

Cooperative Education Incentive (Co-op)



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Program Introduction

The Cooperative Education Incentive (CEI) helps employers hire post-secondary cooperative education students for work placements. Employers receive a wage subsidy to hire these students to fill temporary positions in their organizations. The students receive paid on-the-job work experience related to their field of study and career goals.

The program strengthens Nova Scotia's workforce by helping students acquire the experience and contacts they need to launch their careers, and by connecting employers with talented youth.

CEI is administered by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI).

How does it work?

- Co-op work terms run three times each year:
 - summer term: 1 April to 31 August
 - fall term: 1 September to 31 December
 - winter term: 1 January to 30 April
- Co-op positions run for at least 12 and no more than 16 weeks. The jobs must meet the requirement of the student's Co-op program. The program will consider longer (2-term) placements only if required by the post-secondary institution.
- Employers must be sure the work experience will count toward the student's academic program. A Co-op coordinator at a Nova Scotia university or the NSCC must review and approve the position before you apply. A list of co-op programs and Co-op Coordinators is available on our website.
- The student you hire must work full-time: at least 390 hours over a work term (or the hours required by the student's Co-op program). We will fund no more than 640 hours over the work term.
- Employers must pay a minimum wage of \$18.00 per hour (plus vacation pay and other mandatory employment costs). Preference will be given to positions which offer higher wages.
- If approved, employers **must pay at least** the hourly wage specified in the application. Employers who pay less may be required to make up the difference at the end of the term.
- The program will reimburse \$8 for each hour worked by the student.
- Employers are eligible for a diversity bonus of \$1.50 per hour if they hire a student who self-identifies as: Mi'kmaq or Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, a visible minority, a person with a disability, member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, a woman in an occupation where they are under-represented or an international student.
- Employers may not use any other government wage subsidies to pay the student they hire. Employers who receive project funding may use Co-op to hire students but must use operating funding to pay the balance of the salary. The student salary should not be a line-item in the project funding.
- Organizations that receive funds from the Industrial Research Assistance Program (IRAP) or the Scientific Research & Experimental Development (SR&ED) tax credit may qualify to receive 50% of the hourly wage you will pay to the student for up to a maximum subsidy of \$10 an hour.

Employers

Co-op employers may be of any size and belong to one of the following categories:

- private sector
- government-funded
- not-for-profit
- municipalities
- social enterprise
- charitable organizations

Student-Employees

The student you hire must be enrolled in a work term as part of a cooperative education program at a Nova Scotia university or college. The work term you receive funding for must take place in Nova Scotia.

The program will consider the hiring of family members only where it supports the employment of individuals from certain groups that are underrepresented in the labour market, and where the employer has followed a fair hiring process.

Individuals who self-identify as one or more of the following may be eligible:

- ▶ Mi'kmaq or Indigenous
- ▶ African Nova Scotians
- ▶ Visible minorities (including persons of African descent)
- ▶ Persons with disabilities (consisting of a physical, cognitive or mental impairment that presents a persistent barrier to work).

A fair hiring process includes:

- ▶ advertising the position, (which can include language that indicates a preference for candidates from one of the populations above);
- ▶ interviews; and
- ▶ a rationale for selection.

Applying for the Cooperative Education Incentive

Ready to go?

The program accepts applications three times a year. You can find application deadlines and other useful information on the program website:

<https://novascotia.ca/programs/co-op-education-incentive/>

You will apply using the Labour Market Program Support System (LaMPSS).

If you are registered, apply for Co-op by clicking Start Now on the [program website](#).

If you need to register, clicking the application links will take you to an access request form. You will proceed to the application form once you've provided your organization details.

It is the organization's responsibility to keep LaMPSS up to date. You can do this once you have logged in.

To apply, you need:

- A description of your organization and its mandate.
- A contact person at your organization who will be responsible for the agreement.
- A job description for the position.
- Endorsement from a Co-op coordinator (You can find a list of post-secondary Co-op programs and coordinators on the [program website](#)).
- Endorsement means that you must contact a co-op coordinator to discuss the job you fill and whether it is suitable for the students in their program. We will contact all the coordinators to make sure positions are endorsed.

Your application will include:

- the number of hours and weeks you plan for your student to work.
- the wage you intend to pay them.

Important: If your organization uses a wage range depending on the student's level of experience, please put the **lowest** wage you will pay in the application. If you offer the student less than you have indicated in the application, you may be required to pay the difference.

Multiple positions

You may apply for more than one position. This may require more than one application.

Please make one application if:

- All hires will work from one county or location.
- All hires will work for 16 weeks or fewer.
- All hires will work for more than 16 weeks.

Please make **multiple applications** if:

- You are applying for positions in more than one county (Please submit one application per county).
- You plan to hire students for both one- and two-term positions (12-16-week and 25-32-week positions should not be on the same form.)

We will return applications that do not meet program requirements for you to amend.

Assessment and Approval

Once the application period for a term has closed, our Agreement Managers and Youth Initiatives Director will assess your application.

The program normally communicates decisions at least one month before the Co-op term begins.

We give preference to employers who:

- Provide challenging, knowledge-intensive work opportunities.
- Pay above-average wages.
- Demonstrate commitment to innovation and a culture of learning.
- Are internationally competitive (export-focused).
- Operate in Nova Scotia's growth sectors.
- Hire graduates for permanent jobs.

We also consider:

- the input of the Co-op coordinator.
- The organization's commitment to diversity and employment equity.
- the impact of the organization on the community.
- an equitable distribution of opportunity throughout Nova Scotia.

If approved, you will receive an email confirming funding. Funding is contingent upon hiring an eligible co-op student or students.

Please review the approval email carefully. The program may have approved only some of the requested positions. LaMPSS assigns each position a unique number, and if you have applied for multiple positions with the same title, you will be approved only for the number that appears in the approval email.

For example, you requested two Office Assistants, and your letter shows Office Assistant (12345).

This means only one of the positions was approved.

If both were approved, the letter would show Office Assistant (12345) and Office Assistant (23456).

The email will introduce you to your agreement manager and include your agreement number, which you should include in all correspondence with the program.

If the program has not approved any of your positions, you will receive an email to let you know.

Appeals

If some or all of your positions have been denied, you can appeal the decision. The deadline for appeals is generally one week after we send notification emails.

When submitting an appeal, please provide additional details about the job, including how the position will help the student with their career, what supports you will provide, and anything else you think we should know.

Selecting Your Student

Your organization is responsible for recruiting, selecting, and hiring a student. We suggest you work with Co-op staff at the post-secondary program to select a suitable student.

Once you hire your student, send your agreement manager:

- ▶ A completed [Student Information Form](#). This is where the student may self-identify for the 10% diversity bonus (if applicable).
- ▶ A copy of the student's transcript, or a letter that shows the student is enrolled in a Co-op work-term for the period of the agreement.

Please send your Student Information Form within 10 days of the employee's start date. **Your funding is not confirmed until we receive this information. The program may cancel your funding if you do not provide these documents by the deadline provided.**

If you will be hiring the student for different hours, weeks, or a different hourly wage than what was in your application, please let your agreement manager know as soon as possible. Remember that you must pay at least the wage stated in the application, and that students must work the minimum number of hours required by the program.

The Agreement Period

Once we receive the Student Information Form(s) and confirm each student is eligible, we will issue a contract that contains the positions for which you have hired.

LaMPSS will send an email to all signing officers identified on the application form asking for you to sign your contract.

You may sign by logging in to LaMPSS and:

- Providing electronic acknowledgement within the database
- Downloading the agreement, signing it digitally, and uploading it again -or-
- Printing the agreement, signing it in ink, scanning and uploading

Signing authorities who are not LaMPSS users can use electronic acknowledgement to sign the contract by using the Nova Scotia Login System. We will provide instructions with your approval email. Only the email address that received the invitation can be used to sign in.

The funding amount stated in the contract is based on the student-employee working the full number of weeks and hours requested, at the hourly rate provided in the application. If the student works fewer hours, we will reduce your payment. Once you sign this contract, your agreement will be active.

Financial Reporting

Before we can make your reimbursement payment, we require proof of wages paid to the student.

Please download and complete the Pay Declaration from the [program website](#). We reimburse for actual hours worked to the maximum number of hours approved in the contract. The total hours worked by the student should match the hours approved in your contract. **Please clearly explain any discrepancies.**

Have your employee sign the Pay Declaration and upload it into LaMPSS using the instructions your Agreement Manager will provide. Signatures may be in ink and scanned/photographed, or via Adobe Digital ID. This signature is our only confirmation that you paid the student what you agreed to pay. Typed signatures will not be accepted.

If the employee is not available to sign the Pay Declaration, please also send the employee's Record of Employment (ROE). The amounts and hours reported on the ROE must match the amounts and hours reported on the Pay Declaration.

Amounts reported on the pay declaration or ROE may be subject to audit by the program.

Evaluation and Feedback

To make sure we are meeting our program standards and to gather feedback about the program, we ask both employers and students to complete a survey at the end of the agreement period.

We will send links to the surveys by email to the agreement contact and student(s). Surveys must be complete for us to issue payment. **Make sure your student(s) completes their survey during the last day or two they are working for you.**

All information we gather is confidential. While we report on program trends, we will not share identifiable information without permission.

Your Agreement Manager may also contact you from time to time during the agreement to request feedback or collect additional information.

Co-op Program Summary

1. Develop a position and confirm it meets the requirements of at least one [Nova Scotia Co-operative Education Program](#).
2. [Apply online](#). (Apply for LaMPSS access if necessary.)
3. If approved, hire your student(s). Be sure they are enrolled in a Co-op Work term for the semester.
4. Send your agreement manager a completed [Student Information Form](#) and proof of your selected student's enrollment in a Co-op program.
5. Your Agreement Manager will send you a link to sign your funding agreement in LaMPSS.
6. Provide work experience to the student(s).
7. Download and complete the Pay Declaration. Both employer and student must sign.
8. Log in to LaMPSS and upload your Pay Declaration (and ROE if required.)
9. Complete the employer survey, and have the student complete the employee survey. Your Agreement Manager will send you the survey links.
10. You will receive reimbursement by direct deposit.

Contact Us

If you require any additional information, please contact us:

yepinfo@novascotia.ca

(Toll Free) 1-800-424-5418

(Local) 902-424-6000

