

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Apprenticeship is an agreement between a person who wants to learn a skill, an apprentice, and an employer who needs a skilled worker. Newfoundland and Labrador's apprenticeship system combines on-the-job experience with both technical and theory-based training. Upon completion of their apprenticeship program, which generally spans a four to five year period, apprentices can write a journeyperson exam. If successful, they are certified as journeypersons in their respective trade.

As of the Fall of 2002, 8741 apprentices were registered with the Department of Education. To better understand the dynamics of the apprenticeship system in Newfoundland and Labrador and to determine whether registered apprentices were still active in their respective programs, a survey of the apprenticeship population was conducted in the Winter and Spring of 2003. The survey, the first of its kind to be carried out in the Province, successfully contacted 4401 apprentices or just over 50% of the survey pool.

Apprentices were asked a series of questions relating to their present status as well as their future intentions with respect to apprenticeship. A series of questions were also asked to determine the impact of funding sources on successful completion of the program as well as barriers to greater female participation in apprenticeship.

Key Findings

- The vast majority of registered apprentices are male. Of the 8741 apprentices registered in the Province in 2002, 7281 (83%) were male and 1460 (17%) were female. On average, apprentices were just over 30 years of age. This did not differ significantly between female and male apprentices, whose average age was 29.3 and 30.6 years, respectively. Over 53% of males were married compared to 49% of women and 46% of females had dependent children compared to 37% of males.
- For the majority of apprentices (65%), the highest level of education attained prior to registration was a high school diploma or equivalent, 10% reported some high school while 14% indicated they held a college diploma.
- Immediately prior to apprenticeship registration, the vast majority of apprentices were in the labour force with approximately 86% reporting they were either employed (53%) or unemployed (33%). Most of the remaining apprentices (12%) were previously in high school or post-secondary studies. The majority of those employed were not working in an apprenticeable trade (67%), 26% were working in the trade in which they enrolled for training, and the remaining 7% of apprentices had jobs in a trade other than the one in which they were enrolled for training.
- While high school students are more likely to rely on family and friends as the primary source of career information, apprentices, whose average age is 30.4 years, rely more heavily on their college or training institution for career information. Only a small percentage of apprentices

reported that high school teachers (9%) or guidance counselors (10%) had been a source of information on apprenticeship programs.

- More than 90% of apprentices reported they were at least somewhat knowledgeable about job opportunities in their trade prior to registration, as well that apprenticeship involved both in-class and on-the-job training. Interest in the trade and employment opportunities were the overwhelming reasons given by apprentices for deciding to register.
- The majority (86%) of apprentices completed their entry-level courses with over half completing their entry-level instruction at the College of the North Atlantic. Those who did not complete did not necessarily drop out; some were simply still in the process of completing their courses while others had not yet started their courses. Apprentices who dropped their entry-level courses generally did so later in the entry-level program. Courses were dropped for a variety of reasons, however starting a job was the most commonly reported.
- The majority of apprentices (57%) reported the method of instruction they received was lecture-based, compared to 34% of apprentices who reported the self-paced method. Again, this varied considerably by trade. Most apprentices (85%) were satisfied with their entry-level instruction, with considerable variation among trades. When examining satisfaction by public and private institutions, apprentices of private training institutions reported a higher rate of satisfaction than did apprentices at public institutions. For apprentices who attended private colleges, their rates of satisfaction with entry-level instruction showed little difference between instructional methods. However, for apprentices of public colleges, a higher percentage receiving lecture-based instruction reported satisfaction than did those receiving self-paced instruction.
- Of apprentices who had completed their entry-level courses and had adequate time to begin logging hours, 79% indicated they had logged on-the-job hours. This varied significantly by trade. The vast majority (94%) of apprentices were satisfied with the skills they were exposed to on their job site. Similarly, 95% of apprentices were satisfied with their overall on-the-job experience.
- The logging of hours is linked to difficulty finding trade-related employment. Almost 70% of apprentices who logged hours did so only in Newfoundland and Labrador, 13% logged all their hours outside the province while 18% logged hours both in and out of the province.
- Apprentices from the Steamfitter/Pipefitter, Mobile Crane Operator, Heavy Equipment Operator, Industrial Mechanic (Millwright), Welder, and Heavy Duty Equipment Technician trades have the highest proportion of apprentices with difficulty finding employment and willing to move outside the Province. Representing 41% of all apprentices who responded to the survey, this group is large enough to warrant concern with their employment difficulties. Of this group, 51% reported difficulty finding trade-related employment, compared with only 26% of all other trades. Of those reporting difficulty, 78% were willing to move outside the Province, compared to only 62% of all other trades. Only 57% of those who reported difficulty finding trade-related employment and willingness to move outside the province actually logged any on-the-job hours, compared to 71% from all other trades. Furthermore, close to half (49%) logged on-the-job hours outside the province compared to only one-third (33%) of apprentices in all other trades. Taken

together, these six trades have had considerable difficulty finding trade-related employment throughout their apprenticeship.

- Just over one-quarter (26%) of apprentices surveyed had pursued further education or training beyond entry-level. The likelihood of further training increased with the amount of time passed. Waitlists affected less than 6% of apprentices who did not pursue further training.
- Most apprentices reported they pursued further training out of a personal interest (60%). However, when personal interest is factored out, similar numbers of apprentices indicated their reasons for pursuing further training was to get a job (40%) or get a different job (44%), while a higher percentage indicated it was required for their apprenticeship or job (58%). For those who took trade-related further training, 75% indicated it was a requirement and 39% indicated it was to get a job.
- Eighty percent (80%) of apprentices reported they had accessed the Internet, and the majority indicated that they were willing to take theory-based courses online.
- Of the apprentices surveyed (n=4401), 81% reported they intend to write the journeyperson examination, however, of this group only 20% had pursued further trade-related training and completion of advanced-level courses is a prerequisite of journeyperson certification.
- Only 8% of apprentices who logged on-the-job hours had completed their entry-level courses more than 5 years ago. Of this group, 78% still intend to write the journeyperson examination. For these apprentices, not having logged enough hours (29%) and not having completed all the necessary courses (23%) were the most commonly reported reasons for the delay in writing their examinations. For those who reported they had not yet logged enough hours, they most often cited the inability to find a job as the reason (40%).
- At the time of survey, 54% of apprentices reported they were employed, and the vast majority were employed on a full-time basis despite the fact the survey took place during a period when trades activities are normally slower.
- While varying by trade, over half (53%) of full-time employed apprentices were employed as apprentices in their trade at the time of survey while 26% were in jobs not at all related to their trade, mostly due to better job opportunities. Apprentices employed in their trade worked the fewest number of hours per week at 45.1. Those employed in jobs either directly or indirectly related to their trade but not as apprentices worked on average 46.4 and 48.9 hours per week respectively. Those in employment not at all related to their trade worked on average 45.6 hours per week. These employment experiences undoubtedly contribute to apprentices not continuing towards certification in their trade. However, for a small number of trades the wages as apprentices in the trade were higher than for any other type of employment. For these trades, despite their difficulty in finding trade-related employment, these higher wages are likely why they chose to remain in their trade.

- Apprentices employed full-time in their trade were paid on average \$13.69 per hour. Those in employment directly or indirectly related to training but not as apprentices earned the highest average hourly wages at \$16.28 and \$16.11 respectively, while those in employment not at all related to the trade earned the lowest average hourly wage at \$12.43.
- Just over half (54%) of unemployed apprentices were seeking employment as apprentices in their trade, 6% were seeking employment in the trade but not as apprentices, 24% were seeking any type of employment at all, while 14% indicated they were not seeking employment. For all trades, temporary lay-off was the most commonly reported reason for not seeking employment, with the notable exception of Hairstylists where 52% were not seeking employment due to family responsibilities.
- Although apprentices used many different sources to finance their training program, the most commonly reported source was Human Resources and Skills Development (HRSD) (59%). Government student loans, rather than HRSD support, was reported as the main source of funding by four trades: Hairstylist (59%), Motor Vehicle Body Repairers (Metal & Paint) (54%), Automotive Service Technicians (44%) and Powerline Technicians (Operating) (38%).
- When the Hairstylist trade is factored out, there are only minor differences in where males and females sourced their funding for trades training.
- Where apprentices sourced their funding is dependant on their labour market status prior to registration. Of those previously employed, 57% indicated they had accessed HRSD funding for their apprenticeship training and 23% indicated they had used government student loans. It is unknown whether this latter group were EI eligible and thus entitled to HRSD funding or whether they were aware of that option.
- Of those employed prior to registration and accessing HRSD support, the majority (63%) were working in non-trade jobs. Another 29% were working in the trade in which they were apprenticing and 8% were working in another trade.
- Regardless of source of funding, there were only minor differences in the completion rate of apprentices' entry-level training. HRSD-funded apprentices (6%) and those using personal loans (5%) to finance their training had the lowest drop rate for entry-level courses while apprentices accessing government student loans as well as those receiving funding from their employer or union had the highest (12%).
- Overall and across all employment categories, the lowest average hourly wages (\$12.12 and \$12.48, respectively) were reported by apprentices accessing government student loans and other loans requiring repayment while those funded by an employer or union reported the highest (\$22.38). Apprentices in receipt of HRSD funding had average wages of \$14.19 per hour.
- With high usage of government student loans, personal loans and family resources, the younger apprentices who have weaker labour market attachment and lower percentages of having logged hours are expected to make the greatest personal financial commitment to apprenticeship.

- Small numbers of women in Newfoundland and Labrador participate in the skilled trades occupations. They represent only 17% of the total and are largely dominated by hairstylists and, to a lesser degree, cooks. Women represent less than 3% of apprentices in non-traditional trades.
- In trades other than Hairstylist and Cook, females reported less trade-related employment than males. Even though they reported having researched job opportunities outside the province at levels similar to males, family responsibilities play a role in determining the mobility of many female apprentices.
- The average hourly wages and hours worked per week are considerably less for females than they are for males. While the size of this gap varied between trade categories, the gap was always present. When the predominately female Hairstylist trade is excluded, females worked on average 40.8 hours per week compared to 46.6 hours for males. Also, female wages averaged \$10.96 per hour compared to \$14.56 per hour for males. These fewer hours and reduced wages resulted in the average female apprentice earning about \$448 per week for full-time work while the average male apprentice earned about \$680 per week.
- The wage gap that exists in the predominately female hairstylist trade is even greater. On average, females work 39 hours per week compared to 52 hours per week for males and earn \$7.58 per hour while their male counterparts earn \$10.50. This results in weekly wages of \$295 for females and \$546 for males.
- Females reported poorer labour market attachment prior to registering as apprentices. They also reported less use of HRSD funding and more use of government student loans than males in pursuit of their training.
- A lower percentage of female apprentices than males logged hours in their trade and intend to write the journeyman examination. Female apprentices were more likely to seek any type of employment as opposed to trade-related employment, and for those pursuing further education, female apprentices were more likely to do so outside of their trade than males.
- While the overall number of apprentices who reported experiencing discrimination and/or harassment was relatively small (6.4%, n=283), females reported being the target (12%, n= 74) twice as often as males (6% , n= 209). However, females took more action when confronted with these situations.
- While female apprentices reported lower rates of satisfaction with their choice of trade than males, their overall rate of satisfaction was still close to 80%.