



## Skills shortage in the context of an aging workforce

The Atlantic Provinces Handbook

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# Preface



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This *WPP Handbook: Skills Shortage in the Context of an Aging Workforce - The Atlantic Provinces* provides a factual starting point to better understand skills needs in the context of an aging population. It has been produced as a supporting reference for the Atlantic Provinces Task Force - a project of the Workplace Partners Panel. The business and labour members of the Task Force are hosting a series of deliberative dialogues that involve a wide range of perspectives - including representatives from business and labour, colleges and universities, all levels of government, students, immigration settlement organizations and from others joining the discussion through an on-line forum.

Like the rest of the country, the Atlantic provinces face a world in which global communication, improving technology and increasing international competition challenge us to do our work in different ways, using different tools, and in particular, higher levels of knowledge. To be successful in this environment, business needs to be innovative and the workforce needs to be skilled. High levels of educational attainment, solid literacy and numeracy skills, and opportunities to use and develop skills in the workplace and beyond - these are the criteria that will no doubt contribute to the region's future prosperity.

Meeting the labour market needs that arise from these global trends and marketplace demands will be further complicated by the changing demography of the Atlantic provinces - with an aging workforce setting the stage for potentially serious skills shortages over the next decade. This handbook does not attempt to analyse the macro-economic conditions of the respective Atlantic provinces; nor does it predict specific areas of skill shortage. Instead, the *WPP Handbook: Skills Shortage in the Context of an Aging Workforce - The Atlantic Provinces* sets the stage for the participants in the deliberative dialogue process - providing a fresh and focused look at the demographic trends that will shape both the challenges and the possible solutions.

At the end of the day, solutions to the Atlantic provinces' human resource challenges will not be solved through a technical exercise, and will not be found "in the numbers". Rather, these challenges require a co-operative approach that brings together business and labour, along with government and other stakeholders, to engage in constructive and deliberative dialogue on labour market, skills and shortages issues. This is the goal of the Workplace Partners Panel.

**Shirley Seward**

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Demographics

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# Skills Shortage: A Serious Problem?

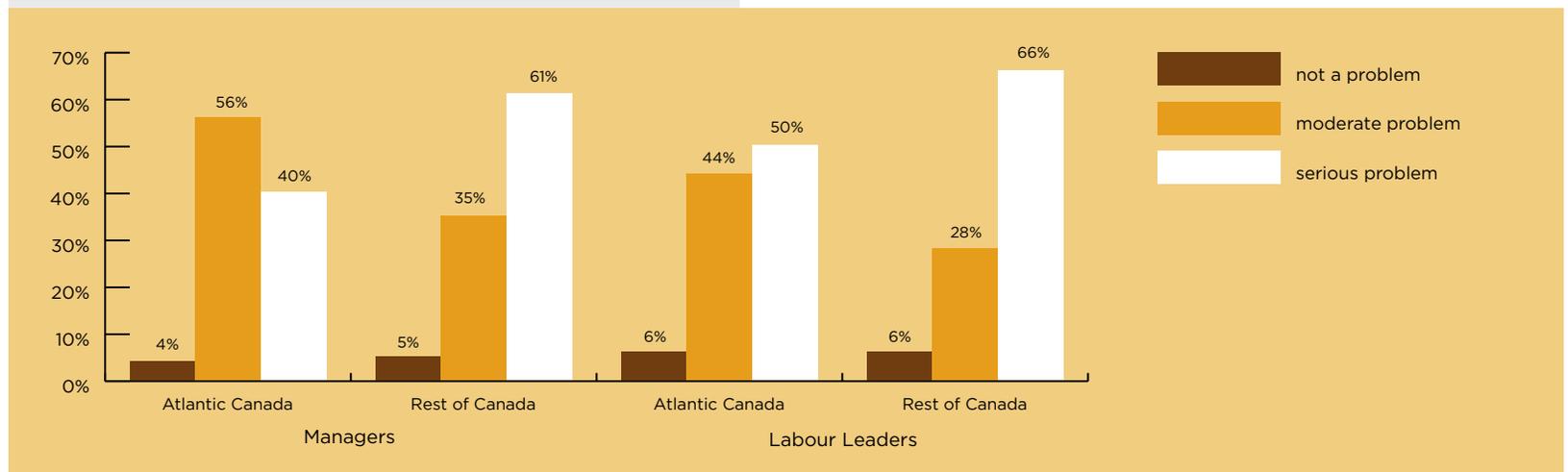
An important issue facing the Canadian labour market is whether and to what extent a tightening labour supply due to demographic trends and a growing demand for skills in the knowledge economy will materialize as skills shortage. Who will replace the retiring baby boomer generation? Are there sufficient numbers of young people entering the job market with the skills needed by our increasingly competitive and knowledge intensive economy?

The Workplace Partners Panel's *2005 Viewpoints Survey* has tracked the issue of skills shortage since 1996. In that year, less than one-third of public and private sector managers and labour leaders viewed skills shortage as a serious problem facing the economy. In 2005, one-half or more saw it as a serious problem, making skills shortage a top issue of concern for both managers and labour leaders (Figure 1).

Other research such as the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters *2004-2005 Management Issues Survey* finds that the lack of qualified personnel is one of the top three constraints on performance improvement.

Managers and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces also express a high level of concern about skills shortage. Forty percent of managers and 50% of labour leaders judge it to be a serious problem - fewer than 10% said it is not a problem. Managers and labour leaders are concerned about skills shortage for good reason - they are experiencing them first hand. Of the 126 managers surveyed in the Atlantic provinces, 42% said occupational shortages currently exist within their own organizations, and an additional 14% expected shortages within the next two years. The most common occupational groups in shortage are trades (private sector) and professionals (public sector).

Figure 1: Managers' and Labour Leaders' Views on Skill Shortages



Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005 Survey

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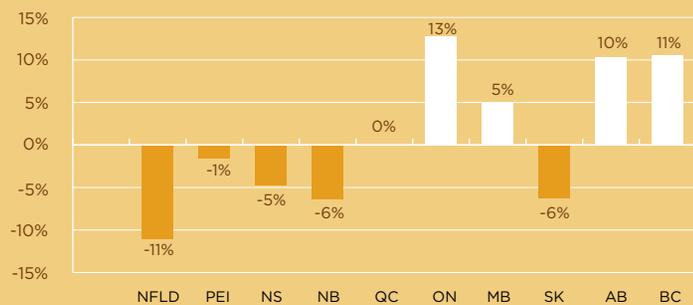
## Working-Age Population Projected to Decline in the Atlantic provinces

Over the past 30 years, Canada and the provinces could safely formulate their economic, social, and labour market policies on the presumption of continuous labour force growth.

There are certainly provincial examples of year-over-year decline in the labour force. But in the vast majority of instances, these were of short duration and were followed by a continued expansion in the number of labour force participants<sup>1</sup>. The next 30 years will likely be very different. The OECD projects that Canada's annual labour force growth will fall to less than 0.5% between 2000 and 2020. Over the period 2020 to 2050, labour force growth is expected to be negative<sup>2</sup>.

For some provinces, however, the decline in the size of the working age population is expected to occur sooner and be more pronounced. Leading provinces with declining populations are Newfoundland and Labrador, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Projected Change in the Size of the Working-age Population (Age 15-64), 2006-2021



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Statistics Canada population projections (Scenario 3: medium growth, medium migration trends) Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

Assuming that current labour force participation rates are carried forward<sup>3</sup>, the Atlantic provinces could enter a prolonged period in which economic and social policies will be predicated on a diminishing supply of labour and higher than average dependency ratios (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Total Dependency Ratio\*, 2006 to 2031

Year	Canada	NFLD	PEI	NS	NB
2006	43.9	40.3	46.0	43.4	42.8
2011	43.7	42.6	45.5	43.8	43.5
2021	51.4	56.1	56.3	54.8	55.1
2031	61.3	70.4	67.1	68.9	69.3

\*Total dependency ratio is computed as a percentage of children and elderly to population aged 15-64. For instance, in 2021, for every 100 persons in Canada aged 15-64, there will be 51.4 children (aged under 15) and elderly (aged 65 and over).

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Statistics Canada population projections (Scenario 3: medium growth, medium migration trends) Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

The nature and severity of the repercussions brought about by these developments will depend upon evolving demand conditions and other factors. It could lead to skills and labour shortages of broader magnitude than what has been experienced in the recent past. It will undoubtedly put pressure on our capacity to meet future labour market and skills requirements, and raises many important questions. How good is our understanding of the social and economic impacts and, if any, of negative labour force growth? How will economies with negative labour force growth attract new business and investment? Will provincial differences in labour force growth have an impact on regional disparities?

1 The notable exception is Newfoundland during the period 1992-1997, when the size of the labour force declined for six consecutive years. Saskatchewan also experienced eight annual decreases in its labour force since 1985, although not in consecutive years.

2 OECD (2005). *Aging Populations: High Time for Action*. Background paper prepared by the OECD Secretariat for the meeting of G8 Employment and Labour Ministers, London, 10-11 March, 2005.

3 In each of the Atlantic provinces, labour force participation rates in 2004 and 2005 are at the highest levels recorded since 1976.

# The East Coast Retirement Wave

In the coming years, the Atlantic provinces will experience a dramatic increase in their senior populations, fuelled by the wave of the retiring baby-boomer generation (persons born between 1947 and 1962). As of 2002, there were 224,000 working Atlantic Canadians who were within 10 years of the median retirement age, representing about one in five employed workers. In each of the Atlantic provinces, the near retirement rate is double what it was just 20 years ago, a result of the approaching baby-boomer retirement wave and a substantially lower median retirement age (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Near-retirement Rates and Median Retirement Age by Province  
(provinces ordered on the basis of 2002 near-retirement rate, highest to lowest)

	Near retirement rate*		Median retirement age	
	1987	2002	1987	2002
	%		years	
Prince Edward Island	10.0	24.9	65.7	59.4
British Columbia	11.3	23.6	64.3	60.3
Quebec	10.4	21.6	64.0	59.8
Nova Scotia	10.2	21.6	63.7	59.8
Newfoundland and Labrador	9.6	21.6	63.3	59.6
New Brunswick	9.2	20.9	64.6	59.6
Manitoba	11.5	20.3	64.6	61.2
<b>Canada</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>19.8</b>	<b>64.3</b>	<b>60.6</b>
Ontario	10.8	19.6	64.7	60.8
Alberta	11.4	15.0	63.1	63.4
Saskatchewan	15.3	13.8	64.1	65.1

\* the percentage of workers who are within 10 years of the median retirement age

Source: adapted from Statistics Canada, *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Feb., 2004

Concern about aging populations, rising dependency ratios and their potential impact on living standards has prompted the OECD to argue that “it is vital to improve labour market retention and hiring prospects for the over 50s” and that “a comprehensive package of measures are required which act both on the demand and supply side to encourage workers to remain longer in the workforce<sup>4</sup>.”

Policies and initiatives that would encourage workers to remain in the workforce longer may be difficult to effectively implement insofar as they run counter to actual retirement trends observed over the past 15 years. In Canada, the median age at retirement was fairly stable over the course of the 1970s and 1980s (around 65 years of age), but fell dramatically over the 1990s. The dramatic drop in retirement age was likely the result of several factors, including a change in 1987 which lowered the minimum age at which benefits could be withdrawn from the Canada Pension Plan.

Extending the working careers of Canadians or allowing workers to voluntarily work past ‘normal’ retirement age could be one way of dealing with skills shortage. However, the *2005 Viewpoints Survey* revealed that only 6% of managers in the Atlantic provinces described their organization or business as “very actively” exploring ways to extend the careers of its older workers. 59% said they were “not at all” active on the issue. Despite this, 82% of the managers surveyed in the Atlantic provinces, either moderately or strongly agreed with the statement that “prolonging working careers is a good way to deal with skills shortage as long as it is voluntary for workers”. On the other hand, only 42% of labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces agreed that prolonging working careers through voluntary measures is a good way to deal with shortages.

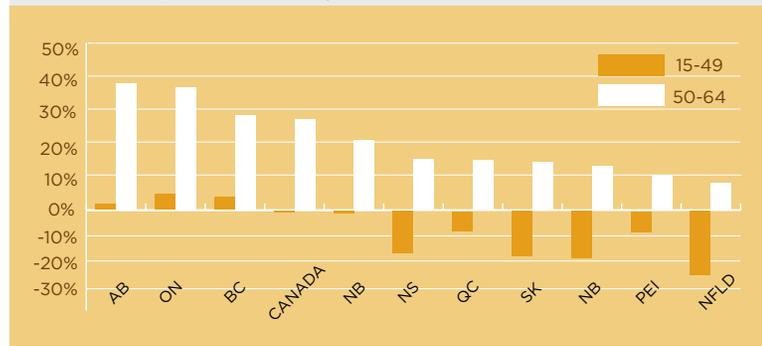
<sup>4</sup> OECD (2005). *Aging Populations: High Time for Action*. Background paper prepared by the OECD Secretariat for the meeting of G8 Employment and Labour Ministers, London, 10-11 March, 2005.

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# The Greying of the Workforce

The demographic trend of an aging population is significant for labour market policy and workplace practices not only because older workers will be *leaving* the labour force, but also because older workers will form an increasingly larger share of total employment over the next 15 years (prior to their retirement). Population projections carried out by Statistics Canada estimate that the population aged 50 to 64 years will increase by 27% between 2006 and 2021 (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percentage Change in the Number of Persons Aged 15 to 49 and 50 to 64, 2006-2021 Projections



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Statistics Canada population (Scenario 3: medium growth, medium migration trends) Catalogue no. 91-520-XIE.

In contrast, the population aged 15 to 49 is projected to remain essentially unchanged (0.3% decline) over the same period. Compared to Canada overall, the Atlantic provinces will experience more modest percentage increases in the number of persons aged 50-64, but more significant declines in the number of persons aged 15-49. From a labour market policy perspective, the increasing proportion of older and near-retirement workers in the workforce (Figure 6)

Figure 6: Persons aged 50-64 as a Percent of the Population Aged 15-64, Canada and Atlantic provinces

	2006	2021
	%	%
<b>Canada</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>31.6</b>
Newfoundland and Labrador	30.3	36.7
Prince Edward Island	29.0	32.4
Nova Scotia	29.0	35.0
New Brunswick	29.0	35.0

Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Statistics Canada population projections, Catalogue no. 91-520

is important for several reasons. First, it raises questions about future growth in the overall levels of training and skills in the Canadian labour force – a key factor in labour productivity. Surveys of adult education and training have shown clearly that the incidence of job-related training and the mean hours of training received declines substantially with age.

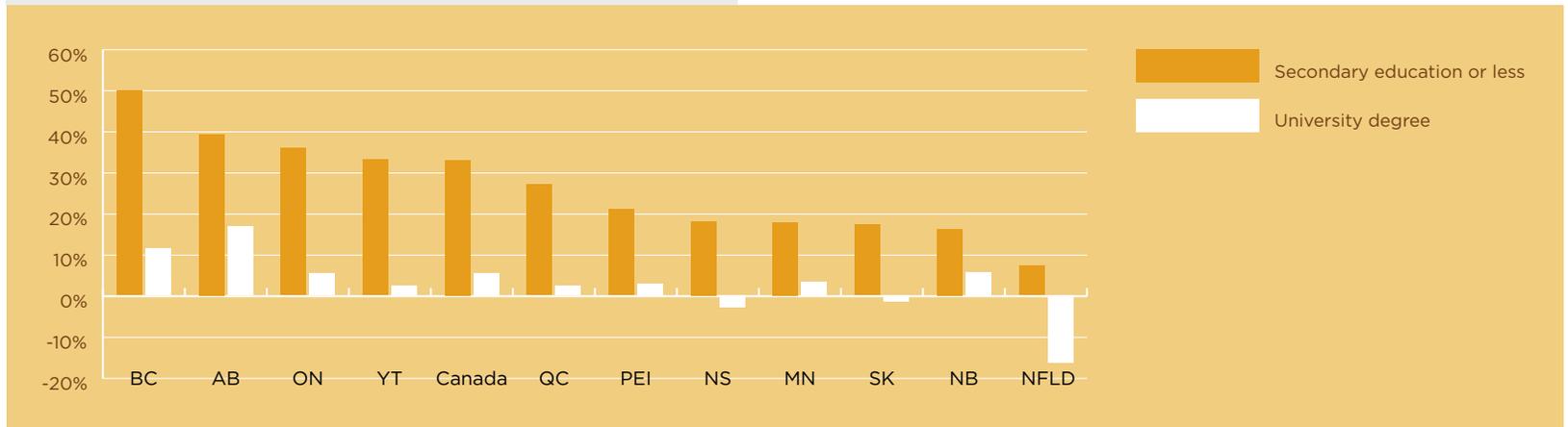
Second, an increasingly older workforce has implications for the kinds of workplace practices and working arrangements that would most appropriately accommodate the needs of an older workforce. Health and safety issues, older worker retention strategies, and phased-in retirement provisions are likely to become increasingly important human resource issues.

# Jobs Requiring Post-secondary Education Growing Rapidly

The expected tightening of labour supply is occurring at a time when the demand for skills is apparently increasing. Already, a large majority of net labour force growth occurs in jobs that typically require post-secondary education and training. For instance, Statistics Canada reports that from 1991 to 2001, the number of people in highly skilled occupations - those that usually require a university education - increased by 33% (Figure 7).

In contrast, low skilled occupations - those typically requiring high school or less - increased by just 5% over the same period. In all provinces, the rate of growth in highly skilled occupations far outpaced that of occupations requiring only secondary education or less. In Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Saskatchewan the number of jobs requiring less than post-secondary education actually declined between 1991 and 2001.

Figure 7: Rate of Growth in Highly Skilled Occupations (requiring university degree) and lower skilled occupations (requiring secondary education or less), 1991-2001, Canada and Provinces



Source: Canadian Labour and Business Centre, using Statistics Canada Census data, Cat. 96F0030XIE2001009

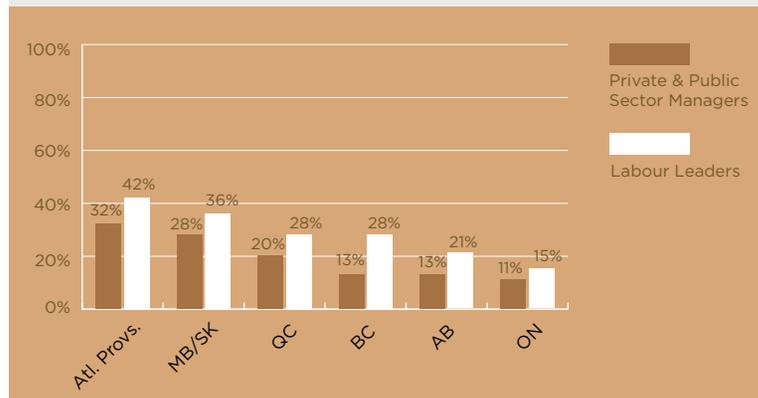
Migration and Labour Mobility  
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# Skills Shortages and the Movement of Workers

For many years, most Atlantic provinces have experienced net losses of people to interprovincial migration. These out-migrations represent potentially significant losses to provincial and regional labour markets in the Atlantic provinces, particularly at a time when competition for skilled workers is on the increase.

In the *2005 Viewpoints Survey*, 1,169 business, labour and public sector leaders across Canada were asked about the biggest challenges they faced in meeting their organizations' skills requirements. Compared to other regions, managers and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces were the most likely to say that "qualified workers moving out of province/region" was a serious problem (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Percentage of Managers and Labour Leaders who say that "qualified workers moving out of our province/region" is a serious problem in meeting skills requirements



Source: Workplace Partners' Panel, Viewpoints 2005

In fact, for managers in the Atlantic provinces, the departure of qualified workers from their province or region was seen as the number one problem in meeting organizational skills requirements over the next five years.

Across Canada, labour mobility has been an important issue in the last few years. Governments at the federal and provincial levels and regulatory bodies for certain professions have been working to reduce the barriers that prevent workers from moving from province to province (for example, differences in the licensing requirements required to practice a profession in a particular province).

While increased mobility may have benefits to workers, employers and to Canada as a whole, not all provinces or regions benefit in the same ways from the movement - or *migration patterns* - of workers. High unemployment rates in one region can create an outflow of people to regions where employment prospects are better. Economic 'booms' or 'busts,' sudden economic shocks and changes in government policy can 'push' people into deciding to leave certain geographic areas or 'pull' them towards others.

These 'pushes' and 'pulls' affect not only labour markets, but potentially the whole economic well-being of provinces, regions and communities. For example, people in some rural parts of the Atlantic provinces have seen how economic conditions can cause people to leave rural communities, and they have seen how the departure of people can, in turn, have negative economic consequences for these areas.

How well-placed are the Atlantic provinces - and areas within each of these provinces - to retain and attract people with skills? What can be done to encourage Atlantic Canadians - particularly young people and those with skills in high demand - to stay in their home province? If most of the Atlantic provinces do continue to see net out-migration rates for the foreseeable future, what are the potential impacts on local, regional and provincial economies and the well-being of Atlantic Canadians?

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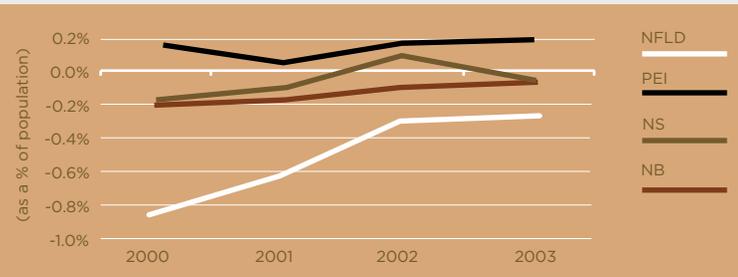
Over the past 30 years, the Atlantic provinces – except Prince Edward Island – have experienced a *net* loss of people through interprovincial migration (Figure 9). These losses have been particularly acute in Newfoundland and Labrador where, over the course of 25 years, the number of people leaving the province has exceeded the number entering it by 104,000 people<sup>5</sup>. This sizable net loss is equivalent to 20% of Newfoundland and Labrador’s current population. While Nova Scotia and New Brunswick experienced comparatively smaller net losses due to interprovincial migration, the losses have nonetheless contributed to a decline in population between 1996 and 2001.

**Interprovincial migration** refers to the number of people leaving one province for permanent residence in another province. Net interprovincial migration is the difference between the number of people who moved away from a province and the number who moved to that same province, in any given period (excluding international immigration/emigration). A negative net migration figure means that more people moved away from a province than moved to that province.

The Atlantic provinces have recently begun to see, or will see in the next few years, a turnaround to net in-migration according to estimates and projections of interprovincial migration conducted separately by Statistics Canada and the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council (APEC)<sup>6</sup>. According to APEC, annual net migration for the Atlantic region as a whole became positive in 2005 and will continue to increase steadily until about 2012. At the provincial level, Statistics Canada data generally support this prediction, but also show that net migration rates will remain negative in Newfoundland and Labrador until at least 2007, while the other provinces will see very different rates of in-migration growth over the next twenty-five years.

## Interprovincial Migration

Figure 9: Net Interprovincial Migration, 2000 to 2003



Net Migration

Province	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
PEI	165	62	165	238	630
NS	-2,007	-898	510	-620	-3,015
NB	-1,530	-1,218	-843	-636	-4,227
NFLD	-4,493	-3,352	-1,632	-1,519	-11,047

Source: Statistics Canada. CANSIM Table 011-0029

Whatever migration patterns emerge – and it is worth noting that these predictions are based on often volatile assumptions – interprovincial migration patterns will have important implications for the labour markets and economies of the Atlantic provinces. Whether these patterns are beneficial or detrimental will depend on the characteristics of the population in those provinces, the needs of provincial labour markets over the years to come, and future economic conditions in the Atlantic provinces. The challenge for labour market stakeholders in the Atlantic provinces will be to see how they can best turn these migration patterns to their advantage.

<sup>5</sup> Statistics Canada 2001 Census: Analysis Series – Profile of the Canadian Population by mobility status.

<sup>6</sup> APEC (2003) Urbanization and the Aging Population: What's ahead for Canada; Statistics Canada (2005) Population Projections for Canada, Provinces and Territories, 2005-2031

# Young Atlantic Canadians on the Move

All across Canada, young adults (less than 25 years of age) are far more likely than people in other age groups to move from one province to another. The reasons are easy to understand. Young adults are typically unmarried and without children, and often move in pursuit of post-secondary education or employment and income opportunities. Without the kinds of attachments that might keep them “at home”, young job seekers are also more likely to move in response to the economic cycles and “shocks” that might occur in their home province.

Over the past 10 years, all four of the Atlantic provinces have experienced a net loss of young adults through interprovincial migration (Figure 10).

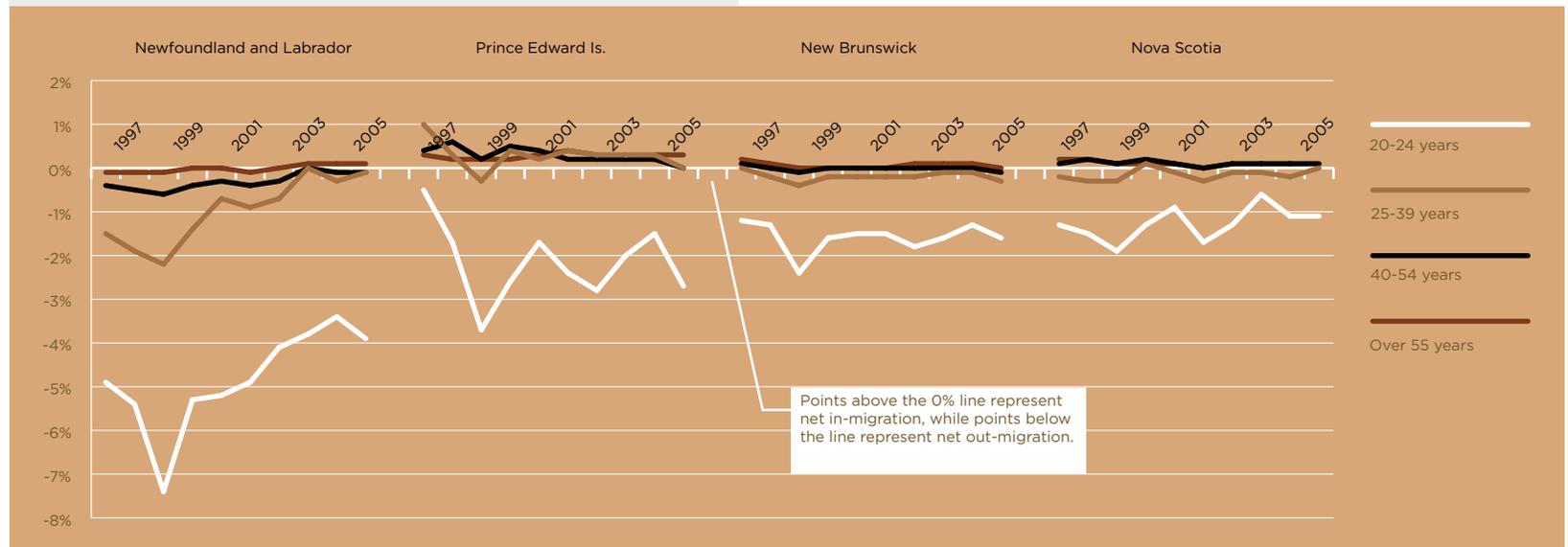
Figure 10: Net interprovincial migrants, Atlantic Provinces, 1996-2005

Province	20-24 years	25-39 years	20-39 years
Newfoundland and Labrador	-18,387	-11,994	-30,381
Prince Edward Island	-2,000	857	-1,143
New Brunswick	-8,110	-3,135	-11,245
Nova Scotia	-7,914	-3,094	-11,008

Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 051-0012

Newfoundland and Labrador’s net loss of young adults was by far the largest, with the number of persons aged 20-24 leaving the province exceeding the number entering it by 18,387. On an annual basis, Newfoundland and Labrador lost the equivalent of 3.5% to 5% of its 20-24 year olds to out-migration over this period (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Net Interprovincial Migration by Age Group, as % of population in each age group, 1996 to 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, CANSIM Table 051-0012

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## Young Atlantic Canadians on the Move

While the net losses of young adults were not as great in the other Atlantic provinces they were still significant. In PEI, the annual net loss of 20 to 24 year olds between 1996 and 2005 was equivalent to 2.2% of its young adult population each year, on average. Comparable figures for New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were 1.6% and 1.3% respectively.

In the face of increasing skills shortage and the need to replenish an aging and soon-to-retire workforce, is the out-migration of young people from the Atlantic provinces a serious problem? If so, what can be done to retain and attract young people in the Atlantic provinces?

Evidence from the Workplace Partners Panel's *2005 Viewpoints Survey* reveals that managers and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces view the *hiring of young labour market entrants* as an important action in addressing their human resource and skills requirements over the next five years. Among managers, it was the fifth most important action from a list of 16. Among labour leaders,

it was the number one action. 87% of managers judged the hiring of young people to be a "somewhat" or "very" important action. Virtually all of the labour leaders surveyed held this view (Figure 12).

Figure 12: Managers' and Labour Leaders' views on importance of hiring young labour market entrants



Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005

## Educational Characteristics of Interprovincial Migrants

It is useful to understand the educational and professional profiles of people who moved in and out of the Atlantic provinces because it can have important implications on the supply of human capital available to employers.

In most of the Atlantic provinces, there were significant net losses of people who held college or university certificates, diplomas or degrees in 2001. Of the people who moved into Newfoundland and Labrador between 1996 and 2001, 2,342 had a college or university diploma in 2001 and 2,492 had a university B.A. degree or higher (Figure 13). Of the people who moved out of Newfoundland and Labrador in the same period, 6,510 had a college or university diploma in 2001 and 7,369 had a university BA degree or higher. On balance, this represented a net loss of 4,168 people with a university or college diploma or certificate and 4,877 with a university B.A. degree or higher.

For New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, the numbers are not comparable in size but there are still significant out-migrations of

people who, in 2001, had some form of credential from a university or college. Thus, between 1996 and 2001, Prince Edward Island saw a net out-migration of some 200 people who had a university certificate, diploma or full degree, while New Brunswick saw similar losses of 3,471 people.

Nova Scotia also saw a net outflow of 1,042 people who held a bachelors degree or higher in 2001, but it also saw a net inflow of 2,376 people who had a college or university certificate or diploma in 2001. Excepting Nova Scotia, the Atlantic provinces also saw net losses of individuals who held trades certificates or diplomas in 2001.

There were also net interprovincial losses of people with only high school graduation, and net *gains* of people with no degree, certificate or diploma in all provinces (except Newfoundland and Labrador).

The losses at the higher end of the educational spectrum are significant because they represent losses of people who possess training and skills that employers increasingly have to compete to attract, and who also tend to be the main drivers of research and innovation in provincial or regional economies.

Figure 13: Educational Characteristics in 2001 of Interprovincial Migrants Aged 25-64

Province	In-, Out- and Net Migrants											
	NFLD			PEI			NB			NS		
	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net	In	Out	Net
<b>Highest Degree Obtained as of 2001</b>												
No degree, certificate or diploma	2,705	5,578	-2,873	1,158	628	530	3,887	3,660	227	4,690	4,618	72
High school graduation certificate	1,824	4,657	-2,833	712	739	-27	4,151	5,148	-997	5,293	5,659	-366
Trades certificate or diploma	2,190	5,502	-3,312	519	701	-182	2,780	2,847	-67	4,774	4,184	590
College or Univ certificate or diploma	2,342	6,510	-4,168	1,160	1,186	-26	4,562	5,108	-546	8,703	6,327	2,376
University Degree BA or Higher	2,492	7,369	-4,877	1,345	1,516	-171	5,376	8,301	-2,925	11,664	12,706	-1,042
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,553</b>	<b>29,616</b>	<b>-18,063</b>	<b>4,894</b>	<b>4,770</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>20,756</b>	<b>25,064</b>	<b>-4,308</b>	<b>35,124</b>	<b>33,494</b>	<b>1,630</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

Immigration

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## How Many Immigrants Come to the Atlantic Provinces?

The Atlantic provinces receive a small share of all immigrants who come to Canada each year. For instance, 3,454 immigrants cited one of the Atlantic provinces as their intended province of settlement in 2004 (Figure 14). This number represents just 1.5% of all immigrants coming to Canada that year.

Figure 14: Immigrants Intended to Arrive in Atlantic Provinces, 1997-2004

Provinces	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Newfoundland and Labrador	417	394	407	359	579
Prince Edward Island	188	134	107	153	310
Nova Scotia	1,610	1,699	1,419	1,474	1,770
New Brunswick	760	806	705	665	795
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	<b>2,975</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>2,638</b>	<b>2,651</b>	<b>3,454</b>
Canada	227,465	250,638	229,040	221,355	235,824

Source: Facts and Figures 2004 - Immigration Overview, CIC Canada

On a per capita basis, the number of immigrants going to each of the Atlantic provinces is much lower than in other Canadian provinces. In 2004, Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick each received just 1 immigrant per 1,000 residents, while Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island received about 2 immigrants per 1000 residents (Figure 15). In contrast, Alberta, Quebec and Manitoba received between 5 and 6 immigrants per 1000 residents, while Ontario recorded the highest immigration level at 10 immigrants per 1,000 residents.

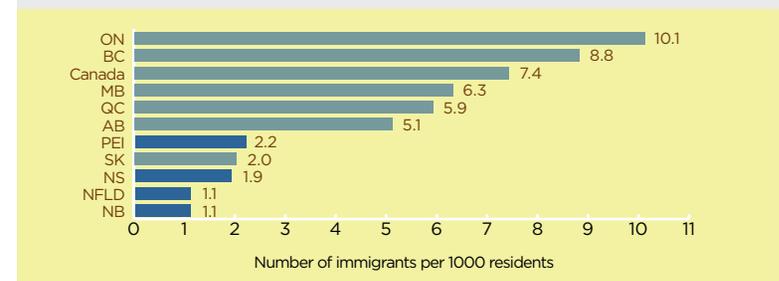
The relatively small number of immigrants choosing to settle in the Atlantic provinces is not a new experience for the region. During 1990-2004, the level of immigration to the region - measured by

the number of immigrant arrivals per 1,000 residents - was about 5 times lower than that in Canada as a whole.

Recent studies have shown that immigrants often choose to settle in areas where they have pre-existing networks of family or friends, or where there are ethnic or cultural communities similar to their own. Also important are economic factors such as the opportunities for employment or business<sup>7</sup>. The Atlantic provinces, where immigrants represent just 3.4% of the population, are likely to face particular challenges in attracting newcomers to the region.

The Workplace Partners Panel 2005 *Viewpoints Survey* asked private and public sector managers and labour leaders a number of questions pertaining to levels of immigration. Nearly one-half of private sector managers and labour leaders, and two-thirds of public sector managers in the Atlantic provinces agreed with the statement "too few immigrants come to my province/region". Given the number and share of immigrants settling in the Atlantic provinces, it is not surprising that managers and labour leaders in the region were more likely than those in any other province to hold this view.

Figure 15: Number of Immigrant Arrivals per 1000 Residents, 2004



Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005 Overview, CIC Canada

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada: Process, Progress and Prospects, 2003. 2004 Immigration Retention Survey, Corporate Research Associates Inc., November 2004

## How Many Immigrants Come to the Atlantic Provinces?

Of the labour leaders surveyed in the Atlantic provinces, about one-third expressed concern about the potential impact of immigration on the employment prospects of their members. A somewhat higher percentage of labour leaders (45%) expressed concern about immigration's potential impact on the wages of their members. However, relatively few survey respondents from the Atlantic provinces agreed that "too many immigrants come to my province/region". Although about one in five private sector managers and labour leaders held this view, it was still the least likely of the 14 immigration questions to elicit agreement.

Immigrants arriving in Canada overwhelmingly choose to settle in large urban centers. Eighty percent of all immigrants arriving in Canada between 1991 and 2001 reside in Canada's five largest urban centers. The preference for urban centers is also evident among immigrants going to the Atlantic provinces. In Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland and Labrador more than 65% of immigrants in each province settled in provincial capitals during 1994-2004. New Brunswick, in turn, is a noticeable exception having three cities (Moncton, Saint John and Fredericton) as the main destination of immigrants; however, the cumulative number of immigrants settling in these three metropolitan areas was never below 65% in the last decade.

Efforts to attract immigrants to the Atlantic provinces will only be truly successful if newcomers *stay* in the Atlantic provinces. Compared with other provinces, however, the Atlantic provinces have the lowest immigrant retention rates. Low retention is problematic for several reasons. It works against efforts to bolster population,

limits the impact of immigration in dealing with skills shortage, and represents an unrealized return on investments made in settlement and integration services, language and employment training.

The problem of immigrant retention has been recognized as an important issue by all Atlantic provincial governments. The Nova Scotia government for example, in its 2005 policy document *Nova Scotia's Immigration Strategy*, noted that "retention is key", and set an objective of increasing the immigrant retention rate to 70% for the 2006-2011 Census period. As in other Atlantic provinces, the government of Nova Scotia highlighted the importance of welcoming communities, good employment opportunities, and effective settlement and integration services – including language training and credential assessment and recognition – as critical factors affecting the retention of newcomers.

**Three Basic Categories of Immigrants** reflect the main goals of Canada's immigration system: family reunification, economic benefit to Canada, and humanitarian commitment.

**Family Class immigrants** are persons who are sponsored by a close family member such as a spouse, fiancé, dependent child, parent or grandparent who is already a Canadian citizen or resident.

**Economic class immigrants** consist of two groups: skilled worker and business immigrants. This class of immigrants is selected for their economic contribution to Canada. Immigrants coming through Provincial Programs are counted as part of the Economic class.

**Refugee class immigrants** – includes Convention refugees and other displaced persons resettled from abroad.

# Skills Profile of Recent Immigrants

Immigrants enter Canada through one of three basic categories. Of the 8,342 immigrants going to the Atlantic provinces in the three years starting in 2001 and ending in 2003, 50% entered Canada through the *economic* class (Figure 16). This group includes skilled workers and their dependents who are selected for the knowledge, skills and experience deemed necessary and appropriate for Canada's labour market. It also includes investors, entrepreneurs and self-employed immigrants. Another 2,313 immigrants (28% of total) came to the region to join close family members. Refugees made up about 21% of immigrants going to the Atlantic provinces between 2001 and 2003.

skilled immigrants and the immigrant candidate is evaluated by the point system that emphasizes level of education, official language proficiency, and amount of work experience among other criteria.

The educational attainment of new immigrants largely reflects the selection process. In 2001, 60% of recent immigrants (those arrived in Canada between 1991 and 2001) in the Atlantic provinces had post-secondary education compared to 41% of the Canadian-born population (Figure 17). Recent immigrants in the Atlantic provinces were more likely than the Canadian-born to have a university degree (34% compared with 11%); more likely to have a graduate

Figure 16: Immigration to Atlantic Region by Major Component, 2001-2003 Cumulative

Class	NFLD		PEI		NS		NB		Atlantic Provinces		Canada	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Family	253	22%	95	24%	1,358	30%	607	28%	2,313	28%	201,210	29%
Economic	479	41%	141	36%	2,498	54%	1,027	47%	4,145	50%	415,226	59%
Refugees	409	35%	153	39%	687	15%	534	24%	1,783	21%	79,021	11%
Other	24	2%	5	1%	56	1%	16	1%	101	1%	5,545	1%
Unknown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,165</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>4,599</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,184</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>8,342</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>701,004</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Facts and Figures 2003 - Immigration Overview

Between 2003 and 2004, and for the Atlantic provinces as a whole, the number of immigrants entering through the economic class rose to 1,869 – a 53% increase from 1,220. About one-half of this increase was due to elevated numbers of provincial nominees. As a result, the proportion of economic class immigrants increased from 46% in 2003 to 54% in 2004, still somewhat below the national average of 57%.

Under the economic admission class, the selection system does not target specific occupations. Instead, Canada aims to attract highly

level of university degree (12% compared with 2%); and less likely to have a trade certificate or diploma (9% compared with 14%).

Immigrants with post-secondary qualifications have specialized in a broad range of areas including Science, Engineering, Health Care, and Education. Recent immigrants with post-secondary qualifications residing in the Atlantic provinces were most likely to have majored in Engineering, Applied Science and Trades: about 30% of recent immigrants had studied in this field. Social Science, Education and Arts accounted for 27% of all recent immigrants with

## Skills Profile of Recent Immigrants

post-secondary qualifications, and 25% majored in Commerce, Management and Business Administration.

The Workplace Partners Panel 2005 *Viewpoints Survey* asked private and public sector managers and labour leaders a number of questions pertaining to Canada's immigration selection system. 44% of private sector managers and 36% of public sector managers surveyed in the Atlantic provinces agreed with the statement that "Canada's immigration selection system does not focus enough on the skills/occupations required by my organization". Similar levels of agreement were expressed by managers from provinces outside of the Atlantic provinces.

The survey results also indicate that managers and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces see a variety of barriers to employment faced by immigrants. Problems with the recognition of immigrants' credentials, lack of Canadian work experience, and to a lesser extent, adapting to workplace culture were commonly acknowledged to be barriers to employment.

One-half of managers and labour leaders surveyed in the Atlantic provinces agreed that "immigrants often lack the necessary language and communications skills" necessary to be hired by their organizations. A similarly high proportion of private sector managers and labour leaders agreed that "immigrants are more likely to require additional training than new employees who grew up in Canada". High levels of agreement among respondents were evident on the issue of services and resources in support of credential recognition. More than one-half of private sector managers and labour leaders agreed that not enough resources are available for this purpose.

Figure 17: Selected characteristics of recent immigrant and Canadian-born populations in the Atlantic provinces, 2001

Key Characteristic	Recent immigr. (1991-2001)	Canadian-born
<b>Educational profile</b>		
No post-secondary education	40.5%	59.4%
Post-secondary education	59.6%	40.6%
Trades certificate or diploma	9.2%	13.8%
College certificate or diploma	11.7%	13.5%
University certificate or diploma	4.5%	2.1%
University degree	34.2%	11.2%
Bachelor's degree	19.9%	8.2%
University certificate	2.4%	1.0%
Master's degree	7.4%	1.8%
Earned doctorate	4.6%	0.2%
<b>Total population 15 years and over</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Major field of post-secondary study</b>		
Physical Science, Engineering and Trades	36.6%	38.5%
Agricultural, biological and nutritional sciences	4.4%	8.1%
Engineering, applied sciences and Trades	29.9%	22.2%
Mathematics, computer and physical sciences	2.2%	8.1%
Health professions and related technologies	11.5%	15.3%
Commerce, management and administration	24.8%	16.9%
Social Sciences, Education and Arts	26.9%	29.0%
Educational, recreational and counselling	11.1%	7.5%
Fine/Applied arts, Humanitarian/Related fields	8.7%	12.3%
Social sciences and related fields	7.1%	9.1%
<b>Total persons with post-secondary education</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Occupational profile</b>		
Sales and Service Occupations	27.8	27.4
Business, Finance, Administrative Occupations	12.8	16.8
Management Occupations	12.6	9.4
Natural/Applied Sciences, Related Occupations	10.7	5.0
Occupations in Social Sc., Education, Gov. Services	10.3	7.0
Health Occupations	7.6	6.3
Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators	6.7	14.3
Occup. in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	4.3	2.0
Occupations in Unique to Primary Industry	3.8	5.4
Occupations in Unique to Processing	3.6	6.4
Manufacturing and Utilities		
<b>Total persons employed</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Participation rate</b>	<b>62.7</b>	<b>61.8%</b>
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	<b>11.1%</b>	<b>14.1%</b>

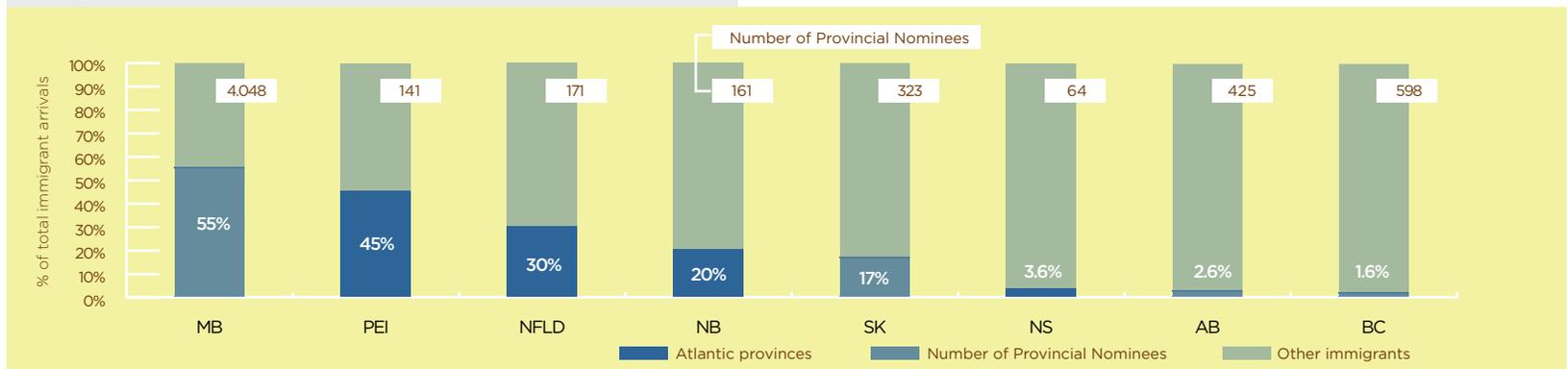
Source: Census 2001, custom tabulations

# Increasing Use of Provincial Nominee Programs

Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) may be an important way for the Atlantic provinces to increase immigration levels and enhance the responsiveness of immigration to changing labour and skills requirements. By the end of 2002, all four Atlantic provinces had signed PNP agreements with the federal government. The agreements allow each province to nominate up to 200 skilled immigration candidates annually (300 candidates in case of Newfoundland and Labrador) who will meet the specific economic and industrial development needs of the province.

Since the inception of the PNPs, each of the Atlantic provinces has seen an increase in the number of immigrants coming through the program, although none has yet to reach the maximum numbers allowed through the terms of the respective agreements. In 2004, Newfoundland and Labrador received 171 provincial nominees, the most of any Atlantic province, while Nova Scotia had received the fewest number of provincial nominees, at 64 (Figure 18). As a percentage of total immigration, PEI's 141 provincial nominees represented nearly one-half (45%) of all immigrants to the province, while Nova Scotia's provincial nominees represented just 4% of its total immigration.

Figure 18: Provincial Nominees, Number and as Percent of Total Immigration, 2004



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using CIC Canada Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration 2005; The Monitor, Spring 2005, CIC Canada

Note: Provinces not shown on the chart do not have Provincial Nominee Programs.

## 22

Canada's Foreign Worker Program is intended to help Canadian employers address skills shortage. Entry to Canada under the program has several requirements, including a documented job offer from an employer, a labour market impact assessment by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, and the issuance of a valid work permit. Each year, the program admits over 90,000 foreign workers for temporary employment in Canada (Figure 19).

Figure 19: Foreign Worker Flows by Destination, 2004

Provinces	Number	% of Total
Newfoundland and Labrador	1,109	1.2
Prince Edward Island	75	0.1
Nova Scotia	1,403	1.5
New Brunswick	576	0.6
<b>Atlantic Provinces Total</b>	<b>3,163</b>	<b>3.4</b>
Quebec	14,795	16.0
Ontario	42,757	46.1
Manitoba	1,575	1.7
Saskatchewan	1,069	1.2
Alberta	8,370	9.0
British Columbia	20,308	21.9
Territories	188	0.2
<b>Total - Canada</b>	<b>92,713</b>	<b>100.0</b>

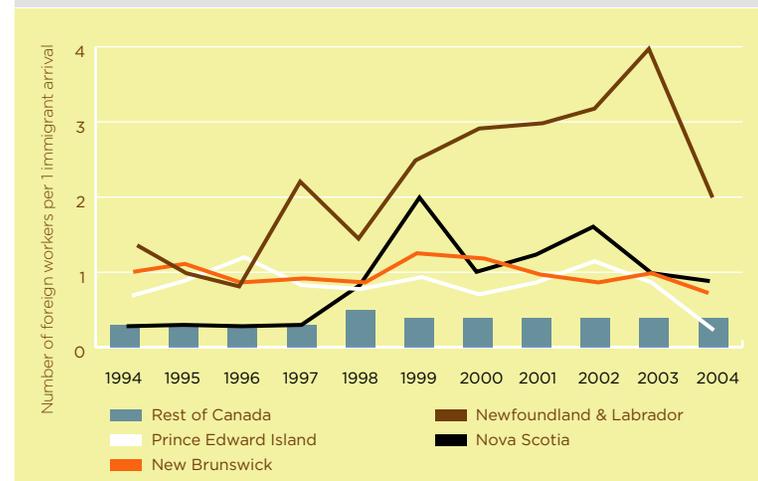
Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada, *The Monitor*, Fall 2005

In 2004, the Atlantic provinces received 3,163 temporary foreign workers. While this number represents just 3.4% of Canada's annual flow of temporary foreign workers, it is nonetheless more than double the share of annual immigration received by the region

## Temporary Foreign Workers

1.5%. Indeed, over the past decade, each of the Atlantic provinces have had instances in which the annual intake of temporary foreign workers has equaled or exceeded the annual intake of landed immigrants (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Annual Flow of Temporary Workers to Atlantic Provinces, 1994-2004



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre using Facts and Figures - Immigration Overview, 2003 and 2004, CIC Canada; *The Monitor*, CIC Canada, Fall 2005

Most notable in this respect is Newfoundland and Labrador, where the annual intake of temporary foreign workers has commonly outnumbered landed immigrant arrivals by a 2 to 1 margin. In no Canadian province outside of the Atlantic region has this happened. For employers in Atlantic provinces, it would appear that access to and utilization of international migration flows has relied more heavily on temporary rather than permanent immigration streams.

## Temporary Foreign Workers

Temporary foreign workers are employed in all industry sectors, in both skilled and semi-or low-skilled occupations. They include managers and professionals, technicians and skilled crafts and trades workers, intermediate sales and service personnel, live-in caregivers, and manual labourers. In 2004, 77% of foreign workers entering Canada came from ten countries: United States (17%), Mexico (12%), United Kingdom (8%), Australia (8%), France (7%), Jamaica (6%), Philippines (6%), Japan (6%), India (3%) and Germany (3%). While the Foreign Worker Program offers employers flexibility in dealing with labour and skills requirements, and can be an effective solution to shortages, elements of the program have been strongly criticized by labour organizations and other groups. The United Food and Commercial Workers for example, has led an active campaign to address poor wages and working conditions of seasonal agricultural workers.

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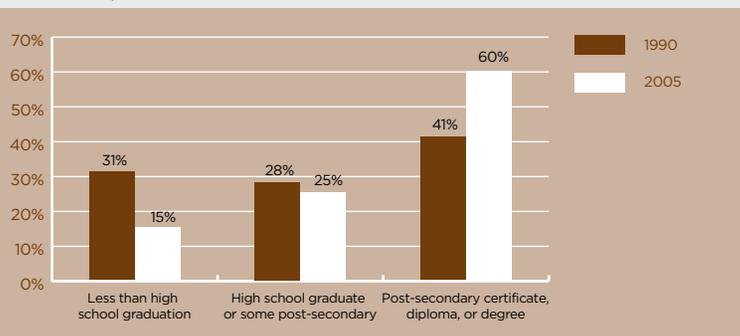
# Rising Levels of Educational Attainment

With today's pace of technological advancement and market globalization, education and life-long learning - including workplace training - play an essential role in generating the skills needed for economic success. Education and training can also enhance individual job security and employment outcomes. A remarkable increase in the education level of the Atlantic provinces' labour force over the past 15 years suggests that Atlantic Canadians recognize the importance of skills and education. In line with the national trend, the labour force in the Atlantic provinces is characterized by an increased proportion of people with post-secondary qualifications, and a declining proportion of people with less than high school graduation (Figure 21). Between 1990 and 2005, the percentage of workers with less than high school graduation fell by more than half (31% to 15%), while the percentage of workers with post-secondary education rose from 41% to 60%. This shift towards higher levels of education is the result of increased partici-

pation in post-secondary programs as well as the retirement of an older generation of workers who on average had relatively lower levels of educational attainment. It is worth noting, however, that despite the noticeable improvement in the educational levels, the proportion of the Atlantic provinces' labour force with less than high school graduation still remains higher than the Canadian average (Figure 22).

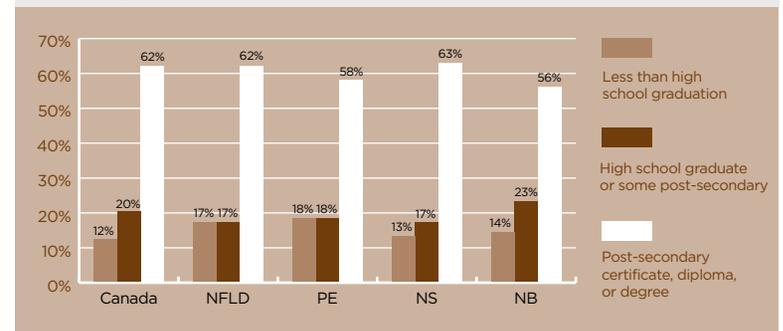
High levels of post-secondary attainment are evident in each of the Atlantic provinces, and they are on par with the Canadian labour force as a whole. A highly educated workforce also means that workers will look for meaningful opportunities to put those skills to use, as well as for the possibility of further skills development in the workplace. While this represents a risk in terms of potential out-migration, it can also be the foundation of increased entrepreneurial activity, which will generate opportunities of its own.

Figure 21: Educational Attainment, Labour Force Age 25 and over, 1990 and 2005, the Atlantic Provinces



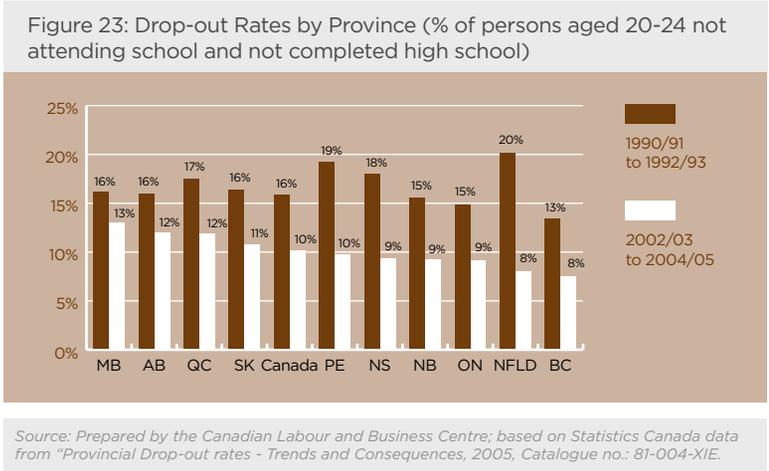
Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre; based on Statistics Canada data from the Labour Force Historical Review, 2006, Catalogue no.: 71F0004XCB.

Figure 22: Educational Attainment, Labour Force Age 25 and over, 2005



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre; based on Statistics Canada data from the Labour Force Historical Review, 2005, Catalogue no.: 71F0004XCB.

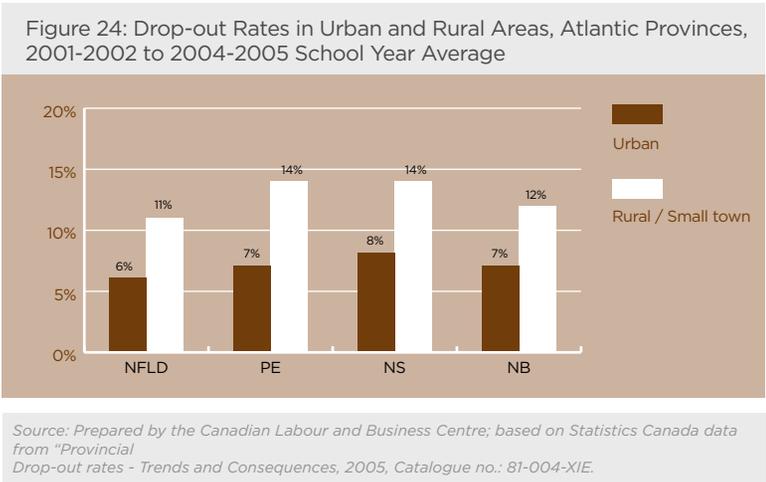
Over the past 15 years, drop-out rates have fallen sharply in each of the Atlantic provinces (Figure 23 and 24). For example, at the start of the 1990s, Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island had the highest provincial drop-out rates, as one in five persons aged 20 to 24 was not attending school and had not graduated from high school. Over the past three years, however, drop-out rates in these provinces have been less than 10% - which is below the national average. Newfoundland and Labrador made the most significant improvement in moving from the highest drop-out rate to the second lowest among the provinces.



Despite declining drop-out rates, there are roughly 13,900 young people in the Atlantic provinces who have dropped out of high school (5,700 in Nova Scotia; 4,500 in New Brunswick; 2,800 in Newfoundland and Labrador; 900 in Prince Edward Island). Also of continuing concern is a relatively high drop-out rates in rural areas and small towns as compared with those found in urban centres - a

# Declining Drop-out Rates

difference that is common to all provinces, including the Atlantic provinces. In Prince Edward Island for instance, the rural and small town drop-out rate is double that found in urban centres.



In an age when most new employment opportunities require at least high school education, young people who have dropped out of high school are far more likely to end up unemployed, in jobs with low earnings, and with diminished long term prospects (Figure 25). In an age of emerging skills shortage, high school drop-outs constitute a tremendous underutilization of potential talent.

Figure 25: Unemployment Rates (%), Persons Aged 25-44, 2005

Province	Not completed high school	High School Graduate	University Degree
NFLD	33.3	16.5	4.8
PEI	20.9	13.6	5.0
NS	13.5	10.2	4.3
NB	23.6	9.8	3.5

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Historical Review, 2006, Catalogue no. 71F0004XCB

# Literacy and Numeracy Skills

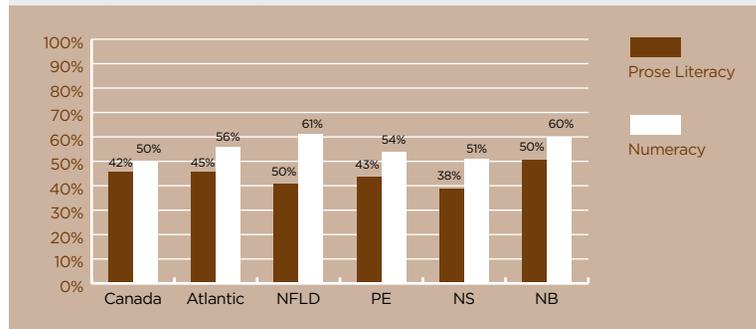
Statistics on educational achievement do not paint a complete picture of the state of employment readiness in the Canadian population. Even as education levels increase, a large number of Canadians still do not possess the literacy and numeracy skills required to meet the needs of the knowledge economy or engage in lifelong learning.

Proficiency in literacy is not simply about ability to read. It is rather about the ability to understand and use information from instruction manuals, to locate and use information contained in job applications, transportation schedules, tables and charts, to apply arithmetic operations to complete an order form or balance an account, and the ability to engage in goal-directed thinking and action when routine solution procedures are unavailable. Literacy and numeracy skills affect employment prospects and earnings, the types of programs in which students can enrol, the types of jobs that can be supported in the economy, the nature and level of expenditures for social programs, workplace productivity and per capita GDP.

Results from the 2003 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS) indicate that the population aged 16-65 in Canadian provinces and territories performed relatively well in international comparisons. However, significant shares of the population in each province demonstrated proficiency levels below the minimum level many experts deem necessary to adequately cope with demands of work and life in a modern, knowledge-based society and economy (Figure 26). Among the Atlantic provinces, the populations of Newfoundland and Labrador and New Brunswick were more likely to demonstrate low literacy and numeracy skills.

Even though the IALSS research finds large segments of the adult population with low literacy and numeracy skills, relatively few of Canada's managers and labour leaders view it as a serious problem facing the economy and labour market. Results from the Workplace Partners Panel's *2005 Viewpoints Survey* find that only 6% of managers in the Atlantic provinces and 21% of labour leaders felt that current employees required "much improvement" in basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, and few felt that low worker literacy skills would be an impediment to meeting future skills requirements (9% of managers and 16% of labour leaders). The perspectives of business and labour leaders on literacy skills could signal a "disconnect" with the actual state of literacy proficiencies. In this respect, workplace initiatives that address low literacy levels may be particularly challenging to implement.

Figure 26: Proportion of Population aged 16 to 65 with Low\* Prose Literacy and Numeracy Skills, 2003



Source: Prepared by the Canadian Labour and Business Centre; based on IALSS data, 2003.

\* Below Level 3. For more information on definitions, see Building on our Competencies: Canadian Results of the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-617-XIE.

# 28 Rising Participation in Job-related Training

In each of the Atlantic provinces, the percentage of the workforce participating in job-related training was higher in 2002 than in 1997 (Figure 27). This elevated level of participation applies to formal and structured training leading to certification as well as formal training sponsored by employers. Nova Scotia stands out with the highest levels of participation among the Atlantic provinces and with levels above the national average. Participation rates in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Prince Edward Island are the lowest of the Atlantic provinces, and below the national average.

Despite the increased levels of participation in job-related training, there are certain segments of the workforce in each province that are less likely to undertake formal training. The Adult Education and Training Survey found lower levels of formal training among workers with lower levels of educational attainment, older workers, and workers in smaller firms. The last group, however, often receive informal training, according to the results of a 2002 survey conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

Employee training continues to be a prominent concern among business and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces. In the Workplace Partners Panel's *2005 Viewpoints Survey*, private and public sector managers were asked to specify the importance of employee training to their organization's overall business strategy. 68% indicated that employee training was very important or even crucial, while no one said that training was unimportant. Similarly, 70% of labour respondents in the Atlantic provinces said it was a very important or crucial part of their overall bargaining issues.

Figure 27: Participation Rate in Job-related Training for the Adult Work Force<sup>1</sup>, Atlantic Provinces and Canada, 1997 and 2002

	1997	2002
	%	%
<b>Formal job-related training<sup>2</sup></b>		
Newfoundland and Labrador	22.9	29.5
Prince Edward Island	23.2	30.6
Nova Scotia	35.0	38.1
New Brunswick	25.1	34.7
Canada	28.5	34.7
<b>Employer-supported formal job-related training<sup>3</sup></b>		
Newfoundland and Labrador	16.4	19.9
Prince Edward Island	18.0	20.3
Nova Scotia	28.4	28.9
New Brunswick	19.3	25.8
Canada	22.4	25.0
<b>Informal job-related training<sup>4</sup></b>		
Newfoundland and Labrador	N/A	25.7
Prince Edward Island	N/A	29.7
Nova Scotia	N/A	34.1
New Brunswick	N/A	31.2
Canada	N/A	32.5

Source: Adult Education and Training Survey, Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 81-595-MIE2004015

1 The adult workforce is the population aged 25-64 who were employed at some point during 1997 and 2002, respectively.

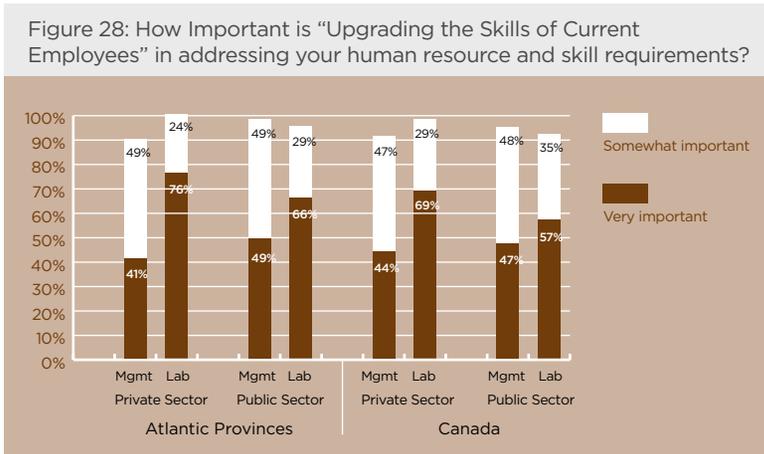
2 Formal job-related training refers to structured courses or programs related to a worker's current or future job and which result in some form of formal recognition upon completion (e.g. certificate or diploma).

3 Employer-supported training includes a range of supporting activities, including providing the training, paying for the training, allowing flexible work schedules to accommodate training.

4 Informal job-related training is unstructured and does not lead to any formal qualification.

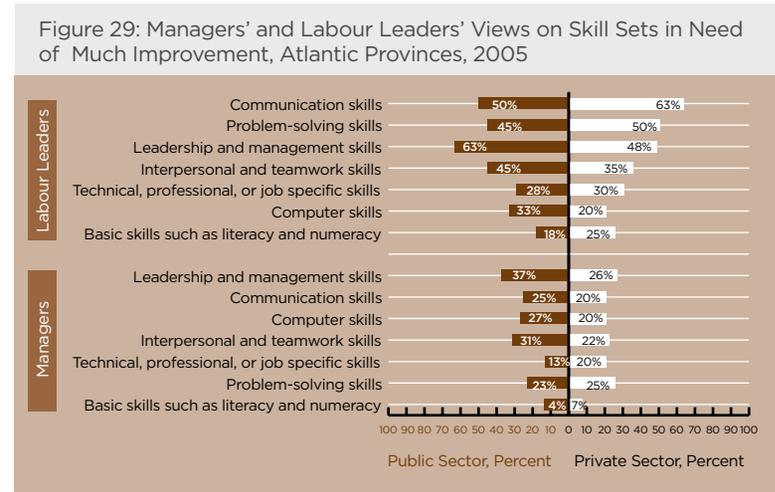
# Managers and Labour Leaders Perspectives on Workplace Training

The Workplace Partners Panel's *2005 Viewpoints Survey* asked managers and labour leaders to consider the importance of various actions in addressing their organization's human resource and skills requirement over the next five years. The survey included a list of 16 possible actions and respondents evaluated the action as "not important", "somewhat important" or "very important". The results show high levels of agreement on the importance of upgrading skills of current employees (Figure 28).



Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005.

Managers and labour leaders also agreed that their current workforces could use improvement in a wide range of skill sets (Figure 29).



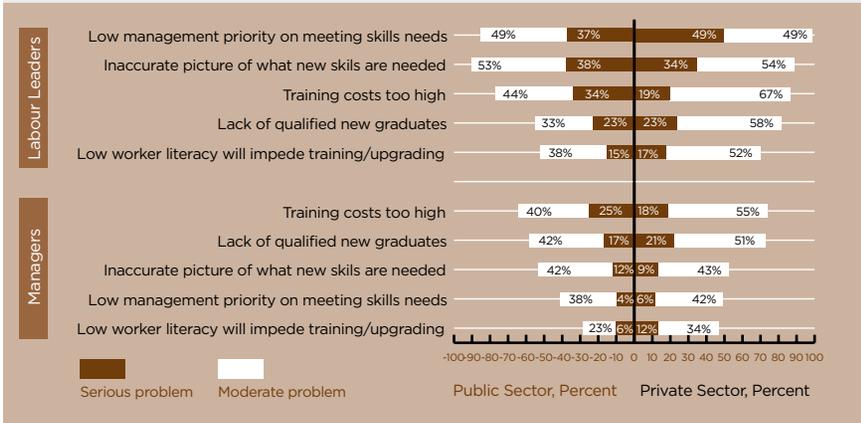
Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005.

So-called "soft skills" such as communication, leadership and problem-solving skills were commonly cited as areas requiring "much improvement". Basic skills such as literacy and numeracy were least likely to be identified as needing much improvement.

# 30 Managers and Labour Leaders Perspectives on Workplace Training

Despite agreement on the importance of upgrading skills and mutual recognition of the skills set in need of improvement, 70% of managers and close to 90% of labour leaders responding to the 2005 Viewpoints Survey said they anticipated problems meeting future labour and skills requirement (Figure 30). Labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces were most likely to cite “low management priority on meeting skills need” and “inaccurate picture of what new skills are needed” as serious problems. Relatively few managers felt these issues were serious problems. The most commonly cited serious problems among managers in the Atlantic problems were “too high training costs” and “lack of qualified new graduates.”

Figure 30: Managers’ and Labour Leaders’ Views on Problem Meeting Skills Requirement, Atlantic Provinces



Source: Workplace Partners Panel, Viewpoints 2005.

## Conclusion:

This *WPP Handbook: Skills Shortage in the Context of an Aging Workforce – The Atlantic Provinces* has provided an overview of some of the key demographic trends taking place within the Atlantic provinces. The information presented on population and workforce aging, interprovincial migration, immigration, education and training are provided as a supporting reference for the Workplace Partners Panel’s Atlantic Provinces Task Force as it considers solutions to the human resource and skills challenges facing the region. The *WPP Handbook* builds on a growing body of research and analysis produced by governments, academics and other organizations within the Atlantic Provinces.

Given the large number of workers expected to retire in the coming years and population projections, which point to a decline in the size of the working-age population, it is not surprising that human resource and skills issues have gained prominence among business, labour, and public sector leaders in the Atlantic provinces. Indeed, the Workplace Partners Panel’s *2005 Viewpoints Survey* found that more than 90% of managers and labour leaders in the Atlantic provinces judged skills shortage to be a moderate or serious problem facing the economy.

The *Viewpoints* findings also suggest that business and labour leaders recognize the importance of working together to address skills needs. As an illustration of this, 80% of the managers and virtually all of the labour leaders surveyed felt it important for business, labour and government to work together to improve the quantity and quality of workplace training. This finding underscores the need for collaborative approaches to the human resource and skills challenge facing the Atlantic provinces. The WPP’s Atlantic prov-

inces Task Force brings together business and labour, along with government and other stakeholders, to engage in constructive and deliberative dialogue, working toward a better and shared understanding of the issues, and laying the foundation for meaningful solutions.

“The Workplace Partners Panel will sponsor regional task forces, bring together stakeholders and ensure workforce strategies are developed that respect regional economic and demographic circumstances across the country.”

**Perrin Beatty**, founding Co-chair

“To meet Canada’s labour market and skills challenge, we need a more constructive and collaborative approach that involves all levels of government, educators and certainly, business and labour.”

**Ken Georgetti**, founding Co-Chair

“The Workplace Partners Panel provides a leadership opportunity for business and labour on the human resource issues that are of the utmost importance to our economic well-being.”

**Shirley Seward**, CEO, Canadian Labour and Business Centre  
Workplace Partners Panel



Canadian Labour and Business Centre



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