County who are experiencing difficulties with daily living as a result of severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI). The program includes case management, psychiatric consultation, as well as a number of services related to wellness, growth and psychosocial rehabilitation that take place at the New Hope Site. The services offered by this program include work ordered day activities, education, and consumer wellness activities. The program identifies *Education and Training*

(LMAPD priority area) as one of its goals - to improve the level of education and work-related skills for persons with severe and persistent mental illness. In addition to LMAPD funded activities, New Hope also offers a successful smoking cessation program that provides their clients an opportunity to experience success overcoming a serious problem and helps them recognize they can achieve success in other aspects of their lives including finding and maintaining employment.

*“Claire” (not her real name), a female client of the Community Support for Adults Program in New Glasgow, was essentially a recluse when first entering the program, going out only to get groceries and for blood work. She began working with a case manager and she began attending programs at New Hope which opened up opportunities for her. She learned about her illness, medication and blood work which increased stability. Claire was able to learn to socialize in a safe environment which increased her comfort and skill in dealing with people. She was able to gradually build up tolerance for a full day routine through working on a variety of projects in the program. Through New Hope-sponsored outings, she was able to try new things and expand her “comfort zone”. She began volunteering at a local charity store and was provided with stress management and coaching supports around this. Claire was successful in getting a full time position with Home Care and has been with them now for 6 months.*

*- Reprinted with the permission of “Claire”, a client of New Hope – New Glasgow.*

➤ **Connections - Halifax, Nova Scotia (Mental Health Program: Recovery and Integration Services, Capital District Health Authority)**

Connections Halifax helps people living with serious mental illness realize their path to self-sufficiency. Their distinct culture is rooted in innovation, personal discovery, and the belief that everyone has potential. Connections is informed by a spirit of entrepreneurship. They believe that by recognizing and strengthening the assets of people and communities, we are more likely to inspire transformation.

A dynamic environment generates innovative ideas and practices. As a program within the Mental Health Program at Capital Health, a cornerstone of their success is the cultivation of partnerships both within Capital Health and across a broad spectrum of community organizations. Over half of their work takes place

in the community. Peer support based on shared lived experience is fundamental. Witnessing peers' successes makes it possible for people to imagine a different life for themselves – as students, as employees, as active and engaged citizens. The environment at Connections does not separate the fundamentals that contribute to a successful recovery: employment, education, skills development, housing and individualized support. Each person creates a unique recovery plan based on their identified priorities.

Employment Services support individuals living with mental illness to find, secure, and maintain employment within the existing labour market. In pursuit of this end, Connections Halifax has developed excellent relationships with many private and public sector employers, as well as with collaborative partner organizations also working toward this goal. Providing this core service involves working simultaneously with both Employers and Individuals living with mental illness.

- Job seekers are assisted (as needed) with career exploration, key related skill upgrading, resume development, job search, initial contacting, and interview preparation.
- Employed individuals are assisted with supplemental training required, and managing any stressful situations that arise.
- Employers are assisted in finding appropriate candidates for job openings. Connections staff also assist employers to learn to work with employees living with mental illness by providing educational information, and practical, experientially based advice. These core services have resulted in hundreds of competitive job placements over the years.

Employment Support Unit (ESU) Staff also develop a wide array of initiatives best defined as social enterprise. Essentially this involves helping to create opportunities where none exist. This addresses the need for opportunities which are accessible and manageable for persons with very challenging on-going symptoms arising from their illness. Within this area of service ESU staff has helped to:

- create new businesses
- manage contracted employment
- provide supervised, casual work teams for a variety of projects.

These areas of development allow persons living with mental illness to re-enter the labour market, actively participate in their community and earn much needed income.

*“Lindsay” (not her real name) is fairly new to Connections, although she has been receiving support for her mental illness in the community for 15 years. She is a young woman with a considerable amount of education; she has completed two bachelor degrees since receiving her diagnosis in the mid 1990’s. Lindsay comes from a family who have been supporting her financially through her recovery process and education, but in the past year have encouraged her to become more financially independent now that her illness has become stable. When Lindsay approached the Connections employment team, it was evident that she had many skills to offer based on her education history, but she had no work experience; the closest thing to employment that Lindsay had performed were her internships through university placements. Lindsay identified that she was interested in pursuing a career as a Library Technician, one of her university degrees, but she was experiencing great difficulty securing even a job interview. Lindsay demonstrated extreme lack of confidence in her skills, which was evident in conversations about employment. Her initial resume held only her education and did not highlight the technical skills that she developed during her internships. During Connections’ initial employment screen with Lindsay, she described thinking that she did not deserve to list these skills on a resume because she did not have any paid experience implementing them. Lindsay also expressed significant anxiety about her ability to work more than a few hours per week due to symptoms of her illness, despite employment staff’s reminders that she had successfully completed two university degrees! Connections employment team worked with Lindsay to improve her resume, and to coach her on interview skills. Lindsay continued to have difficulty expressing her relevant skills as strengths; she still believed that without ‘real’ work experience she wasn’t qualified to speak about them during an interview. Based on the employment staff’s assessment, Lindsay was not successful in her job search for a few reasons: her lack of experience, her anxiety level, and her belief that she did not deserve to speak about her university placement experiences as valid work skills. Employment staff determined that Lindsay would benefit from a supported work experience placement to gain practical experience as a paid employee, to develop her skills in a ‘real’ work setting and to increase her perceived stamina for work by having*

*Lindsay work 16 hours per week, double what Lindsay believed she was capable of.*

*Connections staff contacted a local university to request a 6 month work experience placement for Lindsay so that she could enhance her practical work experience in this field. Lindsay's connection to a mental health organization was disclosed and the areas that she was looking to improve were discussed. Employment staff accompanied Lindsay to the interview and assisted her in promoting herself as a competent candidate for the position, while explaining the areas which needed improvement. The university library staff agreed to support Lindsay in enhancing her work skills by providing supervision and by gradually increasing Lindsay's responsibilities over 6 months until she was independent in all required job tasks. Following this interview, Lindsay appeared optimistic about her chances of securing a long-term career in the library field; this was the first time that employment staff saw Lindsay express positive regard for her skills and future.*

*Lindsay's quiet enthusiasm and technical skills fit well with the university library environment. The feedback that she received was all positive, and when her placement ended, the library staff expressed regret that they were unable to hire her on a permanent basis. Lindsay was unemployed for several months, applying for library positions in the community. Now that she had some work experience to put on her resume, Lindsay was receiving interviews, but was not successful in securing a job. Employment staff continued to work with Lindsay to improve her interviewing skills. While her confidence had improved following the work placement, she was still speaking about herself using negative language. A few weeks ago, Lindsay came into Connections with great news – the university library where she did her work experience placement had a job opening and they had contacted her to apply! They remembered her fondly and based on her performance during her 6 month placement, they did not even feel that an interview was necessary. Lindsay was the successful candidate and is now preparing to start a one year contract working for the university library!*

*- Reprinted with the full permission of "Lindsay", a client of Connections - Halifax.*

*“Joe” (not his real name) has been very active doing odd jobs on a volunteer basis within Connections Halifax for many years, but had never expressed interest in employment. He has significant physical and cognitive disabilities as well as his mental health diagnosis. This had led him to believe that he was incapable of holding down a regular job in the community. The Mindful Mango Café was offered a plot in a local community garden, and needed people to work as gardeners to maintain the plants growing for use at the café. Joe was approached by Connections staff to gauge his interest in this type of work. At first he was hesitant, unsure if he would be able to handle the physical demands. Staff went with Joe to the garden for an orientation, attended by all the people involved in the gardening project. This first orientation included an invitation to assist with the building of the garden plots. Joe jumped right in; grabbed a shovel and wheelbarrow and started working as if he’d been gardening for his whole life!*

*This employment opportunity was created specifically by Connections employment staff for people like Joe who would have significant challenges in the competitive workforce. While Joe has a great work ethic and tremendous enthusiasm for the job, his cognitive impairments have become more evident under these conditions. An example of this is that when Joe was given his work schedule, it was explained that if the weather makes gardening impossible, he can make up his hours on a different day. Joe interpreted this to mean that he was expected to be available to garden 24/7. He expressed great concern about his ability to be at the garden so often. Another example is that Joe was shown how to maintain the basil plants by removing the flowers at the top to encourage more leaf growth. Joe understood this to mean he was to remove the flowers from the 3 individual plants that staff had demonstrated with and not the others. The staffs has been working closely with Joe to help him learn new information by providing him with clear written directions that he can refer to when he feels confused. Employment staff has also paired Joe with another gardener so that he has regular communication about his work schedule. The other gardener also helps Joe remember to wear sunscreen and to drink water during his shift, as Joe was having difficulty understanding the increased need for self-care while doing physical labour. These supports have helped Joe to thrive in a position that requires a fair amount of independence, problem solving, and learning; all identified challenges for Joe in relation to his ability to compete within the mainstream job market.*

*Since then, Joe has been tending the garden 3 times per week, and has received many compliments from other gardeners about his work ethic, enthusiasm, and willingness to learn. He regularly speaks up at Connections about his job and how much he enjoys it. His enthusiasm is infectious! Other Connections members who have previously not expressed interest in employment have seen how happy Joe is at his job and have started inquiring about how they too can enter or re-enter the workforce!*

- Reprinted with the full permission of “Joe”, a client of Connections - Halifax.

➤ **Crossroads Cape Breton - Sydney, Nova Scotia (Mental Health and Addictions Services, Cape Breton District Health Authority)**

Crossroads Cape Breton is a recovery program that supports individuals living with severe and recurrent mental illness in maintaining their social, physical and mental health. Their mission is to enable these individuals to lead more socially satisfying and personally productive lives, recognizing that this often involves being employed in the community. Crossroads services and supports address all five LMAPD priority areas.

*My name is “David” (not my real name). I am mental health survivor. I have had multiple diagnoses over the years (bipolar, schizoaffective disorder, etc.) and was diagnosed in the early 1990’s with schizophrenia and obsessive-compulsive disorder. I spent some time on Inpatient Mental Health Units and lived in a group home for just over a year. At the group home, I was told what to do and when to do it; I did not have choices about my own life. My life was spent wandering around, not sure what to do, keeping to myself. My health was poor and my illness went untreated for some time. There were many dark days and months that I experienced the isolation, fear and confusion that mental illness brings to a person. My friends were very few in number and my contacts included a few family members and health care workers. I considered ending my life and actually attempted this on more than one occasion. This is a particularly difficult thing for me to talk about. I became actively involved in Crossroads approximately five years ago. Over the years, I have contributed to the daily life at the club through a range of work (café, menu planning, meal preparation, safety, maintenance, etc.) and I consider Crossroads as a “family away from home”. I facilitate unit meetings, participate in club-wide meetings, present to various groups and educational programs (e.g. community college, nursing students, and police*

officers), provide tours to the public and serve on various committees, like the Safety Crew. I have completed a work preparation program at the Employment Development Centre in Sydney and subsequently worked in Food Services at Cape Breton University. In 2011, much to my amazement, I presented with Crossroads at the Canadian National Psychosocial Rehabilitation Conference. I never imagined I would share my story and my journey with others in this way. In the fall of 2011, I was encouraged by a colleague from Crossroads to apply for a seat on the newly formed local municipal government Diversity Committee and was accepted. There is representation from councillors, teachers, community members, advocates, employment support workers, African Nova Scotians, etc. We meet monthly to discuss ways of celebrating diversity within our community and increasing equitable access to social, employment and educational opportunities. 2012 has been a busy year for me as well. I participated in the first Mental Health Awareness Night with Crossroads and the CB Screaming Eagles of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League. The game was attended by more than 2500 community members. Recently, I was invited to be a Research Assistant with an MBA student researcher from Cape Breton University. We are evaluating the firsthand experience of persons living in a supported housing program called SHIMI<sup>10</sup>. I enjoy being able to converse with peers and learn about their lives. I now live with my brother in our home in Whitney Pier. On any given day, I can come to Crossroads and be welcomed by friends who actually care about me and how my day and life are going. I now look to my days with choices and possibilities. I used to be ashamed of having a mental illness but I am not anymore. It is part of who I am. I am responsible for my own life and am doing things now that I never envisioned for myself. I now live my life with purpose and friendship. Through my membership at Crossroads, I am living life, not just surviving it. I am needed, wanted and valued as part of a community that cares. I believe in hope, no matter how difficult it seems there is always hope for the future, there is always hope for recovery.

- Reprinted with the full permission of the author, "David", a client of Crossroads-Cape Breton.

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<sup>10</sup> SHIMI: Supportive Housing for Individuals with Mental Illness

➤ **New Beginnings Clubhouse - Dartmouth, Nova Scotia (Mental Health Program - Recovery and Integration Services, Capital District Health Authority)**

New Beginnings is a psychosocial rehabilitation program that promotes health and wellness for individuals with lived experience of long term psychiatric illness, and their circle of support. Their target population is adults 19 years of age and older who are diagnosed with severe and persistent mental illness such as schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder and bipolar disorder, and who do not pose a threat to self or others. New Beginnings is a place to be involved in work, social, recreation and community activities. Through work units they improve social interaction, work skills and quality of life. They focus on the benefits of work because it is believed that through work members regain self-worth, purpose and confidence. It is a voluntary program in which members and staff work together to complete the tasks and make the decisions needed to run the club. New Beginnings addresses all five LMPAD priority areas, including: education and training, employment participation, employment opportunities, connecting clients with employers, and building knowledge.

New Beginnings offers:

- Housing Support/ Community Living skills (i.e. finding and maintaining apartment, access to furniture and household items, financial support and budgeting, housing support, tenancy education)
- Employment/Education Support (i.e. Employment Interest Group, employment development, supported & independent employment, volunteer support, education support)
- Social Support & Belonging (i.e. community outings, variety of in house social/recreational activities, music group, community integration with a variety of social/recreation programs)
- Health and Wellness Education/Promotion (i.e. Mindful relaxation, walking Group, recovery Group, smoking cessation group, tai chi, information sessions on healthy eating, managing emotions, balance life style)
- Self-Confidence & Skills building (i.e. Baking group; Cooking Group, Transportation Training, WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) training, all activities in the program such as cleaning, food planning & shopping, gaining clerical skills, computer skills, sorting, filing)

- Peer Support (Peer support is throughout all the services offer at New Beginnings Dartmouth)

New Beginnings has 35 individuals who are maintaining their employment. Staff works directly with ten employers to help people maintain their employment.

*“Since returning to work, I have a lot more structure, more disciplined and I no longer sit around all day.”*

*“It (work) gives me a sense of purpose.”*

*“Financially, I am now far more independent.”*

New Beginnings has 4 individuals who are pursuing education.

*“Being able to use the computers and having the help I need, has helped me succeed in Adult Literacy Program.”<sup>11</sup>*

New Beginnings works with a number of community partners including: the Canadian Mental Health Association; Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission; Body in Balance; Dartmouth Seniors Centre; Lake City Employment Services; Affirmative Industries; Clean Nova Scotia; Dartmouth Community Health Board; NSCC; Alderney Landing Cultural Community Centre; YMCA; Halifax Regional Police; Alderney Gate Library; HRM Recreation; Dartmouth Literacy Network; Main Street Dartmouth Business Improvement District; Feed Nova Scotia; Feeding Others of Dartmouth; Bank of Nova Scotia.

➤ **Working Together - Amherst, Nova Scotia (Mental Health Services, Cumberland County District Health Authority)**

Working Together is an example of a community based psychosocial rehabilitation-informed model of service delivery. Based in Cumberland County, this program is not currently funded through LMAPD. Its target population is mental health consumers experiencing functional impairment as a result of severe and persistent mental illness. Over the past year, 14 different programs have been offered at Working Together, with 798 visits recorded, serving 29 adults.

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<sup>11</sup> All quotes from New Beginnings Clubhouse clients are reprinted with permission

Programs have included Cooking, Computer Skills, Art Therapy and Crafting, Music, Physical Fitness, Coping Skills, Relaxation, Literacy, Volunteering at the local animal shelter, Gardening, Men's Group, and Information Sessions from local services and agencies. Participants are involved in community outreach and anti-stigma activities as well such as the holiday Turkey Dinner, and the annual walk for mental health awareness *Minds in Motion*. Recently, participants of the cooking group made a large batch of vegetarian chili for the Cross Border Challenge with great pleasure. Each of these major events were planned, organized, and executed by the participants of the program. Working Together has identified *Education and Training* and *Building Knowledge* (LMAPD priority areas) amongst its goals - to improve the level of education and work-related skills for persons with SRMI, as well as *Building the Knowledge Base*.

Due to the small number of clients, specific success stories cannot be shared without risking a breach of privacy. However, facilitators of Working Together noticed great progress in all of the participants in many different ways. Growth and development was observed on countless occasions in the kitchen, in casual conversations, and with members of the community. Participants developed interpersonal, vocational, and social skills which improved their overall self-confidence, self-esteem, social supports, and a sense of pride. Symptoms of illnesses appeared less frequently, few participants were hospitalized throughout the year, and many found themselves engaged in activities they never thought possible. For some, Working Together was the reason they have maintained their wellness and enjoyed a quality of life like never before experienced.

Participants of Working Together have expressed their enjoyment and satisfaction with the programming throughout the year. In an effort to measure outcomes and improve upon the progress of the programming, two focus groups comprised of 10 participants were held. The strengths and limitations were discussed along with suggested improvements and groups that should be continued. For instance, participants wanted the Cooking, Animal Shelter, Computer, Exercise, and Art groups to continue indefinitely. All participants of the programming were invited and encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the year.

## **Mental Health Standards**

Employment is a key determinant of health, and mental health programs view developing marketable employability skills in individuals living with SPMI as a priority of Community Supports programs. The Community Mental Health Supports for Adults (CMHSA) core program is based on psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery principles and practices, and two models of best practices that adhere to these principles are Supported Employment (SE) and Individual Placement and Support (IPS)<sup>12</sup>. Mental Health Employability programs embracing these models are promoted in the field, and the revised CMHSA standards which embrace these principles are available on the DHW website:

[http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/mhs/pubs/Standards\\_Mental\\_Health\\_Services\\_2009.pdf](http://www.gov.ns.ca/health/mhs/pubs/Standards_Mental_Health_Services_2009.pdf)

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<sup>12</sup> Bond, Gary R., Supported Employment: Evidence for an Evidence-Based Practice, Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, Volume 27 Number 4, Spring 2004.

## Health and Wellness, Addiction Services

Funding through the Department of Health and Wellness (DHW) flows to the District Health Authorities in Nova Scotia to support a wide range of services and supports in health promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for individuals, families and communities, affected by substance use and/or gambling-related problems. The Canadian Supreme Court has ruled that addiction is a disability under Canadian law. Addiction Services help clients to prepare for, gain, and keep productive roles in the community.

Addiction contributes to barriers related to preparing for, attaining, and retaining employment. The impact of LMAPD funding contributes to the reduction of the disabling effects of substance use and/or gambling-related problems. The target population comprises of individuals sixteen years of age or older, who are harmfully involved with alcohol, gambling and/or other drugs.

Addictions treatment in Nova Scotia is evidenced-based and is grounded in a holistic treatment methodology that considers all areas of an individual's life, which are affected by an addiction. The continuum of care includes intensive programming such as withdrawal management, structured treatment, as well as community based services, others affected services, outreach and prevention. Clinicians from one end of the province to the other regularly provide links with community organizations through the development of treatment plans that help individuals develop strong ties to their community.

The District Health Authorities and Addiction Services staff work with community groups to best meet the needs of those accessing services. Examples of this would include other government resources (such as HRSDC), and community groups (Canadian Mental Health Association, supportive recovery programs etc.). It is important to note Nova Scotia continues to work collaboratively with Atlantic and National partners to contribute to wider systemic initiatives. As example, a toolkit called the "Problematic Substance Use that Impacts the Workplace" was developed by the Atlantic Canada Council of Addiction (ACCA) and supported by Health Canada. Directors of Addiction Services in Nova Scotia are key members of ACCA. The toolkit can be found at: <http://www.gnb.ca/0378/acca/pdf/acca-toolkit-english.pdf>. The purpose of the toolkit provides education about problematic substance use, in addition to a "step-by-step guide on addressing

problematic substance use that impacts the workplace”. The toolkits can be utilized in both large and small workplaces, and provides the “tools” to help employers create “healthy, safe and productive environments” and are encouraged to “view addressing problematic substance use and gambling as a component of workplace health, rather than from a disciplinary perspective”. The toolkit is comprehensive and designed to increase work productivity through employer and employee wellness.

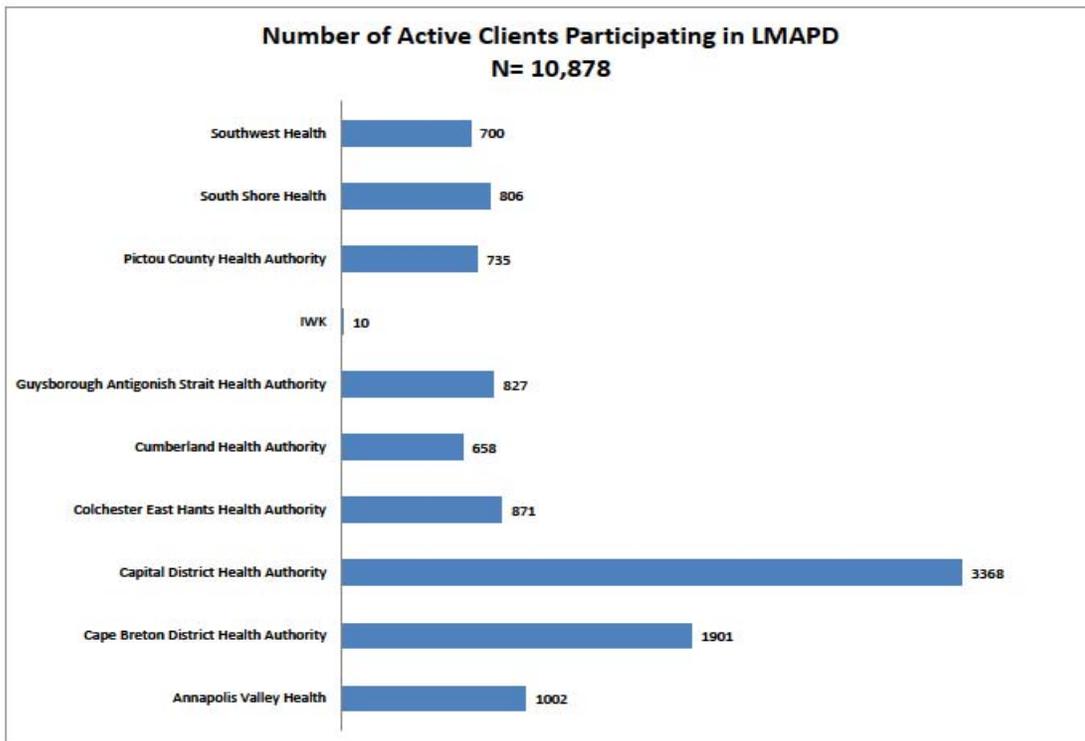
DHA and DHW involvement is present in other national groups, such as the National Action Group on Workforce Development, Canadian Executive Council on Addictions and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse.

Addiction Services recovers funding of \$2.3 million annually to be applied to the costs of providing the continuum of care services that are described above and provide a direct contribution to the recovery from addictions and the securing of gainful employment by Nova Scotians. Information about addiction services programs and locations can be found at <http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/addictions/> or <http://www.addictionservices.ns.ca/>

### **Program Indicators**

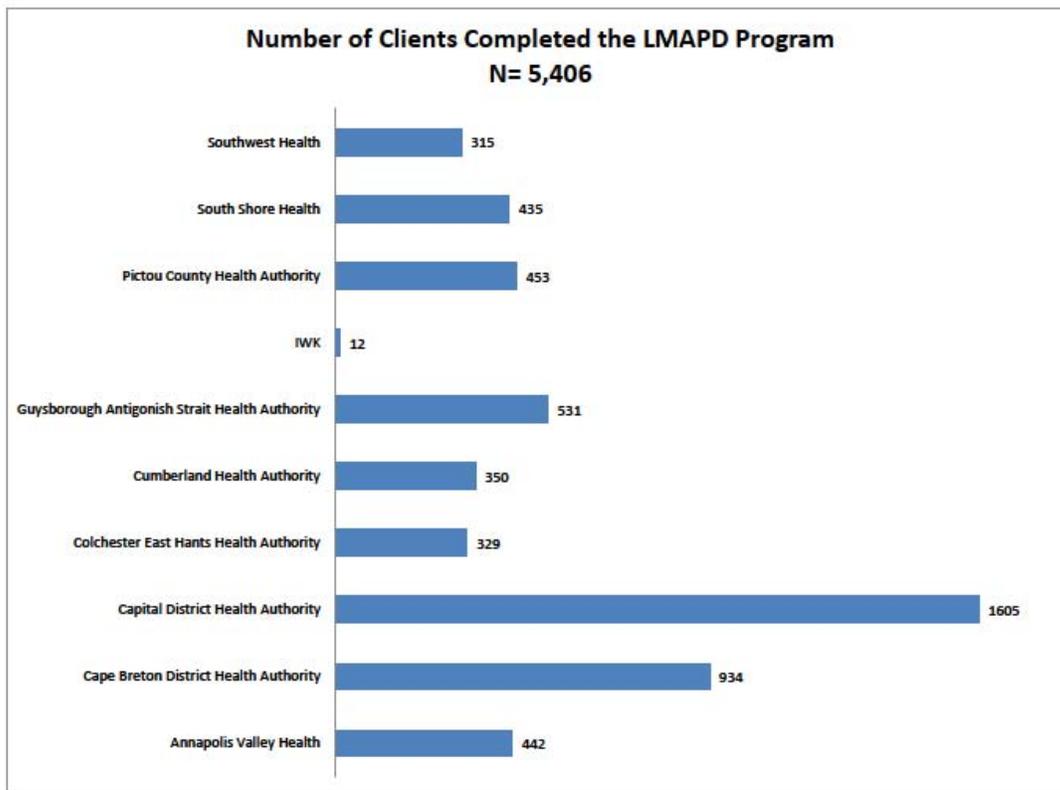
Addiction Services facilitate the improvement of work-related skills (e.g.: personal management skills) through participation in addiction education programs, structured treatment program, and community-based programs. The focus of Addiction Services is on improving client independence and facilitates clients’ connection to employers through ongoing assessment and treatment planning.

Number of people actively participating in LMAPD program:	10878
Number of people successfully completing LMAPD program:	5406
Number of people employed as a result of LMAPD program:	not available
Number of people sustained in employment:	not available



**Figure 1: Number of people actively participating in LMAPD funded programs by Health Authority**<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Source: ASsist (Addiction Services Statistical Information System Technology), Oct, 2011



**Figure 2: Number of people completing LMAPD funded programs by Health Authority<sup>14</sup>**

<sup>14</sup> Source: ASsist (Addiction Services Statistical Information System Technology), Oct, 2011

## Estimated Cost-shared Expenditures<sup>15</sup>

<b>2011 – 12</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>Federal Contribution</b>	<b>Provincial Contribution</b>
<b>Community Services</b>			
<b>Employment Support Services</b>			
Employment related assessment, career counseling staff & program delivery	2,406,563	919,959	1,486,604
Provision of disability related supports	648,378	179,343	469,035
Special Needs Supports	549,628	274,814	274,814
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>3,604,569</b>	<b>1,374,116</b>	<b>2,230,453</b>
<b>Labour &amp; Advanced Education</b>			
<b>Post-Secondary Disability Services</b>			
Program Administration	466,000	233,000	233,000
Grants to Students	1,251,000	625,500	625,500
Educational Attendant Care	196,000	98,000	98,000
Sign Language Interpreter Services	694,000	347,000	347,000
University Disability Service Delivery	1,054,000	527,000	527,000
NSCC Disability Service Delivery	1,170,000	585,000	585,000
In Kind Contributions/Special Projects	635,230	317,615	317,615
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>5,466,230</b>	<b>2,733,115</b>	<b>2,733,115</b>
<b>Health</b>			
<b>Mental Health</b>			
Clubhouse Programs	2,722,790	1,283,765	1,439,025
Employment Skill & Development Support	183,000	75,000	108,000
<b>Addiction Services</b>			
Workplace Outreach	294,500	50,000	244,500
Addiction Services	14,421,685	2,428,200	11,993,485
Administrative Services	2,542,644	349,150	2,193,494
<b>Sub-total:</b>	<b>20,164,619</b>	<b>4,186,115</b>	<b>15,978,504</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29,235,418</b>	<b>8,293,346</b>	<b>20,942,072</b>

<sup>15</sup> These expenditure figures have not been audited and are estimates.

## Societal Indicators

Each year the Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreement for Persons with Disabilities reports have included societal indicators using data from the Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), when available, and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID). Human Resources Skills Development provides the societal indicators data for the annual reports each September<sup>16</sup>. This report includes SLID data from 1999 thru 2010 for most of the societal indicators. The SLID is a longitudinal survey, interviewing the same panel of respondents each year over a period of six years. It tracks overlapping panels of individual respondents and is conducted annually. It is a rich source of information about income, employment, education and other characteristics of the adult Canadian population.

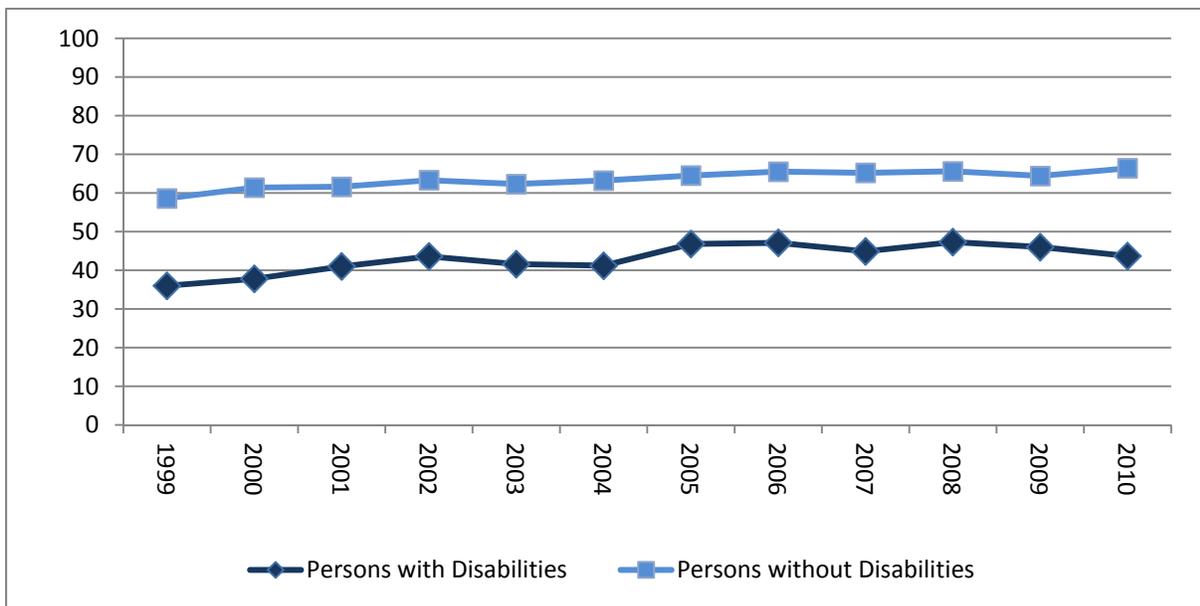
Since the first report in 2004 there have been improvements on some of the societal indicators for persons with disabilities. There has been a steady increase in the educational achievements of working aged adults since 1999. There has been an increase in employment and a decrease in the proportions of persons with disabilities who do not participate in the labour force. As the economy grew between 2001 and 2009, the numbers of persons with disabilities who were able to participate in the labour force increased. Greater participation in the labour force was accompanied by increases in average annual incomes and greater numbers of persons with disabilities with earned income. The constant dollar value of average incomes for persons with disabilities has fluctuated year to year as it increased between 2001 and 2009. Over the same period, the constant dollar value of average incomes for persons who do not have a disability increased steadily from one year to the next. These two trends resulted in a decline in the average earnings (constant dollars) of persons with disabilities expressed as a percentage of the average earnings (constant dollars) of persons who do not have a disability. In 2010 the average earnings of persons with disabilities were equivalent to 85 percent of the average earnings of persons without a disability –

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<sup>16</sup> 2009 was an exception. The data was delayed and subsequently reported in an updated release February 2010

a 2 percent decrease from 2001. The gap has fluctuated from a high of 95 percent in 2002 and 2005 to a low of 73 percent in 2009, indicating the gap between the real value of earnings of persons with and without a disability has widened and shown signs of some recovery in 2010.

## Labour Force Participation

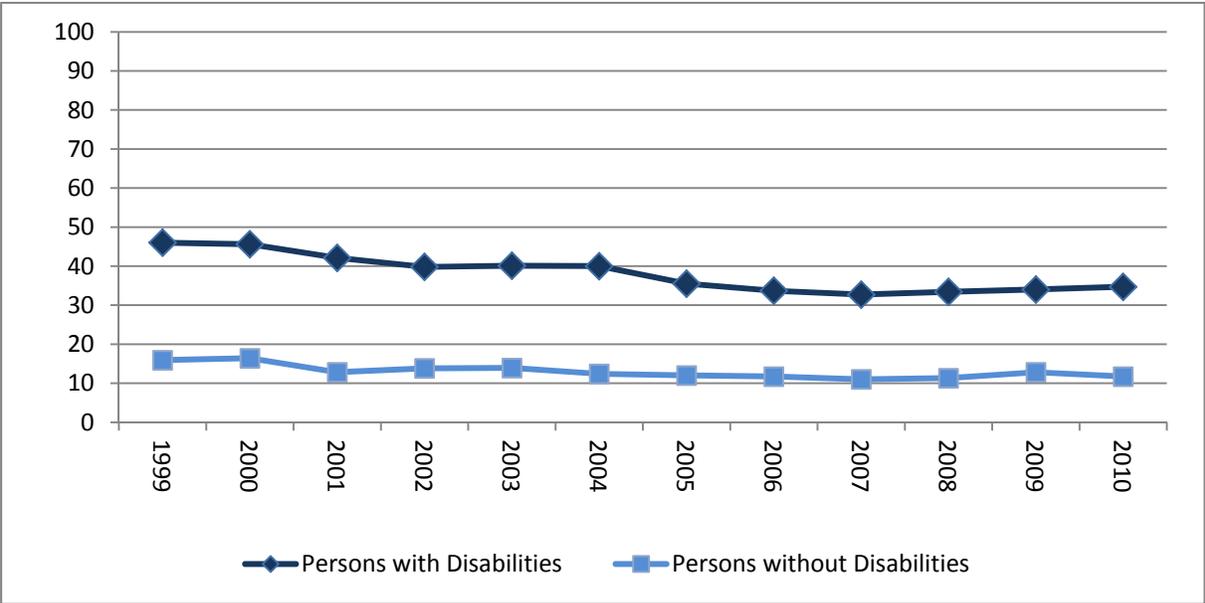


**Chart 1: Percentage of Nova Scotians (16-64) who were employed all year**

The percentage of working aged adult (16-64) Nova Scotians who were employed for an entire year is depicted in Chart 1. Between 1999 and 2010 the percentage of full-year employed disabled persons increased substantially by 10 percent. In 2010 the percentage of disabled persons employed for the full year dropped slightly to 44 percent from 46 percent in 2009. During the same period the proportions of persons who do not have a disability and who were employed for the full year increased from 59 percent in 1999 to 66 percent in 2010. The employment gap between persons who have and persons who do not have a disability fluctuated and narrowed between 1999 and 2010, but returned to essentially the same gap (23 percent in 1999 and 2010) as 1999 by 2010.

Chart 2 looks at labour market attachment from the opposite perspective. It shows the percentage of working aged Nova Scotians who were not employed for

the full year or who were not in the labour market. Between 1999 and 2010 the percentages of persons who were unemployed or not in the labour force for the full year decreased. The proportions of disabled persons not working full year declined from 46 percent in 1999 to 35 percent in 2010, while the proportions of people who do not have a disability and who were not employed all year decreased from 16 percent to 12 percent over the same period. Persons without a disability are more likely than persons who have a disability to be employed for the full year. While the proportions of persons with disabilities who were employed for the full year improved between 1999 and 2010, it still remained that significantly more persons with disabilities experienced not being employed for a full year than did persons who did not have a disability.

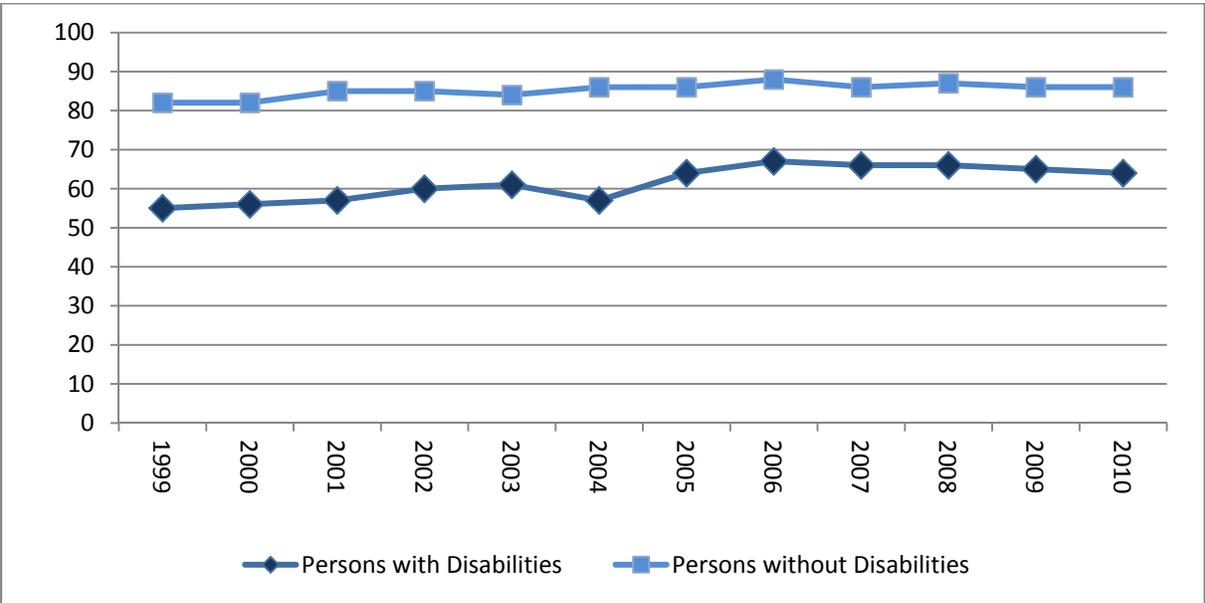


**Chart 2: Percentage of Nova Scotians (16-64) who were not employed all year or who were not in the labour force**

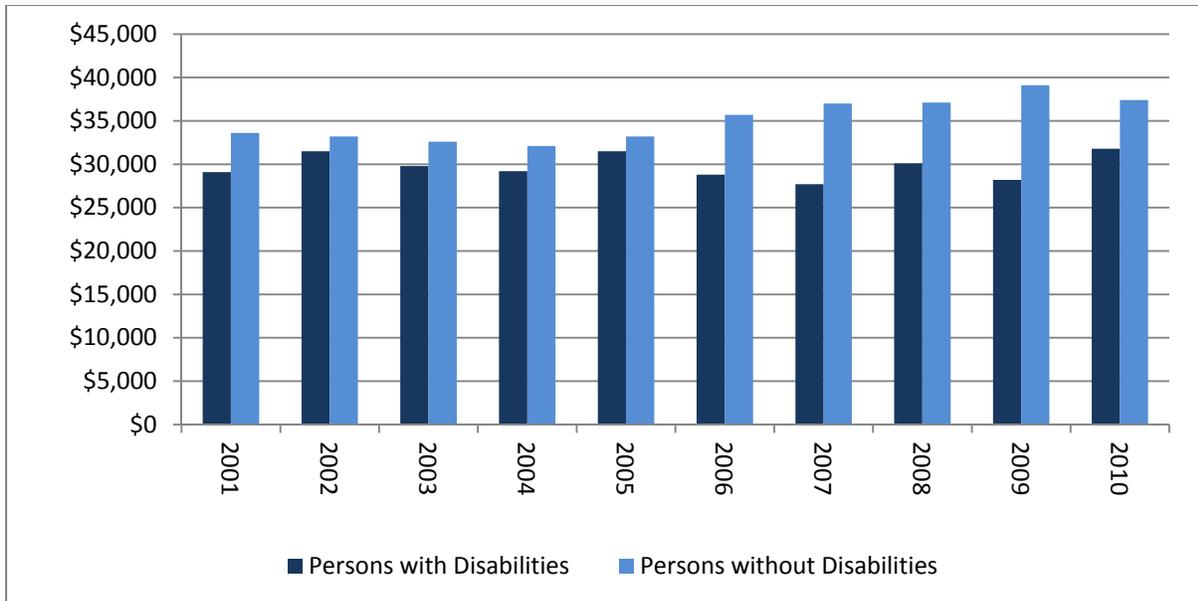
### Income

Along with increased participation in the labour market, Nova Scotians experienced increases in the proportions of working aged adults with earned income. Chart 3 shows the percentages of persons who have a disability and the percentages of persons who do not have a disability who have earned income. This table captures persons who have employment for only a part of the year as well as those who were employed for the full year. Between 1999 and 2010 the percentage of persons with disabilities who had earned income increased from 55 percent to 64 percent. In 2006, the highest incidence of earned income among

persons with disabilities occurred (67 percent). The proportions of persons who do not have a disability and who have earned income remained significantly higher than earned income among persons who have a disability. There has been a greater increase in the percentage of persons with a disability earning income – a 9 percent increase in the numbers of persons with a disability earning income compared to a 4 percent increase among the numbers of persons without a disability earning income. The gap in the proportions of adults with earned income persisted, fluctuated from one year to the next but also decreased between 1999 (27 percent) and 2010 (22 percent). The incidence of employment incidence among persons with disabilities has increased since 1999.



**Chart 3: Percentage of Nova Scotians (16-64) who had earned income**



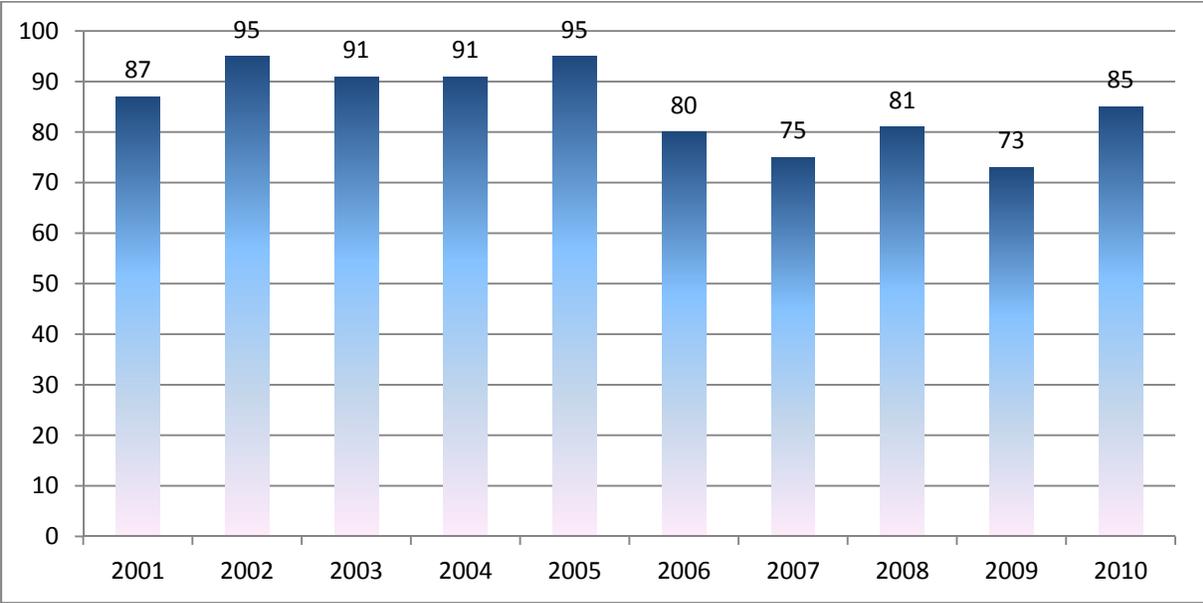
**Chart 4: Average earned incomes among Nova Scotians (16-64) – constant dollars**

Increases in average annual incomes for persons who have a disability and persons who do not have a disability are shown in Chart 4. Along with the numbers of persons warning an income, the average earned incomes increased between 1999 and 2010 for person with and without a disability. The average earned income in constant dollars<sup>17</sup> among persons who have a disability increased from \$29,100 in 2001 to \$31,800 in 2010. The average earned income among persons who do not have a disability increased from \$33,600 in 1999 to \$37,400 in 2010. In 2009 the average earned incomes of persons with a disability dropped to \$28,200 – below the average in 2001 then subsequently recovered in 2010. In 2009 the average earned income of persons who did not have a disability was \$39,100 – the impact of the 2009 recession on the average earned incomes of persons who do not have disability was delayed to 2010 when their average earned incomes dropped but remained above every year prior to 2009. The average earned income among persons who do not have a disability increased by \$3,800 (11 percent) between 2010 and 2001. The average earned income among persons who do have a disability increased<sup>17</sup> by \$2,700 or 14 percent over the same period. The 2009 recession appears to have impacted person with disabilities

<sup>17</sup> The term ‘constant dollars’ refers to a metric for valuing the price of something over time, without that metric changing due to inflation or deflation. The term specifically refers to dollars whose present value is linked to a specific year. Constant dollars are used to compare the ‘real’ value of an income or price over time. The relative value of the constant dollar in any given year remains the same no matter what year is used as the baseline for the value of money over time as long as the same reference year is used for the comparison of all years in a series. In this series 2010 is the reference year.

more severely than persons without a disability. There is insufficient information to indicate the reasons for this difference. Given the nature of many disabilities it could be the result of persons with disabilities working fewer hours in order to accommodate a disability.

Chart 5 shows the average earnings in constant dollars of persons who have a disability as a percentage of the average earnings in constant dollars of persons who do not have a disability. It shows the combined impact of changes in average earnings of persons with a disability over time in relation to changes in the average earnings of persons who do not have a disability. Although more persons with a disability experienced more employment over the period and have seen an increase in the value of earned incomes, these improvements have declined relative to the increases in employment and average earned incomes of persons who do not have a disability.

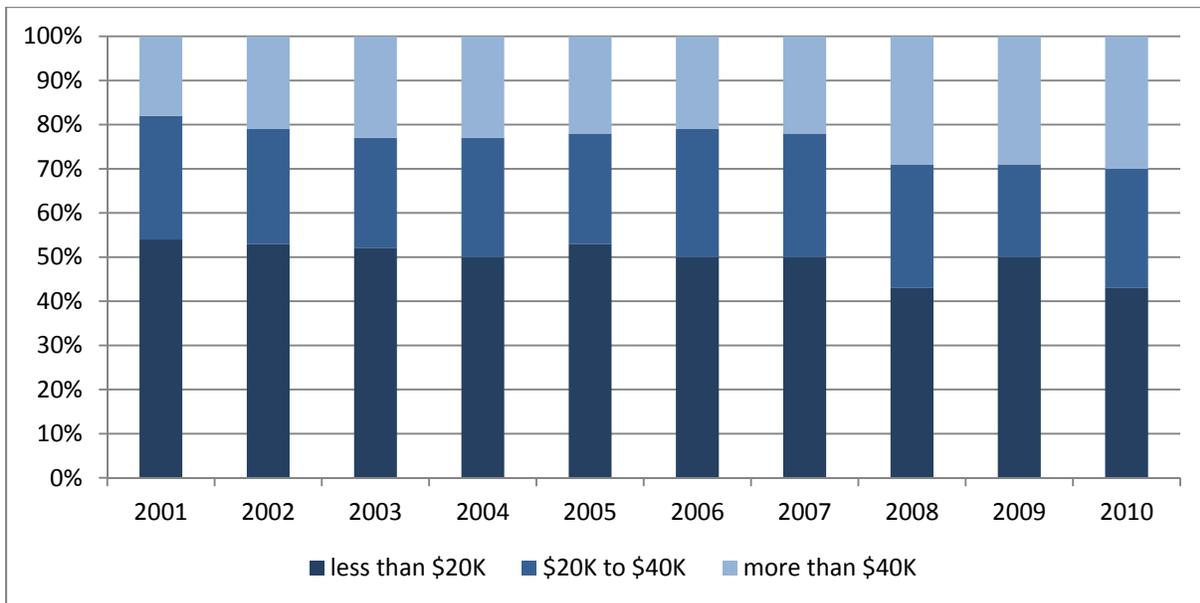


**Chart 5: Average earning of persons with a disability as a percentage of average earnings of persons who do not have a disability in Nova Scotia – constant dollars**

Relative to persons without a disability, persons who do have a disability fared better in terms of earned income between 2001 and 2005 than they did between 2006 and 2010. Although they recovered partially in 2010, incomes among persons with a disability have not reached comparable levels of 2001 thru 2005. The increased employment experienced among persons with a disability did not result in an increase in average earnings in constant dollars compared to persons

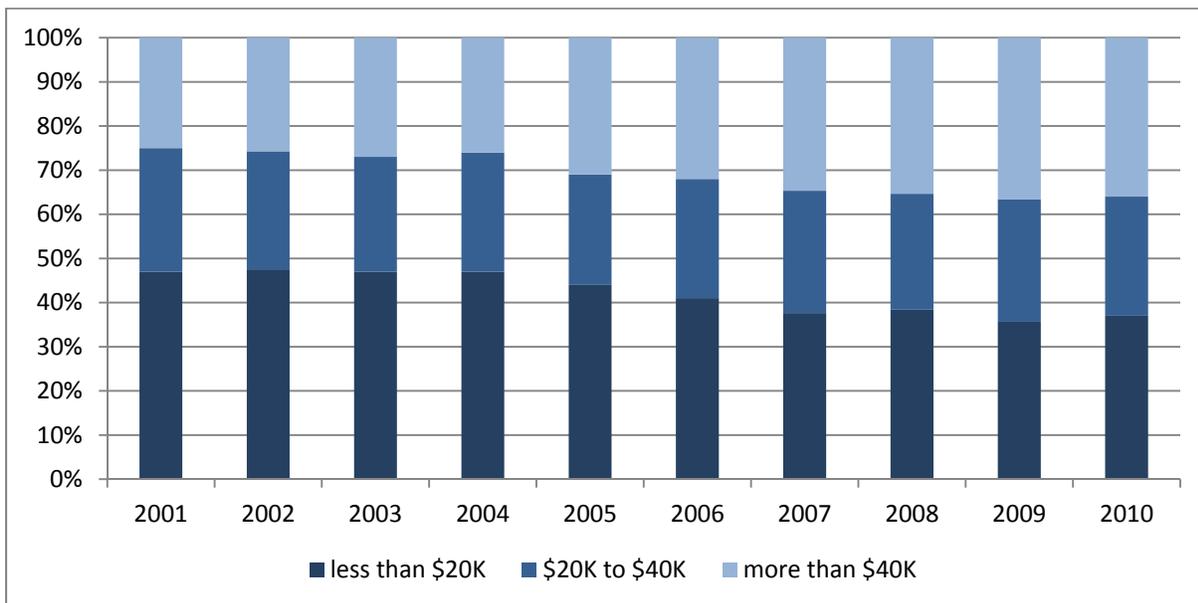
without a disability. A possible explanation could be that new earners enter the labour force at lower rates of pay than experienced earners thus depressing the average earnings for the group. If more earners who have a disability work fewer hours than do earners who do not have a disability, this would also negatively impact average earnings.

Charts 6 depicts the income distribution of working aged Nova Scotians who have a disability and Chart 7 show the income distribution for the Nova Scotians who do not have a disability. More persons with disabilities have lower incomes than do persons who do not have a disability. Both groups of earners are doing better in terms of more people earning higher incomes in 2010 than in 2001. Among earners without a disability (Chart 7) and among those with a disability (Chart 6) there is a smaller proportion in the lowest income category, approximately the same proportions of earners in the middle category and higher proportions of earners earning more than forty thousand a year.



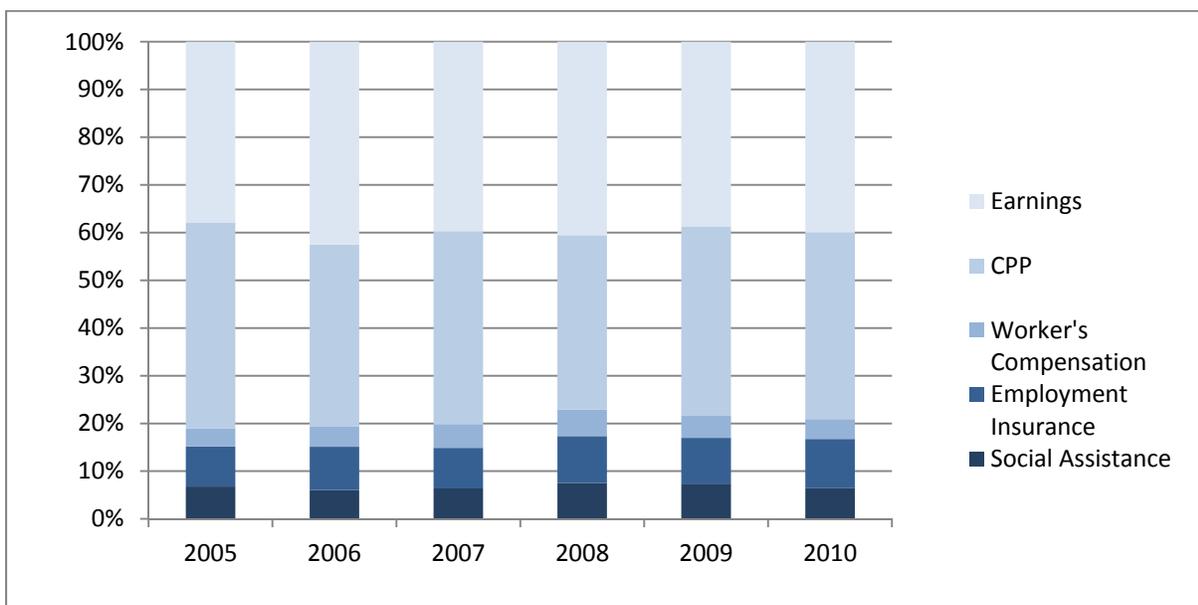
**Chart 6: Income distribution among Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**

Among persons living with a disability, the proportions earning less than twenty thousand dollars a year tend to fluctuate more from one year to the next while more persons who do not have a disability have tended to make steady incremental shifts upward in their incomes years over year. This seems to indicate that persons with disabilities' employment experience are more precarious than their non-disabled colleagues.



**Chart 7: Income distribution among Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability**

A greater proportion of persons without disabilities are earning higher incomes than persons who have a disability, and greater proportions of persons with a disability earn less than persons who do not have a disability. These trends combine to depress the earned incomes of persons with disabilities compared to those persons who do not have a disability.

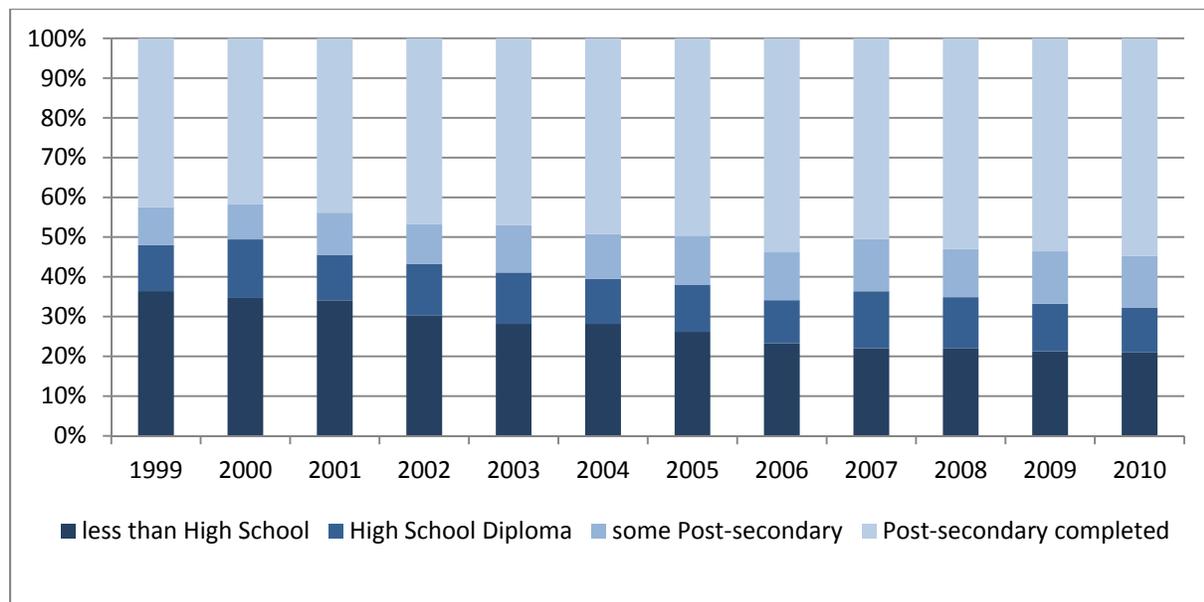


**Chart 8: Sources of income among Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**

Chart 8 shows the income sources reported by persons who have a disability. The data available is limited to 2005 thru 2010. There is very little variation between years. Respondents report sources the sources of their income and any one respondent may have more than one source of income. The most common sources of income for persons living with a disability are earnings from employment and Canada Pension Plan. Almost 9000 fewer persons with a disability reported income from earnings in 2009 than in either 2008 or 2010.

## Educational Achievement

Charts 9 and 10 depict the educational achievements of working aged (16-64) Nova Scotians who have and who do not have a disability. For both groups, an increasing proportion of persons have completed higher levels of education since 1999. The proportions of persons who have a disability and have completed post-secondary education have increased and the proportions with only high school or less have declined, leading to a smaller gap in post-secondary education between



**Chart 9: Educational achievement among Nova Scotians (16-64) who have a disability**

the two groups. Approximately the same proportion (11-13 percent) of both groups achieved a high school diploma in 2009. A larger proportion of persons who do not have a disability have some or have completed post-secondary education (71 percent) than persons who do have a disability (66 percent) in 2010. Since post-secondary education usually results in more stable employment and higher incomes, the comparative educational achievements could contribute

to comparatively lower levels of earned incomes for persons with disabilities as a group.

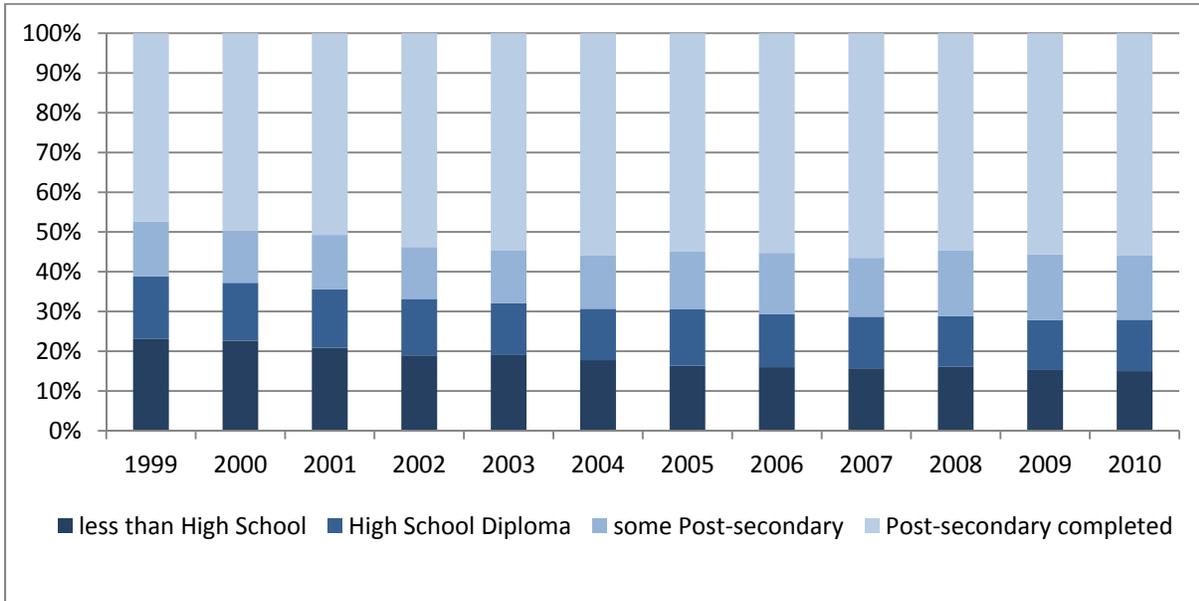


Chart 10: Educational achievement among Nova Scotians (16-64) who do not have a disability

## Looking Ahead

Since 2004 Canada and Nova Scotia have actively collaborated to evaluate labour market programs for persons with disabilities funded under this agreement. A logic framework and extensive literature review were prepared in 2006. Effort was dedicated to developing a feasible and cost-effective evaluation methodology. An evaluability assessment of LMAPD funded programs and services delivered by the Departments of Community Service and Labour and Advanced Education was conducted in 2010. In 2011 Nova Scotia developed an evaluation plan through 2016 that is intended to be implemented incrementally as resources allow.

An evaluability assessment of Department of Health and Wellness Mental Health programs has been conducted and a report is anticipated by the end of 2012. The Evaluability Assessment Project Team has built on previous LMAPD evaluation efforts to develop a logic model for the evaluation of DHW programs overall and a draft evaluation framework for an evaluation of the mental health employability programs in Nova Scotia. Based on the potential data requirements of this framework, a data assessment of the five mental health employability programs in Nova Scotia was undertaken in June of 2012. There was little overlap in the types of data collected for administrative purposes by the five programs over and above that provided in this annual report. Local priorities in terms of evaluation also varied considerably. The Evaluability Assessment Project Team is currently reviewing these results and considering the merits of a case study approach.

It is anticipated that the evaluation of LMAPD impacts resulting from DHW Addictions Services programs and services will occur in the form of an outcome monitoring system (OMS). The OMS would be designed for applicability across the province and will obtain targeted information that directly relates to employment status before accessing treatment and the employment status six months post treatment completion. This evaluation process will be evidence-based and will clearly demonstrate the impact of addictions treatment, on all aspects of client employability. This will be identified through the evaluation of program relevance, program success and exploring what impacts and effects, intended and unintended, have resulted in carrying out the program.

Community Services has recently developed a methodology for evaluating the impact of the provision of disability related supports to individuals experiencing an employment crisis. A wide range of disability related supports are provided each year to help people maintain their employment. Recipients will be surveyed and the results will be included in the next C-NS LMAPD annual report.

Labour and Advanced Education has recently developed evaluation frameworks for portions of two its programs: Disability Services and Provincial Access Grant. The final year of the 5 year graduate follow-up longitudinal study results are included in this annual report. A sixth cohort will be surveyed as per the existing graduate follow-up study to be included in the 2013 C-NS LMAPD annual report. A new 5 year study will be developed in collaboration with our partners this year to be implemented for the following year.

The Canada-Nova Scotia Labour Market Agreements for Persons with Disabilities provides an opportunity to maintain and strengthen Nova Scotia's labour market programs and services for persons with disabilities. The current agreement is scheduled to end March 31, 2013. The government of Nova Scotia welcomes the opportunity to work with the Government of Canada to maintain and develop effective ways to provide meaningful supports for persons with disabilities in order that they may partake fully in all aspects of society. Nova Scotia remains hopeful the Government of Canada will continue to demonstrate its commitment to the employment of Canadians with disabilities by supporting provincial programs that enhance, promote and maintain the employment of Canadians with disabilities.