

Career Rising

Preparing for education & employment

The Career Rising Program is a program delivered in partnership with the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council, that provides skills development camps and work experience within the agricultural and resource sectors. The program supports dependents of of Employment Support and Income Assistance (ESIA) clients, and youth in care (ages 15 to 19) to learn employability skills, earn wages, connect to community, and help meet local industry labour market needs.

There are four components to the program:

1. A two-week skills development camp focused on building self-confidence, leadership skills, work readiness, financial literacy, and career exploration;
2. A paid work experience with a local employer within the agricultural and resource sectors;
3. Post-work experience supports that includes resume development, and ongoing connection to community and work throughout the school year;
4. A post-secondary grant comprised of matched wages (up to a maximum of \$1200/summer) by Community Services, and \$500 per student from the Community Credit Union, to help encourage students to attend post-secondary and alleviate future post-secondary costs.

How does it help students?

The program focuses on addressing specific barriers that dependents of ESIA, or youth in care of the Minister may face. In addition to the typical barriers youth generally face, including limited work experience, age, a lack of high school completion, and limited knowledge of the job market, these youth may face additional barriers to employment and self-sufficiency, such as a lack of family support and stigma.

The Career Rising Program provides supports tailored to these barriers to give youth the opportunity for career exploration, work experience, and on-the-job support to help them build a career independent of government supports.

Why are students being matched with employment in the agricultural sector?

It is expected that the program will expand over time to include other resource-based sectors with labour market needs, such as fisheries and forestry.

What is new in the program this year?

DCS has implemented a post-secondary grant component to the program.

The grant is administered by the Nova Scotia Co-operative Council through the Community Credit Union, and matches earned wages up to \$1200 per youth per year of work towards post-secondary costs (about 25% of earned wages). The Community Credit Union has committed to providing a one-time \$500 contribution per youth to enhance the grant.

Participants who return to the program each summer are eligible each year for the maximum grant contribution. For example, if a youth attends the program for three years and maximizes the provincial contribution, they would have \$4100, plus interest, available for their post-secondary studies. Like a Registered Education Savings Plan, the funds are only released to the youth upon proof of attendance at a student loan-approved post-secondary institution in or out of province (community college, private career college, or university).

The Career Rising post-secondary grant compliments existing post-secondary support programs offered by Community Services. The Educate to Work for Dependents of ESIA Clients Program provides funding support to dependents to attend NSCC core programming.

Eligible youth in care have access to three post-secondary support programs.

1. The Educational Bursary Program covers the costs of tuition, books and related expenses, in addition to regular maintenance up to the age of 19.
2. The Secondary Educational Foundation Program provides support to youth exiting care at age 19 to complete high school in order to pursue post-secondary studies.
3. The Extension to the Educational Bursary Program supports former youth in care with their post-secondary studies, up to their 24th birthday.

Testimonials

"I just wanted to say how much we appreciate having this program that brings young people interested in agriculture to our door to learn about small farming and all the diversity of things that we grow and do each day. We are just busy enough to need another helper on our farm, but too small to afford one.

Our student was gentle with all of our livestock and took great care of them. She showed an appreciation of all the other life forms on the farm and learned of their significance to our crops. We hope that she will spend some time in her life making gardens and growing some of her own food. We would take another student next year, GLADLY!"

- Marilyn and Paul, Hawthorn Hill Farm (owners)

"Dragonfly Haven Therapeutic Farm is a petting farm that houses all miniature breed farm animals from bunnies to donkeys. The animals are used for emotional support and comfort for people living with an exceptionality, mental illness, difference in learning, or anyone that needs to pause life for a moment and step out of the stress filled world and enjoy the healing power of animals.

During the youth's summer work placements, they provided loving care for the animals, including feeding and chores, they worked independently in an outside positive work environment within our farm setting, the youth painted the barn, handled bales of hay and placed in the barn, lifted bales of shavings, poured feed into the bins, cleaned the barn area and animal paddocks and pens. They are great workers!

Safety and care of our animals, co-workers, ourselves, and the public are very important to us. The youth all worked well together and were reliable in running the farm with little to no supervision. They handled cash on a daily basis, keeping paper work organized, answering the farm office phone, taking messages, and keeping the work area neat and tidy.

Thank you for offering the youth this opportunity to work at Dragonfly Haven Therapeutic Farm. In the future it would be my pleasure to host work experience for the chosen youth for the upcoming summers."

- Charlotte, Dragonfly Haven Therapeutic Farm (owner)

"I have spent time with students, who were Syrian refugees, working with my flock of 86 sheep. My husband has spent time with them working in his vineyard.

Just last weekend I was teaching them how to splice wire as we installed some box wire on a fence line. After a lunch break, I noticed that they had already returned to work only to find that they had also taken the initiative to demonstrate their newly learned skill by starting a new piece of wire on their own. The wire was spliced on the post perfectly. It was good to see they did learn this new skill however even more rewarding to see them taking initiative.

The students particularly enjoyed learning to use the border collies to move the sheep to and from new grazing areas. And me? I have learned some Arabic words that has been mutually useful to our farm work this summer. It has been a pleasure introducing these gentlemen to agriculture in Lunenburg County.

Thank you to whomever was key in asking us to participate in this valuable program."

- Krista, Krista's Sheep

"At first I was very nervous to start work, but the program helped me learn how to be more responsible. The program taught me how to achieve my goals and how to be more productive overall. I loved the program and it really taught me a lot. I am really happy to be working here and ended up enjoying it more than I expected! This program is making me think about what I want to do after I graduate high school."

- Fallon, student, age 16

"This summer I had the opportunity to be part of the program. I learned a lot about farm safety and I got First Aid and CPR training. Being part of this program has helped me become a stronger worker and I have better knowledge of agriculture. I've had the opportunity to harvest plants like cherries and grape tomatoes. I've also planted a variety of different crops. I really enjoyed the experience I had this summer and I hope to be part of the program again."

- Tarek, student, age 16

"My experience in the program was a lot of fun! I met a lot of great people. In my job experience I learned new things and gained skills I can use in other jobs in the future."

- Erin, student, age 18

"I like the experience this program gave me. It helped me get over my fear of working with other people and it helped me get a job, instead of wasting the summer away. Before working this

summer, I never really wanted to go to work but ever since I started, I've had my eyes open to things that interest me like hands-on work!"

- Morgan, student, age 17

"I really liked the program. I've had the chance to get work experience and to learn to manage my money. I'm always busy at work so it's really fun. Because of this program, I've decided I definitely want to take the carpentry course at NSCC."

- Matthew, student, age 20

"This program helped me push through my anxiety and taught me how to work with others. I knew I wanted to go on to post-secondary and this program has encouraged me to pursue it!"

- Victoria, student, age 19