NEWS RELEASE

More space to grow: Summer Street cultivates a brighter, more inclusive future in New Glasgow

*Government support helps social enterprise build state-of-the-art three-bay greenhouse*

*Photo from event?*

May 23, 2023 · New Glasgow, Nova Scotia · Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)

Organizations that provide training and ~~vocational~~ employment opportunities for people living with challenges help ensure that Canadians of all abilities have the chance to participate fully in the economy. In rural Atlantic Canada, issues such food security and protecting the environment by growing fruits and vegetables locally are increasingly top of mind. The Government of Canada is addressing these issues by investing in [Summer](https://www.cbrm.ns.ca/) Street [Industries](https://summerstreet.ca/) (known as Summer Street) to build a fully accessible greenhouse.

Growing food, skills, and a cleaner economy  
  
Today, The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and Member of Parliament for Central Nova, announced a non-repayable investment of $1,500,000 through the [Canada Coal Transition Initiative – Infrastructure Fund](https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/services/canada-coal-transition-initiative.html) (CCTI) to Summer Street to construct a three-bay greenhouse in New Glasgow, built to universal accessibility standards.

The announcement was made on behalf of the Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA. The Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage is also contributing $1,000,000 to this project.

Summer Street, which provides opportunities and employment to ~~over 200~~ 180 people with diverse abilities ~~intellectual disabilities~~, will use the all-season greenhouse to produce food for its food service businesses, including one of the biggest banquet halls in Pictou County. It will also sell food locally and help supply local food banks, improving food security in the area.

Summer Street participants will be the main workers, learning hands-on gardening skills. The greenhouse will be fully accessible to people of all mobility levels and engineered to be environmentally sustainable and reduce carbon emissions. Local small and medium-sized businesses will be able to lease space to grow food, scale up and reach their market potential. This project supports eco-friendly growth in the food sector and creates education and employment opportunities for individuals with diverse abilities.

The Government of Canada is proud to invest in innovative infrastructure projects that support skills development and economic diversification during the transition to a greener economy.

Quotes

“This project is a perfect example of how our rural communities grow stronger when people work together toward common goals. Summer Street’s new greenhouse will help create a healthier environment, assist small businesses in expanding, provide training and education for people with diverse needs and greater food security for residents of New Glasgow and Pictou County. This collaboration and vision helps build resilient communities and strong economies.”

* *The Honourable Ginette Petitpas Taylor, Minister of Official Languages and Minister responsible for ACOA*

“Summer Street has been doing amazing work in this community for decades. With the creation of an all-season, fully accessible greenhouse, Summer Street participants will gain valuable job skills while producing food for the region. The greenhouse will decrease carbon emissions and provide space to local business owners in need of a modern facility to support their market growth. This is a win for the whole region.”

* *The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and Member of Parliament for Central Nova*

“My government wants our communities to be places where everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential. This expansion will enhance the lives of everyone in New Glasgow and neighbouring communities, allowing people living with intellectual disabilities to find fulfilling work, while providing the area with locally grown, healthy food.”    
- *The Honourable Karla MacFarlane, Minister of Community Services, on behalf of Pat Dunn,   
 Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage.*

With the support provided by our Federal and Provincial governments, the Summer Street universally accessible greenhouse project, which our Participant Council, Society Board, and Staff are involved in developing, will create new job opportunities for people with diverse abilities, forge new partnerships with farmers and businesses, help people facing food insecurity challenges, and offer a desired service in Pictou County. This new development happening at Summer Street is a testament to the strength of how participants' voices are the key to positive organisational growth and creating a Community of Champions.

*Bob Bennett, Executive Director, Summer Street*

Quick facts

* In 2021, ACOA provided Summer Street with a $35,363 non-repayable contribution, through its Innovative Communities Fund (ICF), to conduct a feasibility study for this project.
* Summer Street is an adult service centre offering a range of programs and services to meet the diverse needs of participants including life enhancement programming, supported employment in the community as well as vocational training and employment in social enterprises which accounts for more than 25 per cent of the organization’s revenue.
* The new Summer Street greenhouse will be fully accessible to [Rick Hansen](https://www.rickhansen.com/) standards, a national rating and certification program that measures a multitude of meaningful accessibility criteria.
* The greenhouse will be more than 3,500 square feet. Construction is to being this spring and Summer Street hopes that it will be open this winter.
* Launched on August 20, 2020, the [Canada Coal Transition Initiative](https://www.canada.ca/en/atlantic-canada-opportunities/services/canada-coal-transition-initiative.html) (CCTI) – Infrastructure Fund is a $150 million fund, delivered by Canada’s regional development agencies (RDAs), that aims to help communities move away from coal by investing in infrastructure. The initiative is set to end on March 31, 2025.
* In Atlantic Canada, ACOA is delivering $55 million under the CCTI initiatives.

Contacts

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Marianne Blondin  Press Secretary  Office of the Minister of Official Languages and of the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency  [Marianne.Blondin@acoa-apeca.gc.ca](mailto:Marianne.Blondin@acoa-apeca.gc.ca) | Lauren Sinclair Director of Communications Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency 782-641-6365 [Lauren.Sinclair@acoa-apeca.gc.ca](mailto:Lauren.Sinclair@acoa-apeca.gc.ca) |
| Provincial contact Xxx | Bob Bennett Executive Director Summer Street 902-759-6693  [bob@summerstreet.ca](mailto:bob@summerstreet.ca%20) |

Stay connected

Follow ACOA on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ACOACanada/), [Twitter](https://twitter.com/ACOACanada), [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/acoa-apeca/) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/acoacanada/).