



**Business Awareness Survey
On the
Proposed Canada Job Grants Program**

**Summary of Findings
October 6, 2013**

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Introduction

The current Federal Labour Management Agreement (LMA) ends in March 2014 and will be replaced by the Canada Job Grant program as announced in the 2014 Federal Budget. The goal of this “short duration training” is to ensure that skills training funds are being used to help Canadians obtain qualifications they need to get jobs in high-demand fields. This is a significant change in focus from the original intent of the LMA, which was designed to help provide training to those who need it, including under-represented groups.

The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations launched its “**Business Awareness Survey of the Canada Job Grants Program**” in July of 2013 in an attempt to gain an understanding of what the Nova Scotia business community knew about the proposed program, and whether the Canada Job Grants program would be a program their business would access to assist in the upskilling of existing employees, or to train new employees to fill vacancies in their work environment.

The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations provides services to working age Nova Scotians who do not have a high school diploma or GED, the minimum requirement outlined by the Federal Government to work in a knowledge-based economy. In a Pan-Canadian survey released by the Dartmouth Learning in May of 2013, “**Understanding Literacy in the Workplace,**” it was revealed that more than 75% of the respondents believed that literacy was an issue in the workplace yet they did not see it as their responsibility to provide literacy training. More than 60% of the respondents indicated that they would not hire someone without a high school diploma or GED.ⁱ

The majority of jobs in Canada require at least Level 3 (high school) literacy skill, yet 43% of all students leaving Canada’s high schools still do so with Level 1 and 2 skills (less than grade 8).ⁱⁱ The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations helps working age Nova Scotians who are low literate, low skilled, low employed or unemployed, who are not eligible for programs offered through Service Canada, to build their skills and competitiveness in the labour market. We believe that the learners we work with are an excellent source of labour for many businesses throughout our province identifying a skills/labour shortage.

In addition to developing basic literacy competencies (reading, writing, math) community learning organizations focus enhancing core skills (oral communication, thinking skills, working with others, document use, computer use, and the ability to engage in lifelong learning) identified by the Government of Canada as necessary to obtaining and retaining employment in our country. Critical thinking skills, problem solving and the ability to work as part of a team are essential skills Canadian workers need to compete in the labour market.

The TD Bank Financial Group projected that raising the literacy of Canadians with inadequate reading skills (Levels 1 and 2) to an adequate skill level (Level 3) would have an economic payoff close to \$80 billion.ⁱⁱⁱ Further a one percent improvement in literacy rates nationally would boost Canada’s economy by \$32 billion.^{iv}

The Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations believes we are a vital link in addressing skills and labour shortages in our province through our diverse programs and access to an untapped labour force.

Interim summary of the ANSCLO Business Awareness Survey on the proposed Canada Job Grants Program

- The interim summary is based on a survey of responses from 96 businesses, so far, from across Nova Scotia, with about 2/3rds from HRM.
- Responses represent a wide range of sizes and types of companies. A little over ½ of the companies are small businesses (2-10 employees)
- Most companies are not familiar with the Canada Job Grants program but are either unsure or unwilling to provide matching funds to train existing employees.
- Over 2/3rd of companies surveyed do not believe or are unsure that the Canada Job Grant program will benefit them.
- 75% of companies surveyed are either unsure or unwilling to hire individuals who do not have the required skills even if government funds for training are available.

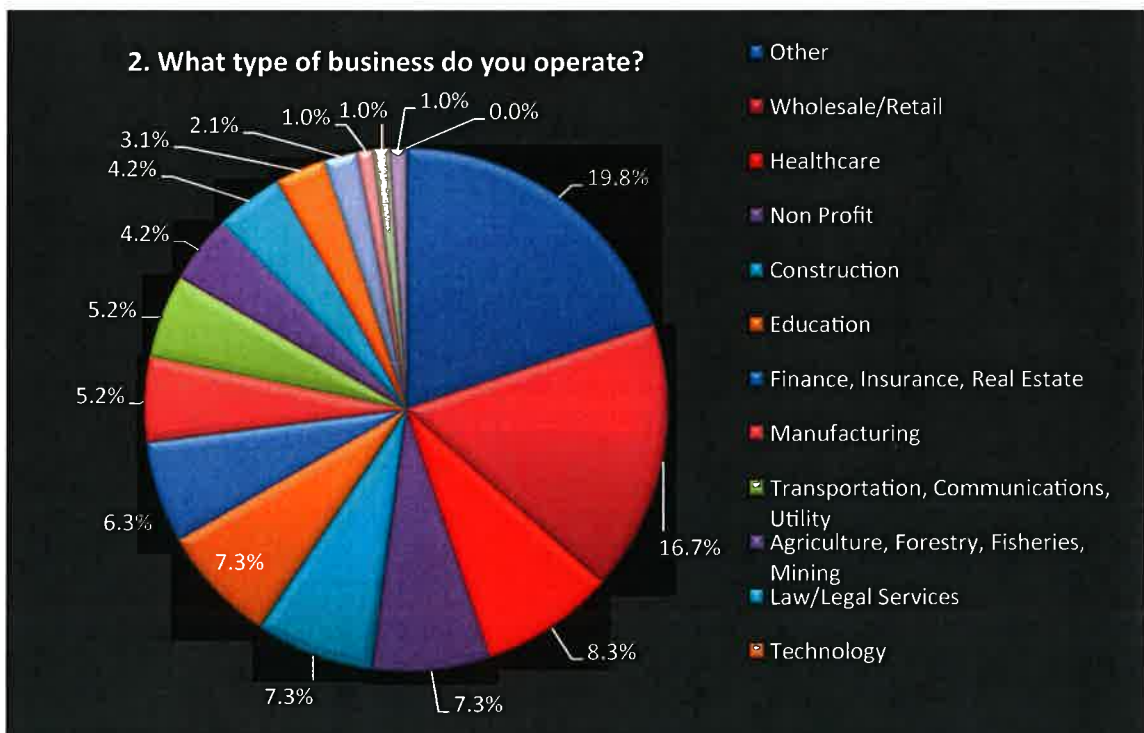
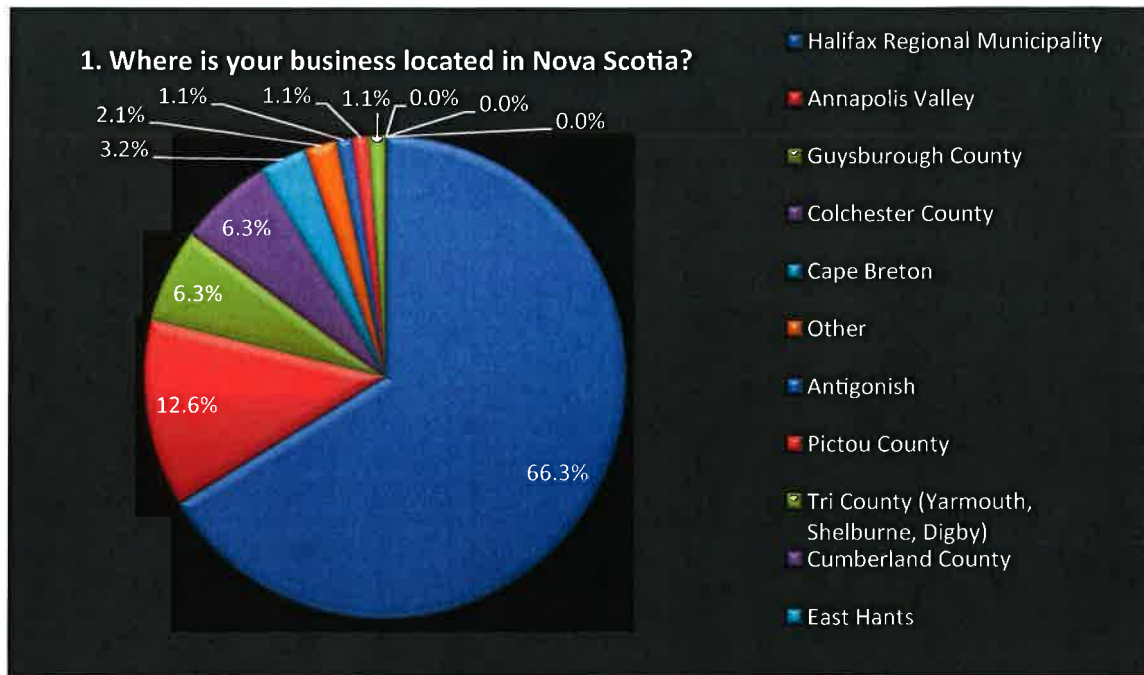
ⁱ Understanding Literacy in the Workplace, The Dartmouth Learning Network Society, May 2013

ⁱⁱ Towards a better understanding of the link between oral fluency, literacy, and Essential Skills, DataAngel Policy Research Inc., 2011

ⁱⁱⁱ TD Bank Financial Group, Literacy Matters: A Call for Action, 2007.

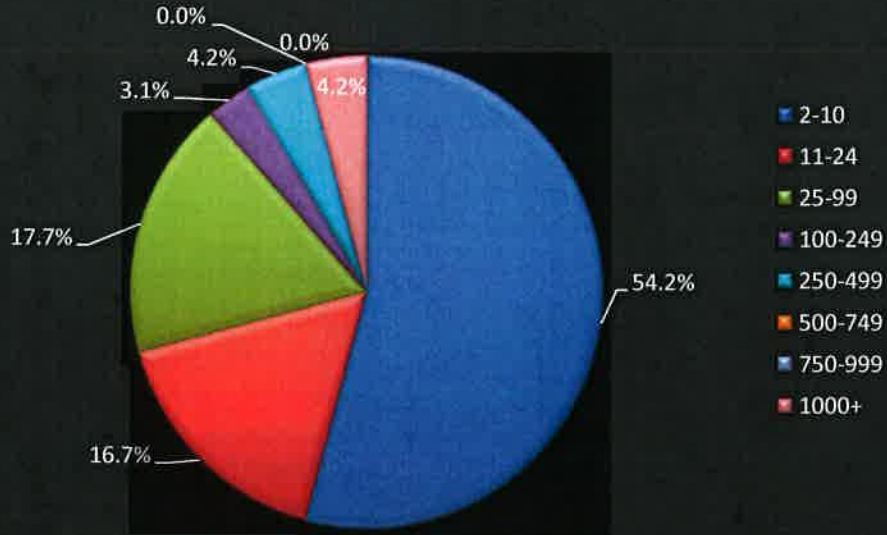
^{iv} State of the Literacy and Essential Skills Field, Canadian Literacy and Learning Network, Chris Harwood, October 2012

Association of Nova Scotia Community Learning Organizations (ANSCLO) Business Awareness Survey on the Proposed Canada Job Grant Program

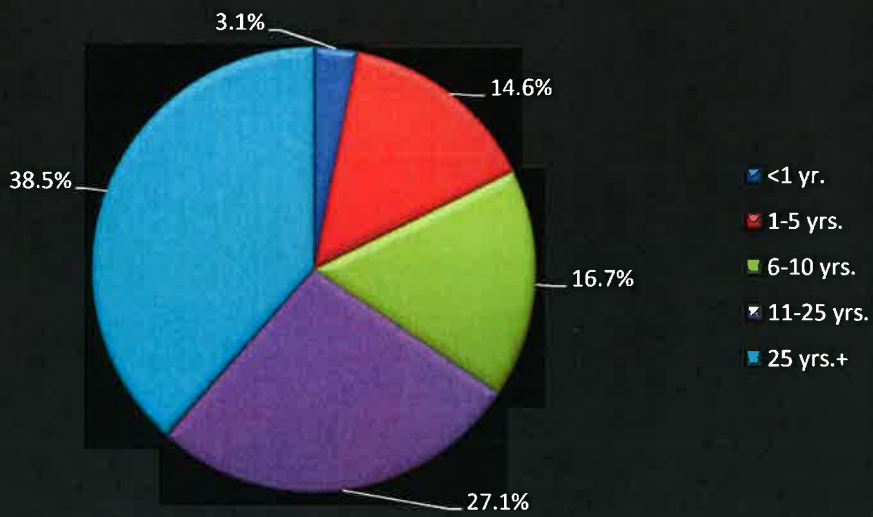


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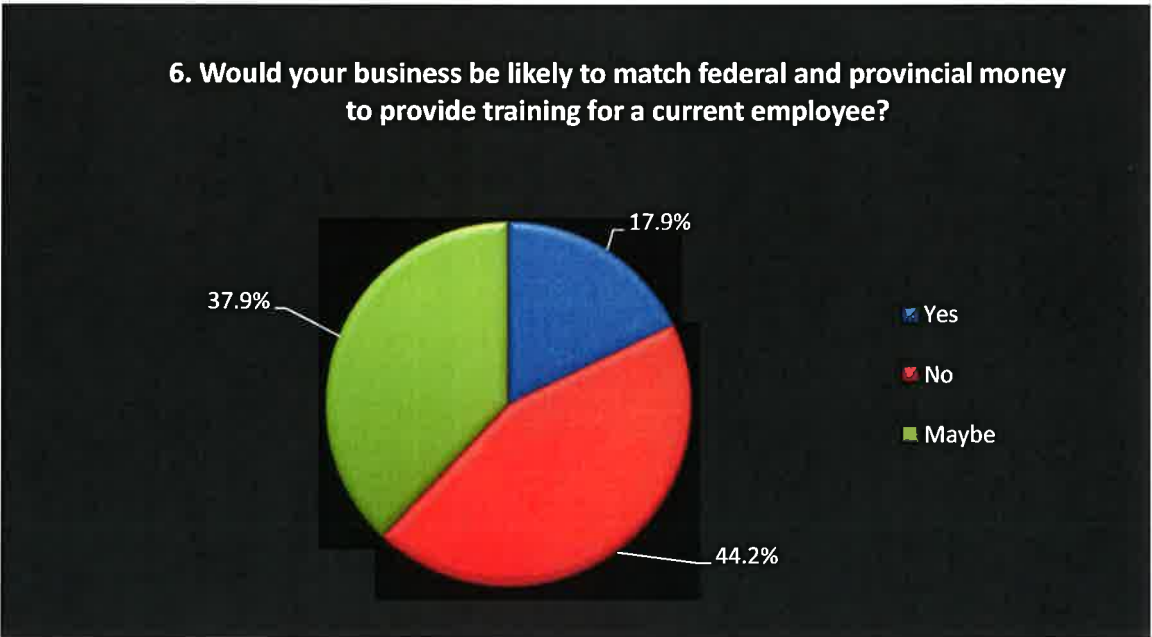
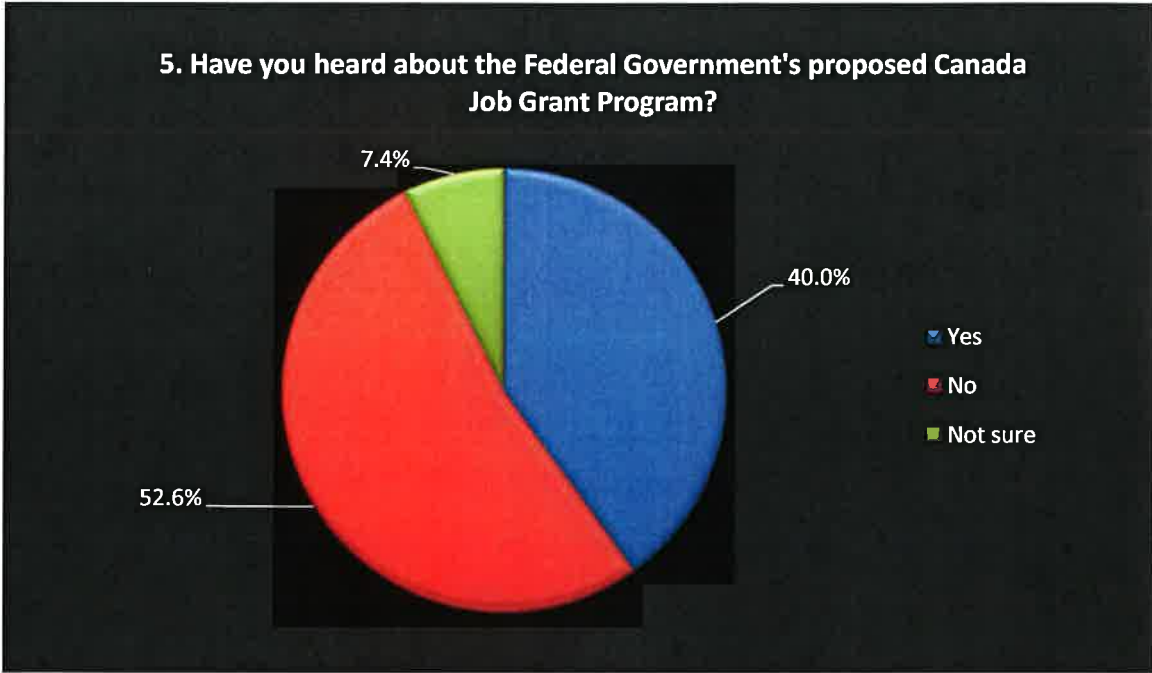
3. About how many employees work at your organization?



4. How long has your company been in business?

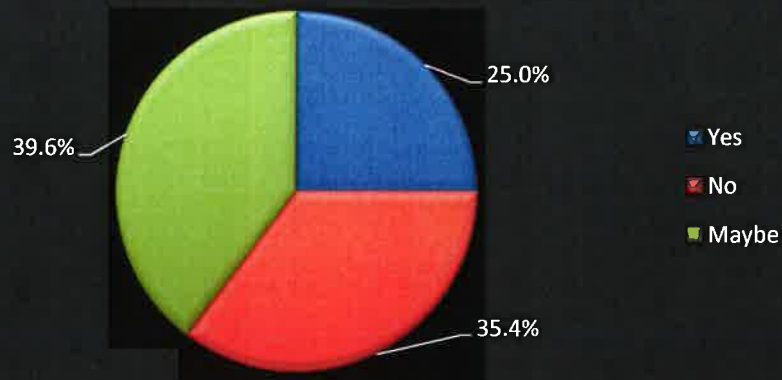


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7. Would your business be likely to hire a new employee who does not already have the training/skills you require if federal and provincial money were available to match your contributions to the cost of training him/her?



8. Do you see the Canada Job Grant program as beneficial to your business?

