



HOSPITALITY
NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR



We Are Tourism

Workforce Action Plan



Deborah Bourden

Chair
Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador
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Dear Hospitality NL Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

I'm excited to introduce an important initiative from Hospitality NL – our We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador. As Chair of the Board and an employer in the tourism industry, I can't stress enough how crucial this plan is.

Our industry is vital to our province's economy, and with this plan, we are set to thrive even more. It is driven by our commitment to Vision 2026, especially Pillar 5 Employment. We are focused on improving workforce planning, policies, and collaboration to ensure tourism offers quality jobs for people at all levels of expertise.

Over the next five years (2024-2028), we have outlined four strategic goals and thirteen actions that address the workforce challenges in our industry. From building awareness of the importance of tourism to providing support for newcomers and minimizing barriers to entry, we are committed to fostering a positive career path within the tourism industry.

As an employer and business owner in the sector, I'm especially excited about promoting tourism as a great career choice. We will do this by showcasing job opportunities, reaching out to newcomers, and working closely with local schools and colleges.

I urge each of you to embrace the recommendations of this action plan. Let's collaborate to make Newfoundland and Labrador's tourism industry a hub of opportunity and growth. Together, we can build a vibrant and sustainable future for our industry.

Deborah Bourden



**Craig
Foley**

Chief Executive Officer
Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador

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Dear Hospitality NL Members, Partners, and Stakeholders,

The tourism industry has had many significant challenges to overcome in recent years, and access to labour has been at the forefront of the feedback Hospitality NL has received from its membership. As a response to this challenge, I am pleased to announce the launch of the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan for Newfoundland and Labrador.

As the CEO of Hospitality NL, I want to emphasize the strategic importance of this action plan in ensuring the continued growth and success of our industry. This underscores our commitment to effective workforce planning, policies, and collaborative approaches to attract and retain a skilled workforce. Additionally, the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan aligns with the provincial tourism vision and strategy.

I call upon operators, Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), other support organizations, municipal, provincial, and federal governments to actively participate and take ownership of the recommendations outlined in the action plan. It is through collaborative efforts that we can successfully implement these strategies and strengthen our tourism sector.

Hospitality NL is committed to supporting the tourism industry throughout this journey, and we look forward to working together to make a lasting positive impact on the workforce landscape in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Craig Foley

Table of Contents

05	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
08	SECTION 1: THE TOURISM WORKFORCE IN NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
10	SECTION 2: LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES
14	SECTION 3: WE ARE TOURISM WORKFORCE ACTION PLAN
41	SECTION 4: THE FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS
44	SECTION 5: SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
46	APPENDIX A: DETAILED ANALYSIS – LABOUR MARKET CHALLENGES
52	APPENDIX B: WORKS CITED





Executive Summary

Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador (Hospitality NL) led the charge in the development of the new We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan, providing the sector with a strategic roadmap to collaboratively tackle workforce challenges head-on.

This five-year strategy aims to transition the tourism industry through its recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and transform the province into a thriving tourism destination. Pillar 5 of Vision 2026 Transition. Transform. Thrive. also focuses on Employment and the importance of effective workforce planning, policies, and the collaborative approaches required to improve worker attraction and retention.

The tourism industry strives to offer quality, meaningful work for varying expertise and experience levels, from frontline and management staff to business ownership. Tourism continues to support dynamic careers and business investment opportunities for tens of thousands of people and communities throughout the province.

The We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan includes four strategic goals and thirteen action items to address challenges over the next five years (2024-2028).

Everyone has a role to play: all levels of government, support organizations such as Hospitality NL and Destination Management Organizations (DMOs), communities, and tourism operators. Strategies need to consider both short-term solutions to incentivize workers to return to work and long-term measures to enhance compensation, improve job security, and create a supportive and attractive work environment.

By addressing these concerns, the industry can strengthen its workforce, overcome labour shortages, foster sustainable growth, and thrive in a post-pandemic landscape.





Workforce Action Plan Stages of Development

The action plan was developed in three phases:

PHASE 1

Completion of a comprehensive literature review on the current state of the tourism workforce. This included consultation with a diverse range of industry stakeholders through focus groups and key informant interviews to gain a deeper understanding of specific challenges facing provincial tourism operators.

PHASE 2

Development of proposed actions and solutions to address the most pressing tourism workforce challenges. Actions were reviewed with the Workforce Action Plan Working Group, where valuable feedback was incorporated.

PHASE 3

Consultations to validate the challenges, proposed actions, and solutions. This was an opportunity to workshop the actions in a group setting to gain valuable feedback from operators and prioritize proposed solutions into tangible action items.



Section 1:

The Tourism Workforce in Newfoundland and Labrador

Newfoundland and Labrador’s tourism sector accounts for 10.3% of the total employment in the province, slightly higher than the national average of 9.5%. As of 2021, there were just over 2,300 tourism businesses, contributing \$1.2 billion annually to the local economy. Approximately 80% of these businesses are small businesses (with fewer than 20 employees).

Labour market challenges are extensive in all sectors, but particularly in tourism. This creates additional stress on operators when there is a scarcity of potential employees, along with a new workplace environment to which operators must adapt. A new approach to managing operations and working with employees is needed.

Some specific characteristics of the tourism labour force in Newfoundland and Labrador¹ that impact challenges and opportunities include:

- The tourism sector employed an average of 23,306 employees through the first nine months of 2022, of whom almost half were employed in food and beverage services.
- Approximately 60% of the provincial tourism workforce is employed on a full-time basis, and 40% is employed part-time. The transportation industry has the highest percentage of full-time workers (89%), while the food and beverage services industry has the highest percentage of part-time workers (52%).

- The food and beverage services industry has the youngest workforce, with 54% of its workers being between 15 and 24 years of age, while the transportation industry has the oldest workforce, with 12% of its workers being 65 years or older. A little over half (54%) of the overall tourism workforce is under the age of 35.
- Over the five-year period of 2021 to 2025, overall employment in the tourism sector in Newfoundland and Labrador is projected to grow at a compounded annual rate of 6.0%. The leading industry in terms of growth is expected to be accommodation (11.6%).

Table 1: Employment in Newfoundland and Labrador’s Tourism Industry and Sector, 2022

		NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR	
		NUMBER	PERCENT
INDUSTRY	Accommodation	2,500	11%
	Food and beverage services	11,222	48%
	Recreation and entertainment	4,917	21%
	Transportation	4,361	19%
	Travel services	306	1%
TOURISM SECTOR TOTAL		23,306	100%

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey (LFS) via Real Time Remote Access.

¹ SNAPSHOT OF THE TOURISM SECTOR LABOUR MARKET. Provincial Report Series: Newfoundland and Labrador. Tourism HR Canada/ Qatalyst. Feb 2023.



Section 2:

Labour Market Challenges

The tourism industry throughout Atlantic Canada was grappling with pre-existing labour challenges even before the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges, identified by the Canadian Tourism Research Institute (CTRI) and the Conference Board of Canada (CBoC), posed a threat to the sector's growth potential for some time. Since 2017, labour challenges have been on the rise, significantly impacting businesses within the industry (Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2021). CTRI and CBoC further highlighted that Atlantic Canada was expected to face acute labour shortages, with rural and remote areas experiencing more severe shortfalls compared to urban regions within their respective provinces.

The pandemic exacerbated various issues, including job vacancies, labour shortages, increased demand on the sector, and a large migration of tourism workers towards other industries. Factors such as increased cost of travel (especially notable in remote / rural regions), the implementation of various health and safety protocols, and a general bottleneck effect on the tourism and travel sector throughout the pandemic compounded labour challenges. Indirect factors, such as an aging population, as well as the often seasonal nature of the tourism sector, have also played a

significant role. In addition, a survey conducted by the provincial government in 2022 revealed concerns regarding the uneven growth of tourism in certain regions. This imbalance raised apprehensions about the potential negative impact on local communities and the environment, prompting a greater focus on tourism's collective social responsibility. These pre-pandemic challenges underscored the need for strategic interventions to address employment gaps and ensure sustainable and equitable growth in the Newfoundland and Labrador tourism sector.

The increasing demand for travel and tourism in the late stages of the pandemic placed additional strain on businesses, resulting in staffing concerns, reduced operating hours, and even lost revenue. In extreme cases, hotels struggled to sell rooms due to a lack of available staff for cleaning, while restaurants were compelled to cut back on operating hours or close on certain days due to insufficient staffing. Consequently, businesses in the tourism industry suffered financial losses due to staffing shortages.



The pandemic's impact on the tourism sector was substantial, leading to significant declines in employment, business closures, and ongoing challenges in adapting to new protocols, managing employee morale, and addressing the fear of virus transmission.²

²Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, 2022; Tourism HR Canada, 2021

Based on results from the three phases of our research, tourism operators in Newfoundland and Labrador are facing labour supply and demand challenges, along with a changing workplace environment. We'll explore these challenges below; please refer to Appendix A for a detailed analysis of labour market challenges.

LABOUR SUPPLY AND DEMAND CHALLENGES

The tourism sector in Newfoundland and Labrador faces significant challenges in attracting a sufficient workforce to meet its operational needs:

- The perception of working in tourism has become much more negative over the past number of years. In an October 2022 study³, 61% of resident respondents felt that the pay was low for most jobs in the tourism industry, while 46% of those who had never worked in tourism were more willing to if the pay was higher. Many noted concerns about scheduling, lack of flexibility, long hours, negative impact on family life, lack of / limited training availability, and career advancement. These issues presented challenges for both recruitment and retention of staff.

- Attracting qualified job candidates is a challenge. Many operators indicated there is a lack of skilled or qualified candidates available.
- Seasonality and its impact are widespread phenomena across the tourism sector. The disparity in visitor numbers between summer and winter in Canada is significant, with three times more visitors travelling during the summer season. Finding workers for seasonal jobs continues to be a challenge, as many individuals are looking for full-time permanent employment.
- Non-local recruits are a potential solution when an operator is unable to hire locally in the region and needs to recruit beyond; however, there are barriers related to affordable housing and transportation, as well as potential challenges with language barriers. Eligibility and applications for labour market programs are also challenging to navigate.
- Expectations of government support continue to be a challenge. Some workers rely on government help between seasonal or temporary jobs, and long-term reliance on government support to sustain a worker's seasonal or transitory work may present a cultural barrier that needs to be overcome.

- Many of Newfoundland and Labrador's high-value experience products are in rural or isolated areas. Difficulties in accessible and affordable transportation, housing and communications, as well as the possibility of social isolation, are key barriers to hiring and retaining staff in many rural and isolated communities.

³Assessing Perceptions of Tourism as a Place of Employment in Newfoundland and Labrador. Tourism HR Canada. October 14, 2022



CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The workplace has changed. With the large gap between demand and supply of workers, in many situations, the employee has the upper hand in the type of work and workplace environment in which they will agree to work.

New worker expectations

In today's workplace, workers and potential workers are looking for:

- Work / life balance and greater job security.
- Good compensation packages that include fair wages and benefits.
- Mental health and wellness supports.
- Advancement and training opportunities plus various forms of recognition.
- Company values that align with personal values.

Demographics

In Newfoundland and Labrador, low fertility rates and high out-migration among young people have further exacerbated the challenges associated with an aging population. The population of the province is aging more rapidly than in any other province in the country.⁴

Digitalization

The use of technology and digital tools is increasing at a rapid pace, and there are many opportunities for digitalization to help with labour force shortages. For example, operators can use remote working and subcontracting to handle some of the administrative load associated with running a small business. Digital platforms can manage reservations and bookings and support visitor experiences through self-guided or enhanced tours, menu presentations, and ordering.

New Skill Requirements (Operators)

With the rapidly changing workplace requirements, new skills and competencies are needed for operators, including a whole new stream of human resource skills previously unknown to many – e.g., new forms of recruitment and selection, establishing / maintaining support and benefit packages, onboarding, skills training, health and wellness, scheduling, etc.

Need for Regional / Community Joint Efforts and Cooperation

This is especially true for rural and small operators trying to manage all aspects of business recruitment, retention, and support programs for employees; it's beyond their time and effort with regard to capabilities and capacities. Regional and community-planned cooperation in marketing, recruitment, employee sharing, support programs, joint training, use of best practices, and other aspects are needed for efficiency and effectiveness for all businesses, but particularly for rural business operators.

DMOs and other community leadership organizations should coordinate community-based planning and implementation for attracting and retaining a resilient, qualified tourism workforce as part of a larger community workforce.

⁴ Hospitality Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism HR Canada: Tourism Labour Market Update – October 2022



Section 3:

We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan



Pillar 5 of Vision 2026 focuses on Employment and the importance of effective workforce planning, policies, and the collaborative approaches required to improve worker attraction and retention. The tourism industry strives to offer quality, meaningful work for varying expertise and experience levels, from frontline and management staff to business ownership. Tourism continues to support dynamic career and business investment opportunities for people and communities throughout the province.

Four strategic goals and thirteen actions have been identified by Hospitality NL to help the tourism industry meet the objectives outlined in Pillar 5 Employment of Vision 2026.

Four key entities are integral to the success of the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan; each will play a different role in leading and supporting the strategic goals outlined. Icons will be used so that readers can quickly identify the responsible parties and their roles.



PROVINCIAL TOURISM OPERATORS

This category typically includes public or private entities that are directly involved in the day-to-day operations and maintenance of critical experiences, services, or projects within the tourism sector.



SECTOR ASSOCIATIONS

Includes associations or industry groups that represent tourism in Newfoundland and Labrador. They often collaborate with government, operators, and other stakeholders to advocate for their members' interests and contribute to sector-wide initiatives, programs, and activities. Hospitality NL is one of the primary sector associations that aligns with many of the initiatives identified in the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan, as are DMOs and the Newfoundland and Labrador Indigenous Tourism Association (NLITA).



COMMUNITIES

The community icon represents the involvement of local communities in driving actions or providing support to connected constituents. This category encompasses grassroots organizations, community leaders, and local bodies that play an active role in shaping initiatives and ensuring their successful implementation at the local level.



GOVERNMENT

Includes Federal, Provincial, and Municipal levels of government. These entities play a crucial role in formulating policies, implementing regulations, and providing resources to support various initiatives.

Goal A:

Enhance the Perception of the Tourism Sector as a Positive Career Path in Newfoundland and Labrador

Action 1: Build awareness of the importance of tourism as an economic driver and a viable career path.

Governments should work closely with tourism operators and Hospitality NL to promote tourism as both an economic driver and an opportunity to realize a sustainable career path.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Develop a joint marketing strategy that outlines the key messages, target audience, and channels for promoting tourism as an economic driver and a viable, sustainable career path.
- Hospitality NL should connect with the national “Discover Tourism” platform of Tourism HR Canada and identify how stories of operations and individuals in Newfoundland and Labrador could be highlighted to demonstrate the range of positions and potential career path options in the province.
- Allocate funding for awareness campaigns.



- Collect current baseline data on both public perceptions of tourism as an economic driver and viable career option and identify any gaps in information to be filled.
- Launch targeted marketing and promotional campaigns to raise awareness of the economic impact of tourism and its workforce to communities.
- Launch coordinated targeted marketing and promotional campaigns through Hospitality NL to promote the positive aspects of working in tourism and the broad range of career opportunities connected to the tourism sector. Include digital platforms, print media, and industry events to reach a wide audience and effectively convey key messages.
- Year 1 will establish a baseline for comparison for subsequent years.

YEAR 2

- Continue promoting tourism as an economic driver through ongoing marketing campaigns, industry events, and collaborations with Hospitality NL and tourism operators. Regularly update and refine the messaging and strategies based on feedback and emerging trends.
- Engage in regular communication and collaboration with industry stakeholders, including tourism operators, educational institutions, and regional and sector associations, to reinforce the importance of tourism as a career path. Seek input and feedback from stakeholders to ensure the messaging resonates with the target audience.
- Conduct follow-up research (survey) to evaluate the movement of public perception and assess the reach of campaign activities.

YEAR 3

- Based on the evaluation results and feedback received, make necessary adjustments and improvements to the messaging, channels, and strategies used to promote tourism as a career path within three years. Ensure continuous refinement and adaptation to effectively reach and engage the target audience.
- Determine what level of awareness and promotion efforts need to be continued based on evaluation of the campaign's impact on public perception.

YEAR 4

- Explore ongoing opportunities for joint initiatives, workshops, and educational programs between industry and educational institutions that continue to highlight career opportunities in the tourism sector.
- Explore the opportunity to integrate the messaging about tourism as an economic driver and viable career path into broader economic development strategies, incorporating messaging into ongoing government initiatives, policies and funding priorities.



Action 2: Market industry employment opportunities.

Industry, sector, and regional organizations can further promote employment opportunities in the tourism industry.



YEAR 1

- Review the Hospitality NL Online Job Board, its structure and user responsibilities, along with any user feedback collected, to identify areas where revisions are needed to ensure accuracy and completeness. Restructure the board to make it a key resource for operators in Newfoundland and Labrador, including fields that meet the needs of both potential recruits and operators. Also, ensure the structure allows for the evaluation of results.
- Develop a required template for job postings that will be used by operators to reflect what is expected from new workers and both what operators need and are offering. For example, fields may include items such as job classification (full-time, part-time,

casual, seasonal, etc.), salary, additional benefits and supports (both from operator and community), position responsibilities and required skills, training opportunities, professional development opportunities, company values, overview and reputation (or other areas to promote the idea of ongoing retention), and a community profile.

- Establish and post guidelines and requirements for businesses to update job vacancies on the board within two weeks of any changes. Regularly monitor the board and provide support and automated reminders to businesses to ensure accurate and up-to-date job listings.

- Engage with industry associations, regional and sector organizations, and individual businesses to encourage their promotion of the job board and active participation in posting job vacancies.
- To assist in increasing value in the Hospitality NL Online Job Board for operators:
 - Develop a current list of recruitment and wage support programs available for operators to consider (such as NL Student Summer Employment program, International Experience Canada, Canada Digital Adoption Program, Propel, BELONG, etc.).
 - Develop a current listing of immigration programs available with short descriptions and links to further information.



YEAR 2

- Develop a feedback survey to be sent to users of the Hospitality NL Online Job Board to gain feedback on the revised structure and its value to operators and industry organizations. Adjust the structure of the job board as appropriate.
- Regularly monitor the board and provide support and reminders to businesses to ensure accurate and up-to-date job listings and guidelines for when listings need to be updated or removed. Maintain updates on the job board as required, along with assessment metrics.
- Promote the use of the Hospitality NL Online Job Board to:
 - Tourism organizations, employment agencies, and third-party support organizations as a key resource for new employment.
 - Community groups and operators as a key tool for marketing the tourism sector. Connect with new recruits and promote career opportunities to a broad range of potential workforce profiles.
- Consider securing the services of, or partnering with, third-party recruitment agencies to help fill certain job categories. For example, Restaurants Canada has an agreement with AMK Global Group to provide members with a reduced rate of commission and continued support for the recruitment of global talent.
- Communicate ongoing updates on the Hospitality NL website (where the job board is located) to the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan and how operators can participate and benefit.



YEAR 3

- Enlist support organizations, such as workforce development agencies or career centres to provide job-matching services for potential employees.
- Explore offering additional services to facilitate positive connections between job seekers and employers through resume reviews, interview preparation, and personalized job recommendations. Provide training and resources to operators to assist them in evaluating the personal digital brand (presence) of potential employees.
- Improve and enhance the job board's features, such as advanced search options, personalized job alerts, and employer profiles, to better serve both job seekers and employers. Regularly incorporate user feedback and technological advancements to ensure the job board remains relevant and user-friendly.

- Forge partnerships and collaborations with educational institutions, community organizations, and government agencies to strengthen the connection between tourism education / training programs and employment opportunities that promote the board through institutions as a valuable resource for students and job seekers interested in pursuing a career in the tourism industry.

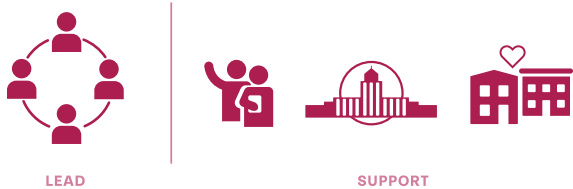
YEAR 4

- Evaluate the impact of the centralized job board and recruitment strategies on employment in the tourism industry. Analyze key metrics, such as job placement rates, user satisfaction, and employer feedback.



Action 3: Promote employment opportunities to newcomers.

Industry, sector, and regional organizations should work closely with newcomers and newcomer organizations to communicate opportunities for employment.



YEAR 1

- Enhance partnerships with the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC), the Association for New Canadians (ANC), Jumpstart Refugee Talent, and other newcomer-serving organizations that can aid in the recruitment of newcomers who may be interested in becoming employed in the tourism sector. The mandate of the ICC is to unlock Canada for newcomers, facilitating and encouraging the journey towards full and active Canadian citizenship. They offer free and paid programs that communicate directly with newcomers and profile the settlement and employment opportunities available.

- Identify and communicate with organizations set up to support specific refugee groups (e.g., Ukrainian and Afghan) to develop strong ties and provide opportunities to promote available tourism jobs.
- Determine the necessary tools and resources needed to connect newcomers with the tourism industry (e.g., translation tools, English as a second language training, networking groups).
- Consider resources developed by national groups such as Tourism HR Canada, Tourism Industry Association of Canada (TIAC), and other sector organizations to see what is applicable in Newfoundland and Labrador or might be enhanced or adapted.
- Develop promotional materials in multiple languages that are geared specifically towards the recruitment of newcomers that include cultural, equity, and diversity elements to highlight the industry's welcoming environment.

YEAR 2

- Launch / distribute promotional materials geared towards attracting newcomers.
- Provide language and cultural support for newcomers during the recruitment and onboarding process from the start of their employment.
- Encourage communities to implement a newcomer communications plan so that newcomers will have an information network to connect with one another and not be alone in a rural / remote community.
- Collaborate with communities and businesses to offer training and orientation programs tailored to newcomers on a community-by-community basis.

YEAR 3

- Monitor the success of newcomer integration programs and make refinements based on feedback and outcomes.
- Collaborate with newcomer-serving organizations like ICC, ANC, and Jumpstart Refugee Talent to showcase success stories of newcomers who have integrated into the tourism sector.

Action 4: Attract students and graduates by working closely with local high schools and post-secondary institutions.

As identified throughout consultations, reaching current students and those who are emerging from high school or post-secondary institutions is an important avenue for increasing awareness of tourism as a viable career option. Partnering with local high schools and post-secondary institutions can help to ensure this message reaches students.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- With coordination through Hospitality NL, operators should consider partnering with local education institutions to deliver presentations to students regarding the tourism industry as a career in general, as well as potential opportunities for student employment or leadership learning opportunities. The information and technology industry has had success taking a similar approach and can be examined for best practices.
- Create a guide with suggestions to help industry engage with their local high schools, connecting to offer opportunities for volunteer hours and career-related activities. The guide should include information on liability and information on how to make the experience positive for both operator and student.
- Collaborate with schools to discuss opportunities to incorporate tourism-related topics in the curriculum. Ensure work-integrated learning and mentorship opportunities are being promoted, such as the national Propel program of Tourism HR Canada. Funded by the Government of Canada through the Student Work Placement Program, Propel offers post-secondary students the opportunity to gain the skills sought by employers through hands-on, paid work / integrated learning opportunities in tourism and hospitality.
- Encourage high schools to incorporate the national tourism curriculum through Tourism HR Canada's Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism (CATT) program.
- Develop an information tool for guidance counsellors to ensure they have accurate messaging and are educated about career opportunities in the tourism sector.



YEAR 2

- Strengthen partnerships with local high schools and post-secondary institutions by providing resources, guest lectures, and mentorship opportunities.
- Develop descriptions of internship opportunities for students and help connect students and operators who are willing to provide volunteer or internship opportunities.

YEAR 3

- Maintain and expand partnerships with local high schools and post-secondary institutions to continue including tourism-related topics in regular activities, supporting students in pursuing careers in the tourism sector.
- Review early activities with schools to identify success stories and pitch those initiatives to other schools.

YEAR 4 / YEAR 5

- Continuously engage with local high schools and post-secondary institutions to stay updated on curriculum developments and identify areas for collaboration and support. Identify and review how tourism is presented and talked about in schools.



Goal B:

Minimize Barriers for Entry into the Tourism Workforce

Action 1: Provide support to operators for program applications.

Through consultation, it became apparent that operators would like increased support from government and Hospitality NL to understand and complete employment program applications. With increased support, operators would feel more confident in minimizing the barriers to attracting workers.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Develop a current list of federal and provincial labour-related programs with challenges and issues identified by the industry. Ensure Hospitality NL continues to advocate (in a coordinated fashion with national industry bodies and other provincial organizations where appropriate) with federal and provincial bodies for more effective, efficient and accessible programs for the industry. Advocacy efforts need to continue in relation to improving programs for recruitment of international full-time and temporary workers



(both federal and provincial programs), employment insurance program policies, and federal and provincial labour policies for specific demographic profile groups that include possible support income clawbacks if wages earned are over a specific level.

- Leverage the labour-related assistance program resources and actions (e.g., foreign workers program) that have been developed by national tourism sector organizations like Tourism HR Canada and TIAC and ensure provincial operators understand and can access these program resources.

- Continue to offer webinars for operators to gain awareness of programs, benefits, and application requirements.
- Encourage government to engage with operators through Hospitality NL and collectively illustrate ways to adapt existing supports to better meet industry needs regarding program information, guidelines, and applications.
- Develop plans to provide ongoing support to operators across all regions, helping them determine program eligibility and necessary steps to complete program applications.

YEAR 2

- Offer a helpline where a knowledgeable support person can aid operators in completing program applications.



Action 2: Curate a package of services targeted at newcomers.

As identified in much of the literature (and throughout consultations), newcomers provide an opportunity to increase capacity within the tourism workforce. Ensuring there is a package of services intended for newcomers would increase their ability to engage with potential employers in the tourism industry.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Take inventory of existing services that address language support, cultural integration, Canadian workplace expectations, job placement assistance, and training programs.
- Develop communication materials that combine supports and include links to those supports.
- Identify gaps in existing support services.
- Enhance partnerships with the ICC and ANC (and other newcomer-serving organizations) that can aid in the recruitment of newcomers who may be interested in becoming employed in the tourism sector.

YEAR 2

- Advocate for supports from others to address gaps and consider establishing partnerships with educational institutions and training providers to offer specialized program supports tailored to the needs of newcomers.
- Collaborate with community organizations, settlement agencies, and industry stakeholders to streamline onboarding / applications for these programs with the goal of having newcomers engage with the suite of supports through one entry point.
- Identify foundational competencies needed in tourism roles so that service agencies can match these against potential job searches, career development opportunities, and training.
- Engage with community organizations to encourage multiple operations to recruit newcomers so community supports have a broad audience.



YEAR 3

- Launch and more aggressively promote the package of services to newcomers through various organizations and channels, such as community events, online platforms, and partnership networks, including the ICC and ANC.
- Monitor the uptake and outcomes of the services, collecting feedback from both newcomers and employers to refine and improve the offerings.

YEAR 4

- Expand partnerships with educational institutions and training providers to increase the availability and accessibility of specialized programs for newcomers.

YEAR 5

- Evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the package of services and make necessary adjustments and improvements.
- Continue to deliver and promote the package of services to newcomers, reaching a larger audience and increasing awareness of the available support.
- Strengthen collaborations with community organizations, settlement agencies, and industry stakeholders to enhance the delivery and impact of the services.



Action 3: Increase accessibility of sector-based training programs.

Broadly, there is a need for increased delivery and accessibility of training programs for the tourism sector. It is important to consider ways to enhance opportunities for operators and the workforce to participate in upskilling.

In addition, many post-secondary institutions and tourism associations / organizations deliver tourism sector training. It's important that this training aligns with the needs of tourism operators and those entering the tourism workforce. For that reason, a listing of the programs and courses being delivered could then be reviewed against industry needs and identify gaps that may exist.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Develop guidelines and recommendations for making training programs more accessible. Things to consider include alternative training formats, accommodating different learning styles, locations, length of time operators can be away, a blend of independent and guided learning, and cost.
- List key training needs and emerging competencies particularly related to human resource requirements for operators as identified in national and regional surveys and reports. Key areas of job descriptions, recruitment, organizational structure, business skills, and a range of ongoing human resource skills to recruit and retain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive staff team are important. Connect to Tourism HR Canada's Workforce Management Engine to identify competencies, particularly for key occupations in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- List existing training and upskilling programs being offered by sector organizations, including Hospitality NL, against operator needs and new competencies identified for both operators and employees. Make recommendations that enhance participation and address apparent training gaps.

- List post-secondary education tourism programs and courses (both public and private) with the goal of validating alignment with sector needs and identifying where new programs and courses should better align with the changing dynamics of the tourism marketplace and workforce.

YEAR 2

- Work with government and other partners (including organizations and operators) to increase access to training programs through increased funding for sector associations, operators, and employees.
- Based on results of the post-secondary and sector-based training assessment, respond to identified opportunities and address gaps in collaboration with leadership of the institutions to enhance their capacity to deliver the most relevant courses and programs in an accessible and affordable manner.

YEAR 3

- Establish financial support programs or subsidies to assist operators and workers facing financial barriers in accessing training programs.
- Promote the availability of financial support.
- Co-promote, with post-secondary institutions, the list of refreshed tourism sector programs offered in the province.
- Monitor and evaluate training programs and, as necessary, refine activities to maximize results.

YEAR 4

- Continuously update and improve the training programs.



Action 4: Advocate for increased support services for the inactive Newfoundland and Labrador workforce.

There is an opportunity to minimize barriers for those who want to work but are currently part of the inactive workforce (e.g., retirees to return to work and earn a livelihood). With support from industry, sector, and regional organizations, needed supports can be identified, prioritized, and implemented to reduce these barriers and increase participation in the tourism workforce.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Identify key profiles of the inactive workforce that might be potential recruits. Connect to the current work of Tourism HR Canada related to archetypes of potential recruits and their specific needs and interests to market directly to each of them.
- Identify financial assistance programs available when working with specific groups (such as the new BELONG program of Tourism HR Canada that works with individuals with disabilities).
- Partner with support organizations and those currently missing out using the inactive workforce to determine needs in order to better align recruitment, advocacy, policy, and programs.

YEAR 2

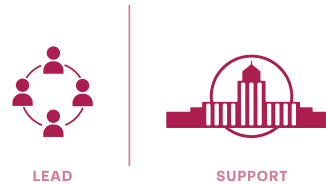
- Implement specific communications to inactive workforce groups to encourage workforce entry.
- Continue to advocate for appropriate policy changes to support inactive workforce groups in entering or reentering the workforce.

Goal C:

Support Human Resources (HR) Capacity

Action 1: Provide consistent HR capacity to support operators.

Many operators expressed that they would appreciate having access to a consistent HR capacity resource from government, their sector associations, and others in order to supplement efforts to recruit and retain workers.



YEAR 1

- Partner with Hospitality NL to establish an HR support pilot program dedicated to providing consistent services and expertise to tourism operators.
- Hire an HR resource to oversee and deliver an operator support program; explore developing an online help desk for operators to secure HR support.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the HR capacity resource through feedback and satisfaction surveys.

YEAR 2

- Based on Year 1 support activity results, make necessary program enhancements or adjustments.
- As needed, develop partnerships with additional HR experts or organizations to increase the capacity and range of services provided.
- Evaluate the demand and effectiveness of HR support services provided in the first two years and make necessary adjustments based on feedback.

YEAR 3

- Develop and provide connections to HR templates and training based on the most frequently-identified needs.
- Evaluate the long-term impact of HR capacity resources in improving workforce conditions and minimizing barriers to employment.
- Develop a sustainability plan to ensure the continuity and availability of HR support services beyond the initial five-year period (if the pilot is a success).
- Share success stories and best practices with the tourism industry to encourage broader adoption of effective HR strategies.



Action 2: Curate HR training offerings to support recruitment and retention.

Industry, sector, and regional organizations can provide increased support to operators with HR training that focuses on improving recruitment and retention outcomes. Some operators noted struggling with both recruitment and retention but were unsure how to combat these challenges.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Develop an online HR Training Hub that identifies and recommends tools and training that address specific recruitment and retention challenges of operators. Identify training that relates to the needs of operators and their skill requirements, as well as potential training for new hires and the continued professional development of staff (that operators may not feel qualified to deliver themselves).
- Communicate the availability of the HR Training Hub through broad-based industry communication platforms.

YEAR 2

- Conduct periodic check-ins with operators to evaluate the effectiveness of the training materials available on the hub.
- If needed, develop or search out existing training materials to fill gaps and address the most pressing recruitment and retention challenges following feedback from the HR helpline.
- Update the hub as needed based on changes in the labour market and the needs of operators in order to identify and recommend existing training to address specific recruitment and retention challenges.

YEAR 3

- Continuously update and refresh the tools and training recommended and available through the hub to address emerging trends and challenges in the industry.
- Provide feedback from industry to trainers, based on what is recommended by the hub. Advocate for program changes to support greater accessibility for operators.

YEAR 4

- Conduct a review of the HR Training Hub programs and tools and their impact on recruitment and retention outcomes. For example, tracking usage and measuring the impact that training and tools recommended or available on the hub has had on operators.
- Further expand on the accessibility of HR training programs as needed.

Action 3: Create opportunities for operators to communicate and share lessons learned / best practices.

During consultations, operators appreciated the opportunity to come together and discuss the challenges and successes they have experienced during and since COVID-19. Many voiced they would benefit from increased opportunities to communicate and share with one another. Industry, sector, and regional organizations should provide additional opportunities for collaboration and discussion amongst operators on a provincial and regional level.



YEAR 1

- Create an online chat group where operators can connect to discuss challenges, lessons learned, and best practices with one another.
- Organize regional in-person opportunities for operators to come together, such as bi-monthly industry breakfast meetings and networking events.
- Create a communications plan to promote all events.

YEAR 2

- Facilitate peer-to-peer mentoring programs or groups where experienced operators can provide guidance to others.
- Develop a knowledge-sharing repository or database of HR best practices and resources based on session discussions.
- Continue to organize regular networking events where operators can showcase best practices and lessons learned.

YEAR 3

- Evaluate the effectiveness and engagement levels of the knowledge-sharing platforms.
- Seek input from operators on their needs and preferences regarding connection opportunities and sharing platforms.
- Identify areas for improvement and enhancement of the platforms based on operator feedback.



YEAR 4

- Continuously promote and encourage operators to actively participate in knowledge-sharing initiatives and events.
- Expand the virtual group(s) and platform to accommodate a growing number of operators and foster broader collaboration.
- Enhance the knowledge-sharing repository with updated resources and case studies.

YEAR 5

- Recognize and celebrate operators who have demonstrated exceptional innovation and success in implementing HR best practices.



Goal D:

Emphasize Newfoundland and Labrador Culture in the Workplace and Recognize those who Demonstrate Excellence in their HR Practices

Action 1: Introduce and reinforce our welcoming culture into the workplace while building relevant and practical supports for operators to understand, embrace, and deliver diversity and inclusion practices into their workplace culture.

A cornerstone of Vision 2026 is its four stated values, two of which include elements that speak to the power of Newfoundland and Labrador culture:

- Being warm and welcoming and instilling a sense of belonging.
- Celebrating and promoting the creativity and diversity of our people, place, and culture.

By embracing and leveraging these core values in the workplace, employers and employees will derive tangible benefits beyond revenue and compensation. These values, when embodied in the workplace, can create an enjoyable atmosphere, heightened job satisfaction and comradery, and a contagious culture of satisfaction and pride.



LEAD



SUPPORT

YEAR 1

- Identify and share examples of our culture and values when experienced in the workplace.
- Organize events, or feature within existing events, elements that celebrate and promote the creativity and diversity of our people, place, and culture.
- Embrace the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals relating to the workforce that demonstrate to employees, the community, and visitors our support of individuals in the community and on the global stage.
- Consider developing a workshop on “storytelling”, which is marketed as a key part of Newfoundland and Labrador culture.

YEAR 2

- Explore existing resources and develop a do-it-yourself diversity audit for the industry to use and establish baseline metrics.
- Adapt existing training programs or develop and implement an diversity, equity, and inclusion training program.
- Encourage industry associations and support organizations to lead by example by conducting the diversity audit and reviewing and communicating core values.
- Support organizations in communicating the importance of core values through internal channels.

YEAR 3

- Organize events that celebrate and promote the creativity and diversity of our people, place, and culture.
- Establish employee resource groups and affinity groups.

YEAR 4

- Continue to organize events that celebrate and promote the creativity and diversity of our people, place, and culture.



Action 2: Recognize workforce development leaders through a provincial / municipal business recognition program.

Throughout the consultation, focus group participants were interested in the idea of launching a provincial / municipal tourism business workplace recognition program. Such a program would be designed to motivate operators to enhance their HR practices and create a positive and rewarding workplace environment to showcase Newfoundland and Labrador culture.

This program would be focused on setting standards of excellence and providing recognition to those who participate, for example, by way of a physical and online sticker that would act as an incentive to avail of the program, much the same way as professional credentials operate in other sectors (e.g., a Red Seal Certified Chef). This recognition would allow the public and other business owners to know who has availed of the program and meets / surpasses the determined standards of excellence.

YEAR 1

- Establish the framework and criteria for the business workplace recognition program.
 - Conduct a thorough analysis of existing business recognition programs and best practices.
 - Engage stakeholders, including tourism operators, industry associations, DMOs, and government representatives, to gather input and feedback on the program framework.
 - Define the criteria and standards that leaders / businesses must meet to be eligible for recognition.
 - Develop a robust evaluation process, including self-assessment and external evaluation, to assess businesses against the program criteria.
 - Consider making the recognition program a part of Hospitality NL's industry awards program.



LEAD



SUPPORT



YEAR 2

- Finalize and launch the recognition program.
 - Finalize and publish the program framework and criteria, ensuring transparency and accessibility for businesses.
- Promote and educate businesses about the recognition program.
 - Develop marketing materials and communication strategies to raise awareness of the recognition program among tourism businesses.
 - Establish partnerships with industry associations and support organizations to reach a wide audience of tourism businesses.
- Promote and celebrate recognized businesses.
 - Develop a communication and marketing strategy to promote recognized businesses to tourists, locals, and other stakeholders.
 - Organize recognition events, awards ceremonies, or showcases to celebrate and highlight the achievements of recognized businesses.
 - Leverage digital platforms, social media, and traditional media channels to amplify the recognition program's visibility and promote recognized businesses.

YEAR 3

- Evaluate and refine the recognition program.
 - Conduct an evaluation of the recognition program's effectiveness and impact on businesses.
 - Gather feedback from recognized businesses, evaluators, and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement.
 - Update and refine the program criteria and evaluation process based on the evaluation results and feedback.
- Expand the recognition program.
 - Explore opportunities to collaborate with regional and national recognition programs to enhance the visibility of awarded businesses within three years.

YEAR 4

- Enhance program benefits.
 - Evaluate the benefits offered to recognized businesses and identify opportunities for enhancement.
 - Collaborate with industry partners to offer additional benefits, such as marketing support, networking opportunities, or access to funding or grants.
 - Promote the value and advantages of being recognized through the program to encourage more businesses to participate.



<p>GOAL A:</p> <p>Enhance the Perception of the Tourism Sector as a Positive Career Path in Newfoundland and Labrador</p>	<p>Action 1:</p> <p>Build awareness of the importance of tourism as an economic driver and a viable career path.</p>	<p>Action 2:</p> <p>Market industry employment opportunities.</p>	<p>Action 3:</p> <p>Promote employment opportunities to newcomers.</p>	<p>Action 4:</p> <p>Attract students and graduates by working closely with local high schools and post-secondary institutions.</p>
<p>GOAL B:</p> <p>Minimize Barriers for Entry into the Tourism Workforce</p>	<p>Action 1:</p> <p>Provide support to operators for program applications.</p>	<p>Action 2:</p> <p>Curate a package of services targeted at newcomers.</p>	<p>Action 3:</p> <p>Increase accessibility of sector-based training programs.</p>	<p>Action 4:</p> <p>Advocate for increased support services for the inactive Newfoundland and Labrador workforce.</p>
<p>GOAL C:</p> <p>Support Human Resources (HR) Capacity</p>	<p>Action 1:</p> <p>Provide consistent HR capacity to support operators.</p>	<p>Action 2:</p> <p>Curate HR training offerings to support recruitment and retention.</p>	<p>Action 3:</p> <p>Create opportunities for operators to communicate and share lessons learned / best practices.</p>	
<p>GOAL D:</p> <p>Emphasize Newfoundland and Labrador Culture in the Workplace and Recognize those who Demonstrate Excellence in their HR Practices</p>	<p>Action 1:</p> <p>Introduce and reinforce our welcoming culture into the workplace while building relevant and practical supports for operators to understand, embrace, and deliver diversity and inclusion practices into their workplace culture.</p>	<p>Action 2:</p> <p>Recognize workforce development leaders through a provincial / municipal business recognition program.</p>		



Section 4:

The Framework for Implementation Success

The Collective Impact Model

Collective impact models have been successfully used in a wide variety of contexts to address complex social challenges when a variety of stakeholders are needed to work together to create sustainable change. A collective impact model will be instrumental in driving the implementation of the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan in Newfoundland and Labrador by bringing together diverse stakeholders and aligning their efforts toward a common goal.

The five guiding principles of this collective impact will be:

1. COMMON AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Stakeholders within the tourism sector ecosystem must be aligned on a common agenda that outlines the desired changes and objectives of the action plan. This shared vision will provide a unified direction and enable all participating organizations, including government agencies, tourism operators, support organizations, and community representatives. The common agenda would encompass the four strategic goals and thirteen actions of the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan.

2. SHARED MEASUREMENT SYSTEMS

Developing a shared measurement system is a vital element of a collective impact approach. This system will enable stakeholders to track progress, measure outcomes, and assess the impact of their initiatives. It should include key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with the goals of the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan, allowing stakeholders to monitor their efforts and identify areas for improvement. The backbone organization can facilitate the establishment of this measurement system and encourage data sharing and reporting among stakeholders who are willing to contribute to the collective achievement of the goals.



3. MUTUALLY REINFORCING ACTIVITIES

To achieve meaningful impact, it is essential to coordinate mutually reinforcing activities among participating organizations. While each organization may have its own strengths and resources, its actions should align with the common agenda and complement the efforts of others. The backbone organization can facilitate collaboration and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders, helping them identify opportunities for synergy, avoid duplication of work, and leverage resources effectively. By fostering strategic coordination, the collective impact model will enhance the overall effectiveness and efficiency of initiatives undertaken by individual organizations.

4. CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION

Consistent communication is crucial for building trust and maintaining alignment among stakeholders. Regular and structured communication channels, facilitated by the backbone organization, can ensure that all participants remain informed, engaged, and connected. This can include regular meetings, workshops, and forums where stakeholders can share updates, exchange best practices, address challenges, and celebrate successes. Effective communication will reinforce the shared vision, facilitate collaboration, and strengthen the collective commitment to the tourism action plan.

5. BACKBONE SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

As the backbone organization, Hospitality NL will play a pivotal role in providing the necessary support, guidance, and resources to drive the collective impact approach. It will serve as the central hub for coordination, providing leadership, expertise, and facilitation to ensure the success of the action plan. Hospitality NL will foster a collaborative culture, promote the common agenda, and offer the required infrastructure for effective implementation. Additionally, the backbone organization will advocate for the collective impact approach, seek funding opportunities, and engage with relevant stakeholders to ensure sustained support for the tourism sector. With additional staffing support, Hospitality NL is well positioned to serve the function as the backbone organization.

By adopting a collective impact approach with Hospitality NL as the backbone organization, the We Are Tourism Workforce Action Plan in Newfoundland and Labrador can benefit from increased collaboration, shared resources, and collective accountability. This approach will enable stakeholders to address complex challenges, leverage their unique expertise, and ultimately lay a foundation for the success of the action plan.



Section 5:

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Appendix A:

Detailed Analysis – Labour Market Challenges

Based on results from the three phases of our research, tourism operators in Newfoundland and Labrador are facing labour supply and demand challenges, along with a changing workplace environment.

LABOUR SUPPLY AND DEMAND

The tourism sector in Canada faces significant challenges in attracting a sufficient workforce to meet its operational needs. Businesses across the country encounter difficulties in finding and retaining suitable employees. Newfoundland and Labrador is no exception to this challenge. Some specific issues identified were:

- The perception of working in tourism has become much more negative over the past number of years. In an October 2022 study⁵, 61% of the resident survey respondents felt that the pay was low for most jobs in the tourism industry, while 46% of those who had never worked in tourism were more willing to if the pay was higher. Less than 1 in 4 tourism employees felt that promotion opportunities were satisfactory (21%). Additionally, negative opinions of the sector existed (e.g., 71% felt the pay was too low, and only 31% felt there were satisfactory promotion opportunities, etc.), further detracting from perceptions of tourism as a long-term career choice.

In addition, many individuals noted concerns about scheduling, lack of flexibility, long hours, negative impact on family life, lack of or limited training availability, and lack of career advancement opportunities. These issues presented challenges for both recruitment and retention of staff.

- The recruitment of staff has become increasingly difficult for the tourism sector in recent years. This struggle is reflected in national statistics, as 55% of small businesses in Canada reported labour shortages, including difficulties in hiring, retaining, or securing adequate staffing hours⁶. This is particularly noteworthy when jobs are seasonal, part-time, or include evenings and weekends.
- Attracting qualified job candidates is a challenge. Many operators indicated that there is a lack of skilled or qualified candidates available. Higher-skilled supervisory / management jobs were difficult to fill. As well, cooks and housekeeping jobs were particularly difficult to fill.
- Competitive compensation is a major issue to consider. Workers, in general, are looking for an increase in basic wages (beyond minimum wage), additional benefit packages beyond wages, and bonuses, with increased

inflation adding to worker expectations and demands. Operators are feeling the pinch, often struggling with financial debt from the pandemic years. Competition is often high in a community, both between tourism operators and against other sectors. This is particularly difficult in rural areas where, in many cases, there is a main employer that offers higher wages.

- Employee retention remains a significant issue. High staff turnover rates are often due to a number of factors, including negative workplace environment, lack of appropriate compensation, lack of job security, location isolation or lack of accessible and affordable transportation and housing, lack of training or professional development opportunities, lack of advancement opportunities, or simply the job being seen as a “first job” or summer employment experience. During the pandemic, there was widespread migration out of tourism into other more secure and less stressful sectors.

⁵ SNAPSHOT OF THE TOURISM SECTOR LABOUR MARKET. Provincial Report Series: Newfoundland and Labrador. Tourism HR Canada/Qatalyst. Feb 2023.

⁶ Canadian Federation of Independent Business, 2021

- Seasonality and its impact are widespread phenomena across the tourism sector. The disparity in visitor numbers between summer and winter in Canada is significant, with three times more visitors travelling during the summer season. Additionally, a substantial majority of total tourism revenues are generated within a narrow timeframe of 120 days, spanning from May to September⁷. This concentration of demand and revenue during a limited period further exacerbates the challenges associated with seasonality. Finding workers for seasonal jobs continues to be a challenge, as many individuals are looking for full-time permanent employment. Targeting students for summer jobs comes with challenges, particularly if trying to access programs for students to come from other provinces or countries, as affordable housing and transportation options are not readily available. As well, issues around seasonality are further exacerbated in rural regions.
- Non-local recruits are a potential solution when an operator is unable to hire locally in the region and needs to recruit beyond; however, there are barriers related to affordable housing and transportation, as well as potential challenges with language barriers. Non-local recruits could be from other communities, other provinces, or even other countries. If bringing in international workers, there is an additional challenge with these workers feeling isolated and not supported. It has also been noted that many international recruits leave their jobs and geographical locations once they receive permanent residency.
- Eligibility and applications for labour market programs are challenging to navigate. Many operators indicated challenges and negative experiences in attempting to make use of programs available for international recruitment options and those connected with Employment Insurance or other local support programs. Time, cost, and effort required were considered key barriers, as well as difficulty in understanding program criteria and eligibility in some areas.
- Expectations of government support continue to be a challenge. Some workers rely on government help between seasonal or temporary jobs, and long-term reliance on government support to sustain a worker's seasonal or transitory work may present a cultural barrier that needs to be overcome. For example, if off-season work becomes available, workers who expect a pattern of seasonal work followed by off-season government support may not be willing to continue to work off-season for low wages. The reality is that the high wages needed to offset the shift away from government assistance are likely beyond the reach of many small operators.
- Rural and isolated locations providing key visitor experiences have additional challenges. Many of Newfoundland and Labrador's high-value experience products are in rural or isolated areas. Difficulties in accessible and affordable transportation, housing and communications, as well as possibilities of social isolation, are key barriers to hiring and retaining staff in many rural and isolated communities.
- Student availability does not always extend to the entire high season timeframe of operations, making staffing for a full season difficult for some operators.

⁷ Tourism Industry Association of Canada, 2022

The findings from our research underscore the need for comprehensive approaches to address the multifaceted labour shortage challenges faced by the tourism industry. Strategies should consider not only short-term solutions to incentivize workers to return to work but also long-term measures to enhance compensation, improve job security, and create a supportive and attractive work environment.

By addressing these concerns, the industry can strengthen its workforce, overcome labour shortages, and foster sustainable growth in a post-pandemic landscape.

CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

The workplace has changed. It will never return to the environment of five years ago. It has changed significantly and rapidly, and to be competitive and resilient in today's world, operators and employees alike need to have a different perspective, a different approach, and different skills. With the large gap between demand and supply of workers, in many situations, the employee has the upper hand in the type of work and workplace environment they will agree to work in. Some key considerations for the future include:

New worker expectations

In today's workplace, workers and potential workers are looking for:

- Work / life balance. This may mean flexible scheduling for family or for personal reasons, working from home, family support such as daycare, and greater job security.
- Good compensation packages. This means more than just fair wages and may include a range of benefits such as health care, paid training and professional development for career progression, and extra benefits such as help with transportation or housing.
- Treatment of employees as individuals, not just as workers, and encouragement of team efforts and supports.
- Mental health and wellness supports.
- Advancement and training opportunities and various forms of recognition.
- Community activities and individuals with similar interests or in similar situations. This is of particular importance in rural and isolated communities.
- Company values that align with personal values.

Demographics

In Newfoundland and Labrador, in addition to low fertility rates, high rates of out-migration among young people in the most fertile child-bearing age range have further exacerbated the aging phenomenon. As a result, over the last 50 years the province's population has aged much more rapidly than any other province in the country⁸.

The province's median age has gone from five years lower than Canada's in 1971 to seven years higher than Canada's in 2022. The aging trend will continue for years to come, but the rate should slow as more young migrants move to the province.

The combination of an aging population and changing demographics in the context of the tourism industry presents a pressing concern. With fewer young workers entering the labour force and a growing number of individuals transitioning into retirement age, there is an imminent need to address labour shortages and develop strategies to attract and retain workers in the sector. Failure to address these demographic challenges could have long-term consequences for the sustainability and growth of the tourism sector.

⁸ Hospitality Newfoundland & Labrador Tourism HR Canada: Tourism Labour Market Update – October 2022

Implications of the changing demographics include:

- The need to expand the target market for new workers to include groups such as immigrants and refugees, mature workers, Indigenous individuals, parents, individuals laid off from other sectors, students from other areas (locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally), and persons with disabilities.
- If recruiting beyond the province, there should be an emphasis on the recruitment of potential new residents, not just for temporary jobs but, where possible, full-time jobs that offer longer-term workforce solutions.
- The need for an expanded set of supports for new recruits, which may include affordable housing, daycare, language learning, Canadian workplace culture training, health and wellness options, greater workplace orientation, knowledge of Newfoundland and Labrador, and other personal supports.
- Additional onboarding, upskilling and ongoing training availability for new labour groups such as newcomers to Canada, persons with disabilities, those from outside the province who do not know the Newfoundland and

Labrador culture, those who have not worked for a period of time, and others new to tourism.

- The need for increased learning and supports for operators in areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion, and a greater learning about specific cultural traits and practices.
- Operators must gain a knowledge of the needs and interests of different types of recruits they will need to attract for employment in the sector. Tourism HR Canada has begun work on identifying a range of archetypes of potential workers along with their specific expectations (such as compensation, including wages and other benefits).

Digitalization

The use of technology and digital tools is increasing at a rapid pace. There are many opportunities for digitalization to help with labour force shortages. For example, operators can use remote working and subcontracting to handle some of the administrative load associated with running a small business.

Additionally, in some tourism packages, digital platforms can manage reservations and bookings, support visitor experiences through self-guided or enhanced tours, menu

presentations, and ordering. Digitalization is also key in the area of marketing and reaching potential employees. For many operators, recruitment and selection can be totally virtual, so maximizing the outcomes of digital employment platforms is key. It is also important for job seekers to develop a “digital brand” to promote themselves to potential employers.

New Skill Requirements (Operators)

With the rapidly changing workplace requirements, new skills and competencies are needed for operators, including a whole new stream of human resource skills, previously unknown to many. These include advanced business acumen, technological skills, and new sales and marketing skills, as well as a full range of additional human resource and leadership skills.

These required human resource skills are extensive. There are new forms of recruitment and selection, as well as ongoing requirements for:

- Setting up and maintaining additional support and benefit packages
- Onboarding
- Skills training
- Health and wellness

- Scheduling
- Employee sharing
- Broader role or joint role responsibilities
- Occupational pluralism possibilities for seasonal workers
- Setting up teams
- Providing the appropriate environment to encourage retention of workers
- Working with others in the sector and community

Need for Regional / Community Joint Efforts and Cooperation

Particularly for rural and small operators trying to manage all aspects of the business, recruitment, retention, and support programs for employees require more time and effort than most operators have the capacity or capability to provide. The added stress of today's workplace environment limits their ability to support employees as they should. Regionally- and community-planned cooperation in marketing, recruitment, employee sharing, support programs, joint training, use of best practices, and other aspects are needed for efficiency and effectiveness for all businesses, but particularly for rural business operators.

DMOs and other community leadership organizations should coordinate community-based planning and implementation for attracting and retaining a resilient, qualified tourism workforce as part of a larger community workforce. The DestinationNEXT 2023 Futures Study⁹ indicates that “for any destination organization, what’s needed is an accelerated expansion beyond destination marketing to destination development / management. Furthermore, the data shows there is a greater need for actionable, data-driven business intelligence and to collaborate with partners more effectively to support community destination development efforts. This includes small business and workforce development,

partner support and education, resident engagement and education, workforce housing and childcare improvements, and advocacy to influence local, regional, and national policy.”

These efforts should align with community-based values, including those from the World Tourism Organization’s Sustainable Development Goals that refer to the workforce¹⁰. Many tourists are now looking for locations that promote sustainable and regenerative tourism.

⁹ MMGY Next Factor & Destinations International. 2023 Futures Study. A Strategic Road Map for the NEXT Generation of Destination Organizations

¹⁰ UNWTO Tourism for SDGs. How to Engage. <https://tourism4sdgs.org/act/companies/>. Accessed Oct 26, 2023 Note particularly SDGs #1,3,4,5,8,10 and 16.





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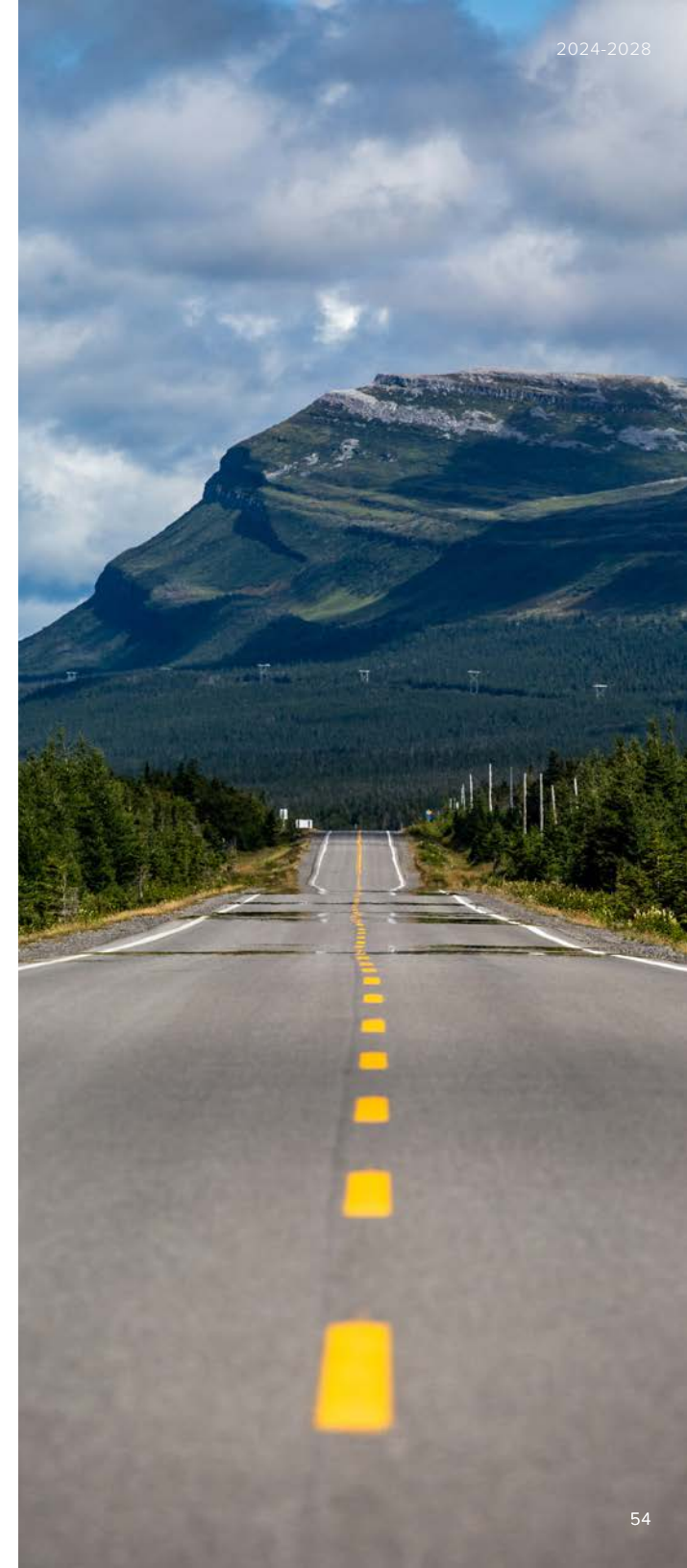
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Thank you