This report, produced by the New Brunswick Institute for Research, Data, and Training (NB-IRDT), presents a statistical description of individuals enrolled in apprenticeship programs in the Atlantic Provinces over the period of 2008-2013. Findings are based on a series of statistics generated by Statistics Canada from datasets which link the following data: the Registered Apprenticeship Information System (RAIS), T1 tax files and T4 statements of earnings.

### Key Questions

Three dimensions of apprenticeship characteristics are explored:

i) Demographic characteristics  
ii) Mobility of apprentices  
iii) Earnings of those continuing, completing, and discontinuing their program

### Why Should We Care?

There has been a marked increase in the size of apprenticeship training programs in Canada over the past 20 years, with nearly triple the number of new apprenticeship registrations since the 1990s. This is partly in response to Canada’s aging workforce and the need for skilled tradespeople to meet skill shortages. This is also a response to higher wages and the large number of opportunities offered in the resource sector.

### Program Characteristics

**Enrollment.** The number of apprentices enrolled in NB has been remarkably steady compared with the growth rates observed in NS and PEI over 2008-2013. In contrast, NL has experienced variable enrollment rates over the same period (likely correlated with energy prices).

**Age and Sex.** The age distribution of apprentices in NB, NS and PEI has been stable over the five years, with the highest proportion of apprentices in the youngest age category (i.e. less than 25 years of age). In NL, the proportion of apprentices less than 25 years of age increased from 25% in 2008 to 32% in 2013. Over 90% of apprentices in all Atlantic Provinces are male, with the highest proportion in NB.

**Top Trades.** Electrician has been the most common field of study for all four provinces, while automotive and carpentry rank in the top five for each province. Over the study period there were no major changes in the composition of enrolled apprentices by field in any province.

### Status in Program

**At End of Calendar Year**

- **Continuer.** Enrolled in the program as of the end of the calendar year.
- **Completer.** Successfully completed the program by the end of the calendar.
- **Discontinuer.** Terminated enrollment in the program before completion.

As of 2013, there were 5,080 individuals enrolled in apprenticeship programs in New Brunswick (NB), 6,515 in Nova Scotia (NS), 6,773 in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) and 1,126 in Prince Edward Island (PEI).

While carpentry and welding do not require compulsory licensing, they are among the most commonly undertaken apprenticeships and this would appear to indicate the value in the labour market of certification.
The number of apprentices enrolled in NB has been remarkably steady over time, in contrast with growth in the number of apprentices in other Atlantic provinces.

Given the destination province for commuters is typically AB, a greater degree of exposure to the AB labour market may increase the cyclicality of completion and discontinuation rates, as has been observed in NL.

Completers and discontinuers tend to reside in the same province in which they received their training. Therefore, even if they commute to another province for work, their province of residence will still benefit from receiving higher taxes paid.

A large portion of individuals completing an apprenticeship program in Atlantic Canada still reside in their province of study two years after completion. Apprenticeship programs appear to be serving the requirements for skilled trades in NB.