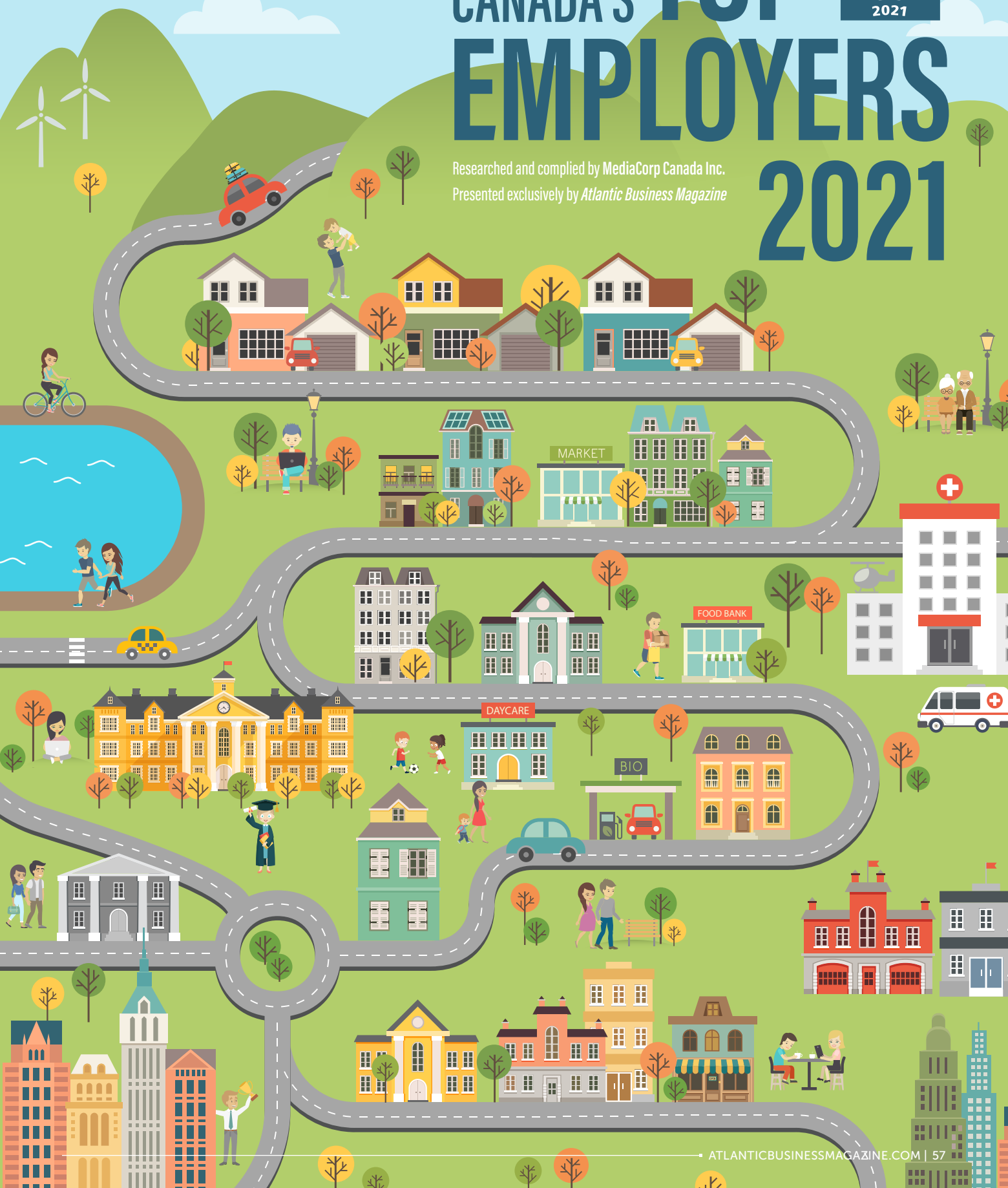
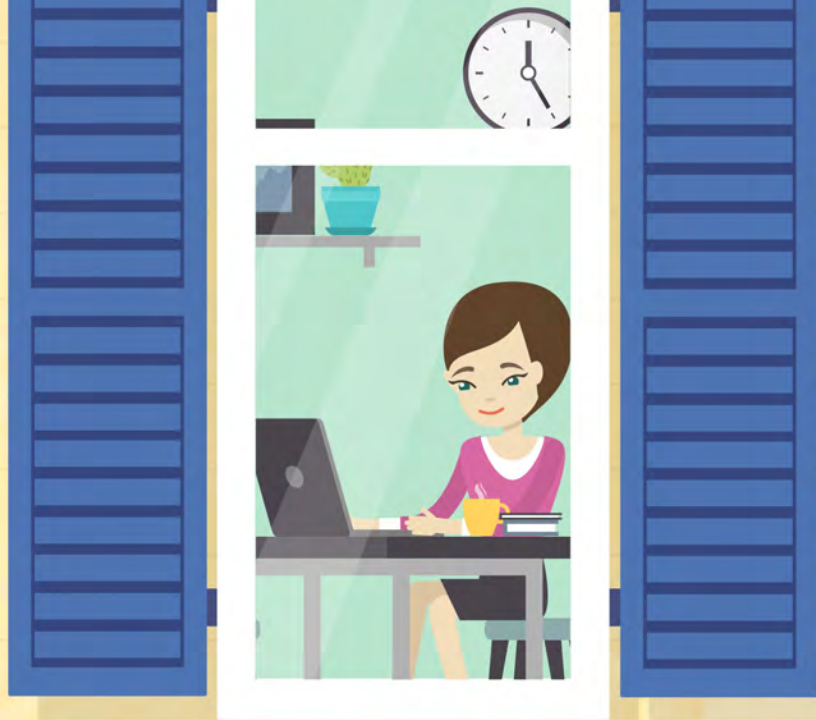




# ATLANTIC CANADA'S TOP EMPLOYERS 2021

Researched and compiled by MediaCorp Canada Inc.  
Presented exclusively by *Atlantic Business Magazine*





There are fewer companies on this year's list of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers than there were in 2019—and that was expected, says Anthony Meehan. Meehan is the founder and president of MediCorp Canada Inc., the company which researches and selects the Atlantic Canada Top Employer honourees, as well as Canada's Top 100 Employers—now in its 20th year.

“Covid has been a challenge for everyone. We knew people were focused on pivoting their business so it was no surprise when we received just over 1,000 applications. That's a lower number than in previous years.”

What was unexpected was what this year's list revealed. “We thought we'd see a lot of layoffs and cutbacks,” says Meehan. “Instead, we saw this great investment in corporate social responsibility and community. Employers are giving back more than ever. Emera, for example, boosted its Dollars for Doers initiative.” They now donate \$20 for every hour an employee volunteers, to a maximum of \$600 per employee per year.

Another trend that became apparent during the Top Employer selection process was the increased attention on the mental health and well-being of staff. Not only is there a continuing worry about personal health and safety due to Covid, but people have had to learn to cope, very quickly, with myriad stressors: working from home, social isolation, child care, elder care and more.

In response, Meehan says, “Irving and others ratcheted up their health benefit initiatives. At \$1,800 a year, PAL has one of the best subsidies for mental health consultations and awareness. And many Top Employers helped staff set up their remote work spaces.”

What does it mean to be a Top Employer during a pandemic? Ultimately, says Meehan, employers with a broader view of community are always better places to work. “Top Employers understand that their ability to operate depends on the health of their community. They are strong now and they will only grow stronger as the economy recovers.”

#### How to make the list:

By submitting an application for Canada's Top 100 Employers list, you are automatically entered for consideration in the Atlantic Canada Top Employers competition (you cannot apply for the regional list alone).

To be eligible for the Atlantic Canada's Top Employers selection, you have to be an employer with a head office or principal place of business in New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia or Newfoundland & Labrador. Employers of any size may apply, whether private or public sector.

**Employers are compared to other organizations in their field and evaluated across eight criteria:**

1. Physical workplace
2. Work atmosphere and social
3. Health, financial and family benefits
4. Vacation and time off
5. Employee communications
6. Performance management
7. Training and skills development
8. Community involvement

Applications for the 2022 competition will be available early in 2021.

For more information:  
[canadastop100.com/atlantic/](http://canadastop100.com/atlantic/)



# Energized by Teamwork

Across Emera, our talented team drives energy transformation through collaboration, innovation and customer service excellence.

We are proud to be named a Top 100 Employer in Canada for 2021. Our goal is to be an employer of choice everywhere we work by giving back to our communities, investing in our employees, and providing a safe, respectful and healthy work environment where everyone feels valued. By attracting and retaining the best and brightest talent, we are working together to deliver cleaner, affordable and reliable energy to our customers and value for our shareholders.

**ADMIRAL INSURANCE SERVICES LTD.**

Industry: Auto and property insurance

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 428

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Health benefits plan that includes a personal spending account of \$500 per year which can be used to cover expenses related to health and wellness, personal development, family care, green living and general lifestyle items.
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for employees who are new mothers (to 100 per cent of salary for 22 weeks) and parental top-up for new fathers and adoptive parents (to 100 per cent of salary for seven weeks). They also offer the option to extend leave into an unpaid leave of absence.
- Defined contribution pension plan and a unique Life Loan program, allowing employees to apply for an interest-free loan of up to \$2,000 for significant life events (such as a wedding reception or funds for home furnishings for a first-time home owner).



Photo: Julian Parkinson

## Web.com Group builds its brand by putting customers and employees first

You don't get to be a leading web technology company serving millions of customers worldwide without knowing a little something about how people work.

At Web.com Group, it's about respect, teamwork and drive. Web's team gives customers a competitive edge, whether they're creating eye-catching web designs, building effective online marketing tools or helping generate customer leads.

"What unites us across the company and around the globe is a shared set of

values and a unified vision focused on the individual customer," says Web.com Group CEO and President Sharon Rowlands. "We work to fulfill the diverse online needs of real people because that's how you guarantee success in a connected world."

As one of the longest-running tech companies in the business, Web has been involved with the Internet in almost every phase – from dial-up to 5G. Through its portfolio of complementary brands – Web.com, Network Solutions, Register.com, Sitebeat, Crazy Domains, Vodien and others – it helps customers build their online presence with superb solutions and service.

Since Rowlands became the company's chief executive in 2019, she's helped these brands lay the groundwork for continued growth and leadership. Recent strategic acquisitions in the Asia-Pacific region, including Dreamscape Networks, have spread Web's reach in both the Southeast Asian and Australian markets.

Just as Web's focus on the customer drives its business model, its commitment to its employees – more than 200 business consultants, customer service specialists, web designers and copywriters in three Ontario and Nova Scotia offices – fulfills its corporate promise. "We strive to hire, develop and retain talented people who represent our diverse customer base," Rowlands says.

Recently, Web expanded its footprint in Halifax, where a diverse workforce enjoys open and bright spaces, flexible hours and lucrative commission structures with uncapped potential. "It's simple," says Rowlands. "We create a culture of competitiveness, collaboration and teamwork by focusing on our two biggest resources: our employees and our customers." -Sponsored content

**ASSUMPTION MUTUAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY**

Industry: Insurance, retirement savings and mortgages

Location: Moncton, N.B.

Full-time employees in Canada: 247

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Defined contribution pension plan, and a number of helpful financial benefits including discounted home and auto insurance, low-interest home loans, and discounted auto lease rates.
- Health benefits plan includes a mental health practitioner benefit of up to \$2,500 annually.
- Variety of flexible work arrangements as well as up to six paid personal days, which can be scheduled as needed.

**BIOVECTRA INC.**

Industry: Pharmaceutical manufacturing

Location: Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Full-time employees in Canada: 400

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Full tuition subsidies for employees and an academic scholarship program for children of employees (to \$1,500 per child).
- Financial benefits include year-end bonuses, a defined contribution pension plan and referral bonuses for employees who recruit candidates from their personal networks (to \$2,000).
- Health plan provides employees with a health spending account of up to \$400 per year as well as a separate wellness spending account of up to \$250 per year.

**CBCL LIMITED**

Industry: Engineering services

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 322

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Employees have access to subsidies for job-related courses and professional accreditation; next generation opportunities include co-op placements, paid internships and summer roles.
- Maternity leave top-up payments for employees who are new mothers (to 80 per cent of salary for 16 weeks) with the option to extend their leave into an unpaid leave of absence.
- Corporate support for community causes and charities with a special focus on health, education, community, science and technology, and sustainability. Approximately 75

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# Cooke

## The best employers care.

At Cooke Aquaculture, it's our business to care. We care for the fish we grow, for the waters we work on and most importantly, for the people in the communities we call home.

Thank you, Team Cooke, for helping make us one of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers. And thank you for caring, every day.



[cookeseafood.com](http://cookeseafood.com) |    

*CBCL Limited cont'd from page 60*

organizations received support last year with employees leading the way and volunteering with initiatives such as Autism Canada and the Heart and Stroke Foundation (employees can take up to two paid volunteer days each year).

**CITCO CANADA INC.**

**Industry:** Portfolio management  
**Location:** Halifax, N.S.  
**Full-time employees in Canada:** 1,292  
**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Maternity leave top-up payments to employees who are new mothers (to 100 per cent of salary for 12 weeks) and flexible work options for when they return.
- Tuition subsidies for job-related courses (up to \$3,000 per year) as well as subsidies for professional accreditation.
- Retirement planning assistance, a defined contribution pension plan and matching RSP contributions.

**East Coast Credit Union employees make the difference in good times and bad**

During these tough times, East Coast Credit Union’s core principles have never been more important, and its call to employees and members has never resonated as deeply as they do today.

“Our dedicated staff have demonstrated outstanding professionalism in providing essential services to our members during the COVID-19 pandemic,” President and CEO, Ken Shea, says. “A pandemic calls for even more support to communities than ever before, and we are committed to that.”

With the recent #Loyal2LocalChallenge, for example, East Coast CU together with other participating credit unions throughout the Atlantic provinces were given up to \$50 each to make purchases from local businesses between June 15-28. Their commitment helped inject over \$70,000 dollars into the Atlantic economy at a time when it was really needed.

East Coast CU also took extra steps to support local farmers markets across Nova Scotia this year by purchasing gift cards to give to members of the community. Supporting these farmers markets was the perfect way to promote local businesses and give back. East Coast CU donated an additional \$10,000 to Feed Nova Scotia which went directly to helping Nova Scotians who need it most during this difficult time.

For employees, the rewards are also tangible. A new flexible work arrangement was implemented at the beginning of 2020. East Coast Credit Union also offers paid health and dental, education and professional development opportunities, wellness and recognition programs, and competitive compensation packages. Staff have the opportunity to support their communities through a paid day off to volunteer at an organization of their choice. They can also represent East Coast Credit Union at the many sponsored events that normally take place throughout the year, such as Nova Scotia Summer Fest and the Dartmouth Ice Festival, to name a few.

As a member-owned organization (in which more than 42,000 account

holders are also shareholders), East Coast CU relies on its staff to stay healthy and fully dedicated to member service.

Says Shea: “We really are all in this together, now more than ever.” -Sponsored content

Photo taken February 2020 (pre-pandemic)



**CLEARWATER SEAFOODS LP**

**Industry:** Seafood processing  
**Location:** Bedford, N.S.  
**Full-time employees in Canada:** 1,068  
**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Along with helping employees save for the future, Clearwater Seafoods offers retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options for those nearing retirement.
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments, to 70 per cent of salary ranging from 35 to 52 weeks (including adoptive parents).
- Organizational Capability Awards (for teamwork, competence and character) and peer-nominated You Made a Difference Award, with winners selected on a quarterly basis.

**COOKE AQUACULTURE INC.**

**Industry:** Fish farming  
**Location:** Saint John, N.B.  
**Full-time employees in Canada:** 2,066  
**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Retirement planning assistance and a defined benefit pension plan.
- Subsidies for job-related courses and professional accreditation as well as academic scholarships for children of employees, to \$1,000 per child per year.

**EAST COAST CREDIT UNION**

**Industry:** Credit union  
**Location:** Antigonish, N.S.  
**Full-time employees in Canada:** 156  
**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Flexible work options and paid personal days to help employees balance work and their personal commitments (up to five paid personal days per year).
- Defined benefit or defined contribution pension plan, depending on the employee group.
- Compassionate leave top-up for those who are called upon to care for a loved one (to 100 per cent of salary for up to 8 weeks).

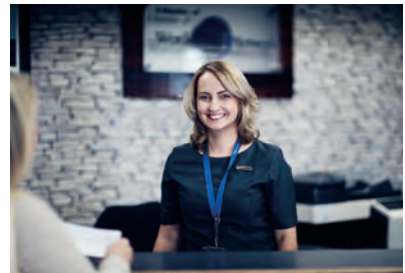
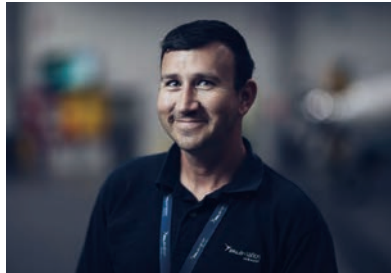


**51%**  
of Top Employers offer parental leave benefits to their employees

CHART  
**YOUR**  
COURSE



INSPIRED BY **CHALLENGE.**  
OPPORTUNITY WITH **REWARD.**  
COMMITTED TO **COMMUNITY.**



With 250+ careers, our companies offer diverse and exciting opportunities across hundreds of distinct skill sets. Join our Talent Community and learn how you can become a PAL by visiting [careersatpal.com](https://careersatpal.com)





## Opportunities New Brunswick's investment in workplace culture returns premiums

If you want a workforce to perform above and beyond the call of daily duty, you might want to take a page from Opportunities New Brunswick (ONB)'s playbook. There, workplace culture isn't an afterthought; it's the foundation it builds on and the force that guides it.

Thanks to its commitment to culture, ONB has been named one of Atlantic Canada's Top Employers for five years in a row (2017-2021). It was recognized by Waterstone Human Capital as one of Canada's Most Admired Corporate Cultures (Broader Public Sector) for 2018.

ONB is a provincial Crown corporation that connects local and worldwide businesses in traditional and emerging industries to advantages the province offers. With its provincial, federal and community partners, it drives economic growth and job creation, supports innovation and helps the next generation of business leaders realize their true potential. Over the past five years, ONB has helped create more than 8,700 jobs and has helped generate \$1.3 billion for the provincial economy.

At the centre of all of this is its culture, which imbues its people with a sense of belonging and shared purpose. "We're not content with just having an HR department," says ONB's Chief Operating Officer Traci Simmons. "Culture is a strategic design for us. We very much live the culture that drives our results."

For example, the organization has put cohorts and individual employees through its Emerging Leaders Program, half of which were women. The participants, (the next generation

of talent apply through a competitive process) invest their time in developing personal and professional leadership skills that are tied directly to achieving results for ONB.

Lync & Learn, an ONB professional development program, was designed and developed inhouse as a way to leverage employee knowledge sharing. Sessions are offered virtually to all ONB employees on a monthly basis, and each session is unique and geared towards skills-based training for employees with defined learning objectives that capture what information and skills the participants can expect to learn. ONB employees can also fine-tune their facilitation skills by leading a session. Sessions are recorded and then posted to the ONB Portal for future use and training.

Friday @9 is a biweekly 30-minute podcast that brings all ONB employees together to receive information regarding organization-wide updates. It often includes an update from ONB's CEO, as well as additional updates from three to four presenters from various lines of business. Each session is recorded and then posted to the ONB Portal for those who were unable to attend.

In all of this, diversity – gender, culture, age – matters. ONB has created opportunities to hire new graduates, increasing the number of employees under the age of 30 from five per cent in 2015 to almost 10 per cent today. To this end, it maintains a Student Program that provides, on average, 10 post-secondary students a year with dynamic and meaningful work experiences as well as the skills and results-oriented resume to support success in their next roles.

By diversifying the age of its own workforce, ONB has secured the presence of new creative voices at the decision-making table. "We are making decisions around culture that motivate and engage our teams," Simmons says. "People here know and believe in the reasons they come to work every day. They have a great common purpose. People do believe that their work here is important."



They do, indeed. According to ONB's 2019 annual employee survey, 94 per cent of employees believe ONB is making a positive impact and 93 per cent feel they are supported in achieving work-life balance.

Simmons says the trick, of course, is not to over-define what culture means in an organization, but to engage, enable and empower employees to reach their full potential. The results can be invaluable both to the organization and to society – whether that's successfully building a new technology or the environment in which a new technology company can thrive.

"We work with hundreds of New Brunswick companies every year, and through them, we see great cultures and meet inspiring leaders every day," she says. "For us, culture is not just one thing, but it is made up of all the passion and professionalism that employees bring to work every day. It's how we all play an important role in driving economic growth and prosperity for New Brunswick. -Sponsored content





## At ONB, we are working to build a new New Brunswick.

Supporting NB businesses in realizing their full potential is the reason our employees come to work every day. Five years running as one of Atlantic Canada's top employers doesn't hurt either. If you are ready to join a winning team that is looking to see NB succeed on the world stage, then visit [onbcanada.ca/careers/](https://onbcanada.ca/careers/)

## EFFICIENCYONE

**Industry:** Energy conservation advocacy

**Location:** Dartmouth, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 132

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Tuition subsidies for employees taking courses at outside institutions and subsidies for professional accreditation.
- Flexible work hours, a work from home option, and up to 14 paid sick days annually.
- Nutrition programs, mindfulness training, blood pressure screenings and corporate rates for nearby gyms.

## EMERA INC.

**Industry:** Electric power generation and distribution and gas distribution

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 2,309

## Killam's workforce goes above and beyond in a time of crisis

For any successful business, customer care and service begin and end with its employees. The challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic might strain any workforce to the breaking point, but not the employees of Killam Apartment REIT.

According to Colleen McCarville, Vice President Human Resources, Killam's employees continue to show their true colors as they navigate the health emergency. "We could not be more proud," she says simply. "They are exceeding our expectations."

Killam Apartment REIT is a Canadian real estate investment trust owning, operating and developing apartments and manufactured home communities (MHCs) in Atlantic Canada, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia, and employing about 700 people, most of whom are public-facing.

"During this critical time, our staff have been going above and beyond to keep our core values – Do the Right Thing, Strong Customer Relationships, Build Community, Creative Solutions,

and Curb Appeal – at the foundation of our culture," McCarville says.

Staff are "doing the right thing" and maintaining "curb appeal" by adjusting to the heightened cleaning responsibilities and use of additional personal protective equipment. They are finding "creative solutions" to cope with the additional responsibilities at work and home.

COVID-19 had forced the closure of building amenity spaces – which are valued greatly by residents. Employees have demonstrated "strong customer relations" by communicating Killam protocols and public health guidelines regarding the use of these, which are now open with restrictions.

Staff continue to "do the right thing" through acts of kindness. Resident Managers have delivered groceries and other necessities to residents who are unable to go out, and employees have assisted residents and co-workers.

Despite the risks, the company's June 2020 employee survey reports that 94 per cent of staff like the work they do and 92 per cent like their co-workers.

Says McCarville: "Our employees' dedication to Killam's Core Values has ensured our continued success throughout this challenging time."

-Sponsored content



**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Tuition subsidies for courses related and not directly related to an employee's current role (up to \$5,000 annually) and extensive in-house training programs, including paid internships, apprenticeships and formal Engineer-in-Training programs for younger employees.
- Subsidy for IVF treatments (to \$15,000) and maternity/parental leave top-up payments for new moms, dads and adoptive parents (to 95 per cent of salary of six weeks).
- Post-secondary academic scholarship programs for older children of employees (and retirees).
- Good Neighbour program encourages employees to donate their time and money to charities that are close to their heart; "Dollars for Doers" initiative matches employee donations, offering \$20 for every volunteer hour to a maximum of \$600 per employee annually.

## FBM ARCHITECTURE | INTERIOR DESIGN

**Industry:** Architectural services

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 36

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Maternity and parental leave top-up policy, offering new parents (including adoptive) up to 95 per cent of salary for up to five weeks followed by 70 per cent of salary for an additional five weeks.
- Health benefits plan includes separate health and wellness spending accounts, allowing employees to exercise flexibility in determining their coverage (\$250 and \$300 respectively).
- Ownership culture cultivated through a share purchase plan that's available to all employees.
- Matching RSP program to encourage long-term saving.

## HALIFAX WATER

**Industry:** Municipal water management

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 498

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Maternity leave top-up to new mothers (to 93 per cent of salary for up to 15 weeks) with the option to extend paid leave into an unpaid leave of absence.
- Tuition subsidies for courses taken at external institutions (up to \$3,000 per year) as well as subsidies for professional accreditation.



## At Emera, teamwork leads the way to a clean, reliable energy future

What makes Emera one of Atlantic Canada's employers of choice? It could be the fact that it's an energy leader with \$32 billion of assets and more than 2.5 million customers in Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean.

But take a closer look and see that it boils down to key fundamentals that are driving their success: committed teams; a proven strategy; a demonstrated commitment to sustainability, and collaborative leadership that always puts safety first. Just ask Mike Roberts, Emera's Chief Human Resources Officer.

"Our strong team drives everything we do," he says. "Our employees are committed to diversity and inclusion, growth and development and to giving back to their communities. They support each other and are inspired by our focus on safely delivering cleaner, affordable, and reliable energy to our customers."

Delivering cleaner and renewable energy to customers has been a focus for Emera for more than 15 years and it remains central to the company's strategy as it prepares for, and capitalizes on, the trends facing the energy industry – decarbonization, digitalization and decentralization.

As a result, Emera has been a leader in the transition to cleaner energy while enhancing reliability and maintaining customer affordability. In fact, Nova Scotia Power, one of Emera's electric utilities, has delivered the fastest transition to cleaner energy in Canada and has already achieved greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions that exceed the targets set by Canada in the COP 21 Paris Agreement – with no increases in non-fuel rates since 2014. The company has also invested in digitalization and decentralization technologies that will help make energy systems even more reliable while providing customers more information and greater choice and control.

Talent management is a significant focus for Emera. This includes understanding best practices, analyzing the labour market, and proactively sourcing candidates. "Our diverse teams make us stronger. And in a rapidly evolving industry, we're always focused on developing and preparing our teams

at all level of the business," says Roberts. "As part of this, we work to identify opportunities for current and future leaders to continuously learn and develop.

Everything Emera does is underpinned by its unwavering commitment to safety. Emera's strong safety culture is rooted in leadership and reinforced by a personal commitment by every member of the team to ensure safety is always the first priority. Proactive reporting, personal plans, field observations and frequent communications are just some of the tools Emera uses to maintain this culture. Its Safety Management System (SMS), for example, is founded on Plan-Do-Check-Act principles and incorporates ISO 45001 aspects.

Emera also believes in giving back to the communities it serves. In 2019, Emera invested over \$13.4 million in communities, concentrating on areas of innovation, safety leadership, and youth opportunities with a focus on diversity and inclusion. The company is proud to also support communities through the charitable efforts of its team members by matching fundraising initiatives and providing charitable donations for hours volunteered in the community. Additionally, each year Emera employees hold a United Way workplace campaign — an effort that has provided the organization with its largest corporate donation in Atlantic Canada for the last 20 years. "Through our annual United Way campaign our employees are supporting charitable organizations throughout the region," explains Roberts. "And these organizations provide much-needed assistance to the most vulnerable in our communities."

Emera also supports social programs to assist with energy costs when customers are in need. This effort was increased to address the additional financial pressure many customers have been facing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Emera companies have been working with customers to help find solutions and have also provided over \$4 million to organizations dedicated to providing critical aid.

"Our team is deeply committed to doing the right thing for our customers, our communities and each other," says Roberts. "We have a dynamic culture supported by tools to help drive collaboration, innovation and our shared purpose of building a more sustainable future for the communities we serve." -Sponsored content

26%

of Top Employers offer flexible work hours and/or remote office options



**HEALTH ASSOCIATION NOVA SCOTIA**

Industry: Professional associations  
Location: Bedford, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 107

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Flexible work hours, five paid personal days per year (which can be scheduled as needed), and up to 7 paid sick days annually.
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for new mothers and fathers, including adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 15 weeks); subsidy for IVF for parents-to-be when needed (to \$15,000).
- Tuition subsidies for employees to pursue job-related (and unrelated) courses and academic scholarships for children of employees (up to \$2,500 per child).

**IRVING OIL**

Industry: Petroleum refining, distribution and retail

Location: Saint John, N.B.

Full-time employees in Canada: 2,876

What makes them a Top Employer:

- LifeSpeak online platform lets employees anonymously access information online regarding a range of wellness topics and smoking cessation programs. The health benefits plan also features a flexible health spending account and dedicated mental health practitioners benefit.
- Community support programs in support of families, the environment and education. They recently introduced the new Good Energy in Action program that offers employees one paid flex day off to volunteer each year and encourages employees to get involved through a national volunteer week campaign in the spring. Over the past year the program has helped connect employees with virtual volunteer opportunities such as video-chat conversations with care home residents, mentoring and tutoring youth, and combatting lockdown loneliness through letter-writing campaigns.
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for employees who are new mothers or fathers (including adoptive parents), to 100 per cent of salary for up to 17 weeks.
- Academic scholarships to children of employees pursuing post-secondary studies, to \$2,000 per child.

**Halifax Water tackles challenging times with a dedicated, skilled workforce**

Serving a population of about 376,000 with high quality water, wastewater and stormwater services, while managing \$1.4 billion in assets, is complex at the best of times. And these are not the best of times.

Fortunately, Halifax Water’s 500 highly skilled and motivated people are dedicated to protecting public health and the environment, which is more critical than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Providing world-class services to customers and the environment is the mission of the utility. Staff are on the front lines keeping critical services and the local economy going around the clock, says Halifax Water General Manager Cathie O’Toole.

“The strength of Halifax Water is and always has been its dedicated, highly skilled and motivated employees. This has never been more evident or important than now as staff work the front lines during COVID-19.”

To understand what that actually means on the ground, Halifax Water – Canada’s first regulated water, wastewater and stormwater utility – maintains 1,500; 1,400; and 900 kilometers of water, wastewater, and storm lines, respectively. Along with these piped assets, the utility maintains 600 kilometres of ditches and 18,000 culverts. Last year Halifax Water produced 40.3 billion liters of drinking water at its eight supply plants and treated 76 billion liters of wastewater at its 14 treatment facilities.

The utility is internationally recognized for leadership. Making significant investments in water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure and services helps support the local economy, supports future growth, environmental compliance, and adaptation to climate change.

Halifax Water has continued to deliver current year business objectives despite the on-going pandemic. “For decades we have been focused on investing in critical infrastructure and improving our operations to manage the region’s water cycle in a financially and environmentally responsible manner,” O’Toole says. “So much of this has to do with our employees, who recognize the importance of the work they do and what it means our customers.”

-Sponsored content



Retirement planning was the most common benefit among Top Employers.

63%

offer some sort of retirement planning benefits



### **JAZZ AVIATION LP**

**Industry:** Air transportation

**Location:** Dartmouth, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 4,777

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Bright Ideas campaign encourages employees to share ideas on increasing productivity and improving customer service and operational efficiency. The company also recognizes exceptional performance through the Jazz Ensemble plus program, rewarding employees for achieving operational and customer satisfaction goals.
- Retirement planning assistance and a defined contribution pension plan.
- Ownership culture is fostered through a share purchase plan, available to all employees.
- Professional development opportunities include formal mentoring, in-house and online training, and tuition subsidies for courses related to their position (up to \$3,000 annually). They also reach out to the next generation of employees through summer student opportunities, paid internships, co-op placements and apprenticeships.

### **KILLAM APARTMENT REIT**

**Industry:** Property management and development

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 512

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Matching RSP contributions and financial benefits including discounted home and auto insurance and subsidized home Internet services.
- Maternity leave top-up payments for new moms (to 80 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) and flexible hours for when they're ready to return to work. The company also supports parents with college and university-aged kids through an academic scholarship program, to \$1,500 per child.

### **METOCEAN TELEMATICS LIMITED**

**Industry:** Maritime electronic equipment design and manufacturing

**Location:** Dartmouth, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 88

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Variety of flexible work arrangements and up to nine paid personal days, which can be scheduled at the employees' discretion.

- Matching RSP contributions, retirement planning assistance and phased-in work options for those nearing retirement.
- Employees are eligible for new employee referral bonuses, ranging from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for each successful hire, depending on the position.

### **NEW BRUNSWICK COMMUNITY COLLEGE / NBCC**

**Industry:** Post secondary schools, college

**Location:** Fredericton, N.B.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 777

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Paid days off for employees who volunteer; in 2019, approximately 160 employees used the volunteer leave program to donate more than 1,300 hours to community projects.
- Lifelong learning is encouraged through tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to a lifetime maximum of \$10,000) as well as subsidies for general interest courses.
- Maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 75 per cent of salary for 17 weeks) with the option to extend leave into an unpaid leave of absence.

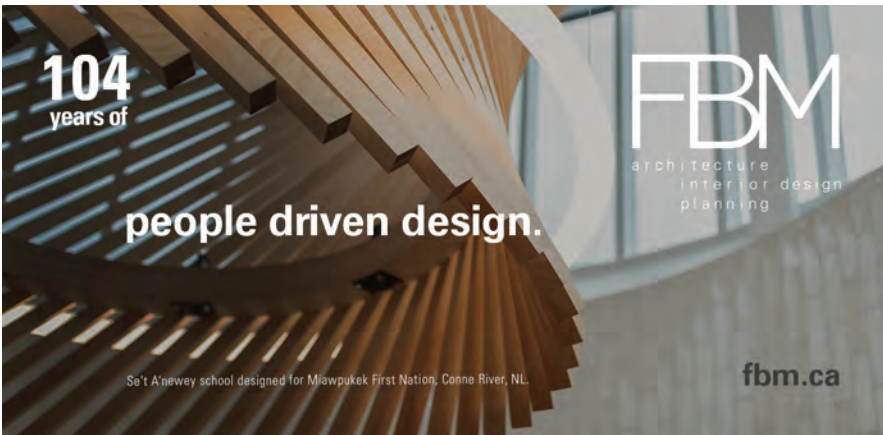
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**NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR CENTRE FOR HEALTH INFORMATION / NLCHI**

Industry: Electronic health records  
Location: St. John's, N.L.

Full-time employees in Canada: 218

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Health benefits plan that extends to retirees (with 50 per cent premium coverage) as well as defined benefit and defined contribution pension plans.
- Corporate recognition culture fostered through programs such as Centre Stage!, which allows managers to nominate employees in various categories, such as "The Marathoner" (for working the 'extra mile'), "The Superstar (for an outstanding performer), and "The Edison" (for innovation, change and creation).



Julie Robichaud, a manager with WCB Nova Scotia, facilitates a training session on the WCB's new cloud-based systems.

**Top employers in 2021 will be defined by resilience**

Leaders set the tone in any organization. They establish the kind of employer an organization will be.

Safety leaders often have a values-based approach.

They put people before profits.

They believe that something should only be done if it can be done safely.

The same leadership shown by top employers is often at the core of strong workplace safety cultures.

In 2020, leaders were called upon like never before.

As we navigate a new reality, top employers, in particular, have an incredible opportunity to lead the way. Leadership will be key as strong workplace safety and health approaches help us face new kinds of challenges to our well being – both physical and mental.

"Resilience is a hallmark of leadership," says Stuart MacLean, CEO. "In 2021, strong leadership will continue to help us work through this, safely."

Like other employers, WCB Nova Scotia's experience in 2020 was marked by change and resilience. Powered by new systems, the WCB continued to support workers and employers, while keeping its people safe, focused, and engaged. Updated cloud-based systems helped the organization pivot to a mix of on-premises and remote work.

Now, driven by a sense of hope and optimism, their focus is on the future.

MacLean says that, over time, new systems will bring new, innovative service possibilities – especially as the organization looks at a refreshed approach to support returning to the job when injury occurs.

As a top employer, the WCB knows that success will depend on leadership.

And that's something they ask for from everyone.

"You don't need a big title to be a safety leader," MacLean says. "A safety leader is anyone who makes their workplace safer. In doing so they can change a life, a community, and a province for the better."

As 2021 begins, it is a moment to pause and reflect on safety, and to reinforce the principles and practices that make your workplace safe.

Visit [worksafeforlife.ca/leaders](https://worksafeforlife.ca/leaders) to learn more. -Sponsored content

**NORTHWOOD**

Industry: Nursing care facilities

Location: Dartmouth, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 998

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Defined benefit pension plan and phased-in work options for those nearing retirement.
- Employee health benefits plan includes a mental health practitioner benefit of \$1,800 per year.
- Professional development encouraged via in-house and online training programs as well as tuition subsidies for courses at external academic institutions.

**NOSEWORTHY CHAPMAN CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS**

Industry: Accounting

Location: St. John's, N.L.

Full-time employees in Canada: 57

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Weekly fixed-payment maternity and parental leave top-up payments for new moms and dads (including adoptive parents) for the full year of their leave (\$92 per week for 52 weeks).
- Company's charitable efforts are guided by employee feedback on which initiatives to support, paid time off for volunteering and matching employee donations.
- Financial benefits include year-end bonuses, signing bonuses for some positions and referral bonuses when employees successfully recruit a friend. The company also helps employees save for the future.

### NTT DATA CANADA, INC.

Industry: Computer systems design services

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 1,007

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Formal employee incentive and management incentive programs offer financial rewards and/or salary increases for innovations and new ideas in support of overall business development.
- STARS rewards and recognition program celebrates outstanding performance, highlighting employee achievements via internal social media and offering points to recipients (which can be redeemed in the NTT store).
- Professional development activities include in-house and online training programs, formal mentoring and tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to \$5,250).

### OPPORTUNITIES NEW BRUNSWICK

Industry: Provincial government, economic development

Location: Fredericton, N.B.

Full-time employees in Canada: 108

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Employee tuition subsidies for courses related to their current position along with a variety of online training initiatives.
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for new and adoptive moms, to 75 per cent of salary for 16 weeks. Employees also have the option to extend their parental leave to an unpaid leave of absence and may be able to take advantage of a phased-in return to work.
- Contributions to a defined contribution pension plan.

### PROVINCIAL AEROSPACE LTD. / PAL

Industry: Air transportation

Location: St. John's, N.L.

Full-time employees in Canada: 1,137

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Health benefits plan includes a mental health practitioners benefit (to \$1,800 annually); they celebrate the annual "Mental Health Week" through a number of awareness initiatives.
- Maternity leave top-up payments for new mothers (to 100 per cent of salary for up to 17 weeks) with the option to extend their leave into an unpaid leave of absence. New moms-to-be may also take advantage of support for IVF treatments if needed (to \$15,000) and parents

with older kids may also apply for academic scholarships (to \$2,000).

- Professional development is encouraged with no-limit tuition subsidies for courses related and not directly related to an employee's current position.

### REDSpace INC.

Industry: Website design services

Location: Bedford, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 213

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Community initiatives are supported through paid volunteer time for employees and matching charitable donations (to \$250) to the initiatives of their choosing.
- Flexible working arrangement policies, including flexible hours and working from home.
- Matching RSP contributions and interest-free loans (up to \$2,700) for home computers and other technology.



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## Multi-partner teamwork helps Cooke Aquaculture fight sea lice with innovative R&D

Sea lice, the scourge of salmon farmers, has cost the global aquaculture industry billions of dollars over the years. Until recently, the weapons available for farmers to defend against these natural pests of fish, consisted of various therapeutic in feed and bath treatments coupled with complicated and costly mechanical removal, which are becoming less effective over time.

Now, with support from provincial and federal governments in Atlantic Canada, Cooke Aquaculture Inc. and a team of university-based and public-sector researchers are close to fully domesticating a native “cleaner fish to more naturally reduce parasite numbers from commercial salmon farms.” According to Dr. Andrew Swanson, Vice President, Research & Development, it’s a first for North America, and could be an industry game changer.

“This innovative marine program involves raising cultured lumpfish as an effective and eco-friendly sea lice removal method,” he says. “These fish basically eat and remove lice which settle on salmon in sea cages. Lice, in large numbers, are harmful to the Atlantic salmon, the aquaculture industry, and are presently one of the most important fish health challenges that we manage.”

Cooke Vice President of Public Relations Joel Richardson added that while 98 per cent of the company’s current sea lice treatments in Atlantic Canada are mechanical and eco-friendly, the cleaner fish program provides a new, green alternative to complement the mix of existing approaches. “They could be very effective in preventing infestations from advancing, especially in the early vulnerable stages of a salmon’s life cycle,” he said.

Although sea lice are not harmful to humans, they do harm juvenile salmon and stunt appetite and growth in adults, costing an estimated \$1 billion a year to salmon farmers around the world. The total economic impacts of Atlantic Canada’s farmed salmon sector amount to just under \$2 billion in output and \$800 million in GDP, about \$350 million in salaries for more than 8,000 workers. Says Richardson: “There is a lot at stake here.”

Swanson says Cold Ocean Salmon Inc., Cooke’s subsidiary in Newfoundland and Labrador, started working on the cleaner fish process with Memorial ten years ago, and with Dalhousie researchers for the past two years. Thanks to steady progress, he says, “We’ve invested significantly in this strategy, and begun to scale and expand the routine use of lumpfish in our salmon production farms of Newfoundland. We’ve recently started to populate our farms in New Brunswick, and eventually, we’ll move this as needed into operations in Nova Scotia and Maine. Developments here are also expected to guide best practices for cleaner fish programs at our other global farms.”

Danny Boyce, Facility and Business Manager of Memorial’s Dr. Joe Brown Aquatic Research Building, says he encountered the cleaner fish approach while investigating new ideas for the facility a number of years ago. “Aquaculture is a very pronounced industry in Atlantic Canada and Maine,” he says. “I thought cleaner fish use may be of interest if we can develop it here locally. So, I reached out to Cooke.”

In fact, the process is proven in Norway, where salmon farmers have been using wild caught cleaner fish since the 1990s. Says Boyce: “In most salmon farming, prolonged use of therapeutants leads to resistance in lice populations and concerns over the effect on surrounding flora and fauna.”

There are still wrinkles to smooth. Dr. Javier Santander, a marine microbiologist at Memorial and one of the scientific leaders of the project, says lumpfish and cunner biology aren’t well documented, compared with other species. That makes understanding the pathogens that may affect them (and, by extension, the salmon they “clean”) and the development of vaccines challenging. “Fortunately, we’ve formed a partnership with Cooke, the Ocean Frontier Institute, Atlantic Fisheries Fund, Genome Atlantic, and the Canadian Center for Fisheries and Innovation to develop and test effective vaccines in the field, select for resistant lumpfish to infectious diseases, sequence lumpfish and cunner genomes, and profile their transcriptome in response to immunization,” he says.

All of which, Swanson says, is “a wonderful example of a multi-level partnership harnessing nature to a commercial advantage.”

The program has received financial support from AFF, ACOA, Genome Atlantic, Canadian Centre for Fisheries Innovation, DFO ACRDP, Ocean Frontier Institute, NSERC, MITACS, as well as indirectly from Governments of NL & NS, and Canada. The specific research groups collaborating on aspects of the cleaner fish program are Memorial (NL), Dalhousie (NS), Guelph (ON), DFO’s SAB Station (NB), as well as Pronova (NS) and Belleoram Nursery (NL). -Sponsored content



**RESMED HALIFAX ULC**

**Industry:** Custom computer programming services

**Location:** Halifax, N.S.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 225

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for employees who are new mothers, fathers or adoptive parents, to 100 per cent of salary for up to 14 weeks.
- Employee professional development includes tuition subsidies for job-related courses (up to \$5,000 per year), formal opportunities for mentoring, and leadership development workshops.
- Four-week vacation allowance plus additional paid time off during the winter break.

**SEKISUI DIAGNOSTICS PEI LTD.**

**Industry:** Medical diagnostic products

**Location:** Charlottetown, P.E.I.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 150

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- New-employee referral bonuses (up to \$1,250); conducts annual benchmarking for each position to ensure competitive compensation

rates for existing employees.

- Tuition subsidies for job-related courses (up to \$4,700 per year), subsidies for professional accreditation, and a variety of in-house and online training programs.
- Three weeks of starting vacation allowance, moving employees to four weeks after only four years on the job. Employees may also take advantage of flexible work hours and a telecommuting option to help balance personal and professional commitments.

**SERCO CANADA INC.**

**Industry:** Technical consulting and management services

**Location:** Happy Valley-Goose Bay, N.L.

**Full-time employees in Canada:** 835

**What makes them a Top Employer:**

- Retirement planning assistance includes contributions to a defined contribution pension plan (the company temporarily changed the rules of the plan during the pandemic, allowing employees the option to withdraw a specified amount from their account if needed).
- Maternity and parental leave top-up payments for new moms (to 93 per



Professional development is very important to Top Employers.

**54%**

offer subsidies for extended learning opportunities

cent of salary for 52 weeks) as well as offering support to new dads and non-birth parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 37 weeks).

- Professional development includes online training options as well as tuition subsidies for courses related and indirectly related to an employee's current position (up to \$5,250 annually).

## What it means to work safely has changed. What it means to be a leader remains the same.

Top employers understand that the world we're living in is demanding a new kind of leadership. One that is asking leaders across this province to step up in a way they never have before. We're proud to be a top employer once again in 2021, and to support other workplaces and the Nova Scotians they employ, as our world continues to evolve.

LEARN MORE AT [WORKSAFEFORLIFE.CA/LEADERS](https://www.worksafebc.ca/leaders)





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**SIGMAST COMMUNICATIONS INC.**

Industry: Mobile communications services

Location: Bedford, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 44

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Three weeks of paid vacation for new employees; previous work experience considered when setting vacation entitlement for experienced candidates. Longer serving employees can apply for unpaid leaves of absence (up to one year).
- Matching RSP contributions and a year-end bonus program that's open to all employees.
- As a subsidiary of Samsung Electronics, SigMast employees can take advantage of discounts on the full range of Samsung products, from home electronics to appliances.

29%

of Top Employers offer their employees health benefits



**ULTRA ELECTRONICS MARITIME SYSTEMS INC.**

Industry: Defence electronics manufacturing

Location: Dartmouth, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 190

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Supports ongoing employee development with tuition subsidies for courses related and not directly related to their current position as well as through a variety of in-house and online training programs.
- Matching RSP contributions, share purchase and profit-sharing plans.

**UNIVERSITY OF NEW BRUNSWICK / UNB**

Industry: Post secondary schools, university

Location: Fredericton, N.B.

Full-time employees in Canada: 1,746

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Contributions to a defined benefit pension plan and retirement planning assistance. Retirees can also stay connected through a dedicated Retired Employees Association, which assists members with health benefits and related

concerns, and provides a collective voice to the university.

- Recognizes exceptional performance in a number of areas including the Excellence in Teaching awards, Distinguished Service awards and President's Medals for service over the span of a career.

**VERAFIN INC.**

Industry: Specialized financial software

Location: St. John's, N.L.

Full-time employees in Canada: 516

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Results-focused work environment allows employees to work when and where they are most productive. This flexible approach also applies to paid sick leave, personal days and compassionate leave, with the company opting out of establishing set leave lengths.
- Parental leave top-up extended to offer all parents, including adoptive, the same amount of paid leave - to 75 per cent of salary for a full year.
- Share purchase plan is available to all employees.
- Employees are encouraged to save for the future with matching RSP contributions.

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**VERB INTERACTIVE INC.**

Industry: Custom website design services

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 173

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Health benefits plan includes a wellness spending account as well as a dedicated mental health practitioners benefit. The company also supports a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association along with access to an online portal and partnership in the national "Not Myself Today" awareness campaign.
- Experienced employees offered four weeks of paid vacation along with additional time off over the Christmas holiday season (up to five days); longer serving employees can apply for an unpaid leave of absence, up the three months.
- Matching RSP contributions.

**WEB.COM CANADA**

Industry: Data processing, hosting, and related services

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 462

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Supports telecommuting work arrangements for employees and has been able to move all Canadian employees to work-from-home arrangements over the past year. This unique arrangement is under ongoing review.
- Tuition subsidies for job-related courses (to \$5,250 per year) and subsidies for professional accreditation and in-house and online training initiatives.
- Matching RSP contributions and a year-end bonus program that's open to all employees.

**WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA**

Industry: Administration of human resource programs

Location: Halifax, N.S.

Full-time employees in Canada: 428

What makes them a Top Employer:

- Health benefits plan includes a flexible health spending account (to \$850 annually) to help cover additional coverages as well as having access to a free on-line health risk assessment tool, called My Good Health.
- New employees start with three

- weeks of paid vacation (working to maximum of six weeks) and receive up to four paid personal days off to help balance work and personal matters. Employees can also apply for self-funded leaves of absence (up to one year) as well as unpaid leaves of absence (up to two years).
- Supports new mothers with maternity leave top-up payments (to 93 per cent of salary for 16 weeks) and offers parental leave top-up for new fathers and adoptive parents (to 93 per cent of salary for 10 weeks). Employees with kids pursuing post-secondary studies may be eligible for academic scholarships.

**FEEDBACK**

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