

CONCLUSION

The Survey of Registered Apprentices was undertaken to provide greater insight into apprenticeship in Newfoundland and Labrador, and specifically the high rate of attrition and low female participation in the program. While there are large numbers of new apprentices registered each year, only a small percentage of these individuals actually continue on in their program, fulfil all the requirements within the recommended time frame and receive certification. It is recognized that some leave apprenticeship without completing the program and still realize acceptable labour market outcomes. Still, the low numbers completing their apprenticeship is perplexing given the higher wages and stronger labour market attachment commanded by persons working in the trades as certified journeypersons.

Apprenticeship programs, which normally span a four to five year period, consist of approximately 25% classroom instruction and 75% on-the-job training. As a first requirement, entry-level courses must be completed over a 2 or 3 semester period. The findings of the survey would indicate that the completion rate for entry-level training is high; the vast majority of apprentices surveyed (86%) had completed their entry-level courses. The bulk of those that don't complete, leave in the final semester with the majority leaving for employment. While most apprentices (85%) also indicated that they were satisfied with their entry-level instruction, lecture-based instruction was favoured over the self-paced instruction currently offered at public colleges.

Once apprentices have completed their entry-level instruction, they are required to complete on-the-job training or log hours in their respective trade, interspersed with advanced-level training. In order to identify those apprentices who would have had time since completing their entry-level training to begin logging hours, the responses of only those who completed their entry-level training prior to June 2002 were considered (n=2851). Of this group, 79% (n=2255) indicated that they had logged some hours.

At the time of survey just 28% (n=788) of those that had logged hours were employed as apprentices in their trade and currently logging hours. Further, of these apprentices, only 27% (n=211) had taken all or some of their advanced-level training. There is the possibility, however, that some other apprentices may not yet have logged adequate hours to begin advanced-level courses. Given that eligibility to write the journeyperson exam requires logging a specific number of hours and completion of the program's advanced level courses, it would appear that many apprentices are stalled between these two elements.

Apprentices employed in their trade, that is logging hours, worked on average 45 hours/week and earned, on average \$13.69 per hour. Those affiliated with a union realized higher wages than their non-unionized counterparts. Additionally, those in employment directly or indirectly related to their trade but not as apprentices earned the highest average hourly wages at \$16.28 and \$16.11, respectively. While 69% indicated logging all their on-the-job hours in Newfoundland and Labrador, another 31% indicated that they had logged some or all of their hours outside the Province, due largely to an inability to find apprenticeable jobs locally. It is apparent that these different experiences influence whether individuals continue their apprenticeship.

While 81% of apprentices who had logged some or all of their hours indicated an intent to write their journeyperson examination sometime in the future, the intent of many is questionable given that 73% had

not pursued further training. This may be, however, a reflection of the struggle of some to find the trade-related employment necessary to progress.

Not unlike their male counterparts, for women, progression through apprenticeship appears to stall as they attempt to log hours, and particularly for those apprenticing in non-traditional trades. The findings of the survey would indicate that, while female apprentices are slightly more successful than their male counterparts in completing entry-level training, they have considerably less success in logging hours. Difficulty in finding trade-related employment and reduced mobility due to family responsibilities are contributive. A higher percentage of female apprentices also reported part-time employment making it more difficult to log the required amount of hours.

Although similar percentages of male and female apprentices reported pursuing further training, a higher percentage of female apprentices stated their studies were totally unrelated to their trade. Almost half of these women stated they wanted to explore other career opportunities, indicative of a lack of satisfaction with the choice of trade.

This dissatisfaction is not surprising given the wage gap experienced by female apprentices responding to the survey. Fewer hours worked and lower wages than males resulted in the average female apprentice earning about \$448 per week for full-time employment while the average male apprentice earned about \$680 per week.

While there was a wage disparity between males and females, incidences of discrimination or harassment did not largely impact female participation in apprenticeship. Only a proportionally small percentage of female apprentices indicated being the target of discrimination or harassment and, although it was evident for those working in non-traditional trades, the numbers were still relatively low. Stereotyping was problematic for a number of female apprentices in industrial, non-traditional trades with 21% indicating that it was making their apprenticeship more difficult.

Another impact on female completion of apprenticeship programs would appear to be connected to funding source. Female apprentices, the largest percentage of which come from the Hairstylist trade, reported less use of HRSD funding and more use of government student loans than males in pursuit of their training. Whether or not this is a reflection of females' poorer attachment to the labour market prior to registration and thus not eligible for HRSD funding, this high usage of government student loans will likely result in higher debt levels for female apprentices.

Overall, the indicators presented in this report show slightly better results for apprentices in receipt of external, non-repayable funding compared to those funding their apprenticeship through savings, loans and other repayable sources of financing. The majority of those externally funded had higher entry-level completion rates and a greater ability to log hours in their trade as well as higher wages in trade-related employment. However, the more favourable results may have more to do with who was funded through these sources rather than the effect of the funding itself. HRSD-funded apprentices were generally older and had greater attachment to the labour force prior to registration as apprentices. This was also the case for apprentices funded by an employer or union, Native Band Council or Association as well as those on Worker Compensation and Income Support. Additionally, apprentices funded by HRSD or an employer or union were more likely to be already working in the trade prior to registration.

While success in apprenticeship appears to be more related to other factors such as experience and labour force attachment rather than source of funding, having external funding allows less financial pressure on the apprentice during and after their apprenticeship when repayment becomes a reality.

Given the current and anticipated demand for tradespeople, it is important that the apprenticeship system be accommodating to all those that chose to work in the skilled trades. *The Apprenticeship Experience: 2003 Survey of Registered Apprentices of Newfoundland and Labrador* is the first report of its kind in this Province and, while it has answered many questions on apprenticeship, it has also identified many more issues which will need to be further explored to gain a greater understanding of apprentices' progression through the apprenticeship system. In particular, further examination of on-the-job training experiences could provide clarity on issues surrounding logging hours and more specifics on advanced-level training could reveal why so few apprentices in this study accessed further training.

In addition, a survey of both certified journeypersons and cancelled apprentices would help to complete the picture of the Province's apprenticeship system by detailing the experiences of those who have completed the program as well as those who did not. Coupled with the difficulties each group faced, it would also provide greater insight into the actual duration of apprenticeship. Additionally, certified journeypersons who have experience in mentoring apprentices could provide their views on the various facets of apprenticeship.