



Member Orientation

Nursing
led by Nurses

Welcome to the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union!

In this orientation pack, you will find the following helpful information:

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4	Accessing Online Resources <i>Just for Members</i>
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Welcome to the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union!

As a dues-paying member of the Nurses' Union, it is crucial that your membership details are accurate and up-to-date.

To participate in the Union and access exclusive content in the Members Only Portal and MyNSNU app, you will need login credentials. To access these credentials, you must fill out the NSNU New Member Information Form.

New Member Information

nsnu.ca/education/orientation



Completing this form is not only essential to access these resources, but also to stay informed about bargaining updates, events, deadlines, and other relevant news. Accurate contact and employment information allow us to communicate effectively with you through e-memos, newsletters, etc.

Please remember: if any of your details change, it is important to update the NSNU. Existing members have the ability to update their contact information and union status directly in the Members Only section of the NSNU website. Log in to Members Only and click **Update Profile Info**.

i.e. Change of address, surname, email or phone number, employment status

Protecting your personal information is of vital importance to the NSNU. For more information, please refer to the **NSNU Privacy Policy**.



Online Resources - *Accessing Your Credentials*

Go to nsnu.ca/user/login?destination=/MembersOnly and use the “Forgot Your Password” function to retrieve your username and password. You must use the email address that the NSNU has on file.

If you are not sure which email address to use, or if the NSNU does not have your email address, contact nsnu.office@nsnu.ca to update your information and reset your password.

Members Only Page

The NSNU Members Only page is your online portal for ratification voting, membership-wide surveys on bargaining priorities and labour issues and other pertinent information. Here, members can register to attend events like the Annual General Meeting, Eastern Labour School, education sessions and more.

nsnu.ca/MembersOnly

MyNSNU App

Using the same username and password as the Members Only portal, you can access the MyNSNU App in the Google and Apple App Stores, and online by visiting nsnu.itacit.com.

Members can use the MyNSNU App to participate in education modules and accessing their education certificates.

just for members

Access the Member Discount List

NSNU Members have exclusive discounts with business across the province! Visit nsnu.ca/MemberDiscounts *

Shop the NSNU Boutique

NSNU Members can set up an appointment to shop at the NSNU Office or visit nsnu.ca/Merchandise * to view a selection of our merchandise and make an order

* Member Login Required

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Union Local?

A Local is comprised of a group of nurses in a workplace who have been certified under the Trade Union Act for the Nova Scotia Nurses' Union to be the bargaining agent for the nurses. The local would be created by a Charter from the Union.

A local elects its officers and deals with internal needs of the local. Counseling, labour/legal assistance and experienced negotiators are provided by the NSNU upon request.

Why is it important to be a member of the NSNU?

Without union contracts, employers can decide to reduce your wages or benefits at any time. Your NSNU Collective Agreement is a legal and binding contract that both employers and the Union must uphold for a defined period of time. This agreement cannot be altered without approval from both parties.

Labour organizations like the NSNU work to ensure members have contracts that protect their rights and offer recourse when things go wrong. NSNU contracts include provisions for job security, seniority rights and the guarantee of the nurses' right to appeal management's decisions through the grievance and arbitration process.

Why does the NSNU need your contact information?

It is important for the NSNU to have the most correct and up-to-date information possible. Collecting and updating contact and employment information enables the Union to reach members with relevant memos, information on bargaining and tentative agreements, newsletters, and other items of interest.

Why should you get involved in your Union?

In its most basic form, a union is simply a group of workers who have won the legal right to negotiate over their wages and working conditions – but unions are more than just a contract. The strength of that contract is entirely dependent on the strength and unity of the workers who fight for it and enforce the rights that they have won. The voice of many is much stronger than the voice of one.

Attending a local meeting or participating in union events can be a great way to dive in and learn more about what is going on and how you can get involved

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union represents thousands of Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners working in Acute, Long-Term and Community Care settings across Nova Scotia.

Member Services

The NSNU provides a variety of services to members, including:

- **Negotiations & Contract Interpretation**
- **Assistance with Grievances & Arbitration**
- **Research & Advocacy**
- **Affiliation with CFNU, CLC & NSFL**
- **Occupational Health & Safety**
- **Labour Education**
 - » Education Day
 - » Shop Steward Training
 - » Local/Administration Organizing
 - » Regional Workshops
 - » Eastern Labour School
 - » CFNU Educational Events/Biennial Convention
- **Legal Representation**

Union Dues

Union dues amount to 1.00% of a nurse's salary. The 1.00% dues deduction is based on all hours paid to the maximum a fulltime nurse would pay (inclusive of paid sick leave, paid vacation leaves and the straight time hourly equivalent of overtime hours paid). Members can claim union dues and professional membership fees when filing income tax.



NSNU Staff

NSNU Staff complete the day-to-day activities of the Union.

The following outlines the current complement of staff:

- **Executive Director**
- **Director of Finance & Operations**
- **Research & Government Relations**
- **Education & Technology**
- **Occupational Health & Safety**
- **Labour Relations Representatives**
6 Staff
- **Administrative**
4 Staff
- **Communications**
2 Staff
- **Financial Staff**
2 Staff

nsnu.ca/staff

Board of Directors

Members of the Board of Directors (BOD) are elected during the Annual General Meeting. **The following positions represent their corresponding member groups on the BOD:**

- **President**
- **1st Vice President**
- **Vice-President Finance**
- **Central Vice-President**
- **Eastern Vice-President**
- **Northern Vice-President**
- **Western Vice-President**
- **Vice-President Licenced Practical Nurses**
- **Vice-President Nurse Practitioners**
- **Vice-President Long Term Care**
- **Vice-President Community Care**
- **IWK Vice-President**

nsnu.ca/about/directors

Standing Committees

AGM Operations & Nominations
Constitution/Resolutions Committee
Finance Committee
Education Committee

Additional Committees

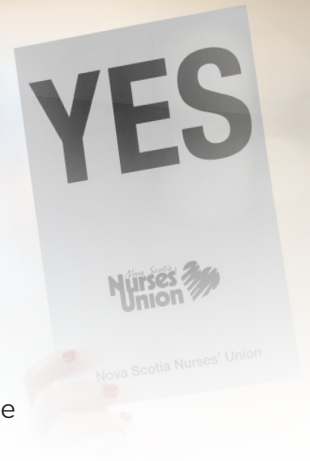
Personnel Committee
Union Discipline Committee
Union Discipline Appeal Committee
Bursary Committee
Provincial Negotiating Committee(s)
and other bargaining committees

Annual General Meeting

The NSNU holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year to update members on Union activities, debate resolutions, review finances, hear from guest speakers, hold elections and address other Union business.

Along with regional and component meetings, the AGM week allows nurses connect with peers from across N.S. and includes a day focused on education. Locals are able to send delegates and observers to speak on behalf of their Local members and to report back on NSNU activities.

The AGM provides a platform for members to engage, learn and actively participate in shaping the future of the Union and the nursing profession as a whole.



Delegates (Voting)

Each Local is entitled to be represented by at least one voting delegate at the AGM. Locals are eligible to send one voting delegate per 100 members, elected by majority vote at a Local meeting

Observers (Non-Voting)

NSNU Locals are eligible to send one observer per 100 members, without voting privileges

Scrutineers (Non-Voting)

Scrutineers, chosen from the pool of observers, are responsible for conducting votes, distributing, collecting, and counting ballots if necessary, and reporting the results

Annual Union Grants, Scholarships & Bursaries

NSNU Locals in good standing can apply for the following grant to support projects, events or activities that encourage union growth, participation and solidarity.

Shirley Farrell Memorial Solidarity & Wellness Grant

UP TO \$2000

In keeping with NSNU's mission, vision and values, the Shirley Farrell Memorial Solidarity & Wellness Grant, a sum of \$2000 (all or part of) will be awarded annually to a Local(s) for an event(s) that encourage union growth, participation and solidarity. Learn more about Shirley Farrell and the criteria for this grant at nsnu.ca/resources/education/scholarships/nsnu.

Members of the NSNU, their children and grandchildren are entitled to apply for numerous scholarships and bursaries through the Union and our affiliates. **The following scholarships and bursaries are given out by the NSNU each year:**

Delores Chase

\$2000

Awarded to an NSNU Member enrolled in a nursing degree program.

Annual Family Scholarships

\$2000 X2

Two scholarships will be awarded to family members of an NSNU Member who is enrolled in a nursing program.

Nursing Degree/Diploma

\$2000

Awarded to an NSNU Member enrolled in a nursing degree program.

Elizabeth & Brittany MacPherson

\$1000

Awarded to a resident of Colchester or East Hants enrolled in a nursing degree program.

Continuing Education

UP TO \$2000

Awarded to an NSNU Member enrolled in an educational program. Value dependant on the cost of the program.

NSNU Bursary Program

\$2000 TOTAL

NSNU allocates \$500 per area is each quarter, with any remaining money being carried to the final quarter of the year.

The CFNU (nurseunions.ca) offers the following scholarships:

CFNU Scholarship

\$1000

Awarded to an unlicensed student enrolled in an accredited nursing education program in Nova Scotia.

CFNU Indigenous Student Scholarship

\$1000

Awarded to an unlicensed, Indigenous student enrolled in an accredited nursing education program in Nova Scotia.

Scholarships are also available through [belairdirect](#) and the [Nova Scotia Federation of Labour](#).

Visit nsnu.ca/scholarshipsandbursaries for more details.

Communications

The NSNU communicates with members and other Nova Scotians on a regular basis about major issues, opportunities and events.

The NSNU launches annual campaigns designed to educate Nova Scotians on critical topics, such as influenza immunization, nurse retention and

recruitment, while also promoting awareness of the Union and its objectives. Recognized as a reliable source of information, the NSNU is frequently called upon by media to provide insights on various topics.

NSNU communications employ a wide range of tools and tactics, which include some of the following:



Campaigner Email Service

Campaigner is a secure email service that enables us to share information, directly to members, in an efficient and timely manner.

Campaigner emails from the NSNU will be sent to the email address that we have on file. We recommend using a personal email, rather than a work or school account, as these tend to bounce.

Social Media

One of the best ways to connect with members is by reaching them where they are at! The NSNU uses social media platforms to connect with members, fellow nurse unions and other labour affiliates.

NSNU's Social Media Commenting Policy:
nsnu.ca/SMCommentingPolicy

-  Nova Scotia Nurses' Union
-  @NSNursesU
-  @NSNU.bsky.social
-  @NSNursesUnion



What's Nu? Newsletter

The NSNU publishes several newsletters each year, which are mailed directly to members and are also available digitally on our website. For current and past editions of *What's Nu?* visit our website at:

nsnu.ca/newsletter-archive

Education

Members of the NSNU can take advantage of various educational opportunities throughout the year. You may be eligible for premium points based on the courses and events you participate in, including the AGM.

Educational Opportunities

- NSNU AGM & Education Day
- CFNU Biennial Convention
- Shop Steward Training
- Eastern Labour School
- In-Person Education *
- Online Education *

* offered by NSNU & affiliate orgs/institutions

Leadership & Practice Premiums

Leadership and Practice Premium Points are now built into most NSNU collective agreements. They allow members to accrue points throughout the year, and then cash in those points for a bonus.

The deadline to submit practice and leadership premiums is October 31st each year, with points collected until that date. Each premium is worth \$850 (pro-rated) and will be paid out in late November or early December.

Practice Premium Points

Requires 70 points from activities like specialty certification, courses, workshops, and educational sessions. Shorter e-learning courses may be combined for points.

- Workshops and seminars offered by NSNU staff also count towards your practice points. Members are encouraged to contact the Union if interested in arranging such education for their local.

Leadership Premium Points

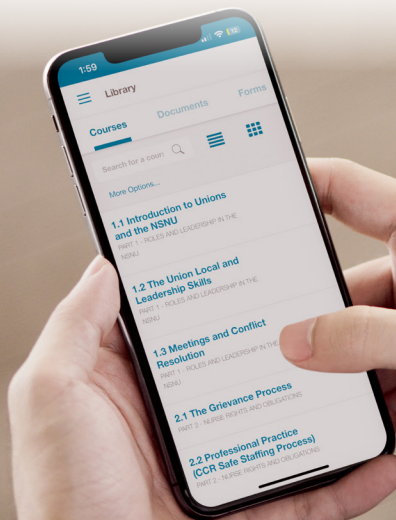
Requires 60 points from committee involvement, professional association participation, publications, research, special responsibilities, or projects.

Refer to your collective agreement (Appendix B) for further information. Consult your manager for point values of activities.

The NSNU has a helpful video explaining the premiums on our YouTube channel: youtube.com/watch?v=Vnu-q2Ehi_c&t=7s

Education on the MyNSNU App

The MyNSNU App provides members with a library of course modules offered by the NSNU. Members can use the app to preview and enroll in courses.



Union Activism: *embracing the labour movement*

Through engagement with your Local or Provincial Union, embracing opportunities for education and expanding your network, you can take your interest in labour relations and build your resume as an activist!

getting involved!

You can get involved by attending events and rallies or serving on committees:

- Young Worker's Committee
- Anti-Racism/Human Rights Committee
- Committee on Political Action
- Educational Committee
- OH&S/Workers Compensation Committee
- Women's Committee
- International Solidarity Committee

Activism Checklist:

- ☐ Attend Local meetings
- ☐ Attend Union events (like AGM & Education Day)
- ☐ Take on a role in your Local Executive
 - » President
 - » Vice President
 - » Treasurer
 - » Secretary
 - » Shop Steward
 - » Joint OH&S Rep

staying updated!

Getting involved in your Union requires staying up-to-date on Union activities:

- Read your **What's Nu?** Newsletter
- Check the NSNU website at nsnu.ca
- Read your Campaigner email messages



The **Nova Scotia Federation of Labour** is the central provincial voice for Nova Scotia workers. The Fed represents thousands of union members, lobbying the provincial government for justice and fairness for workers across the province.



The **Canadian Labour Congress** is the largest labour organization in Canada, bringing together dozens of national and international unions, provincial and territorial federations of labour and community-based labour councils to represent more than 3 million workers across the country.



The **CFNU** is Canada's largest nurses' organization, representing nurses and student nurses in every sector of health care and advocating on key health priorities and federal engagement in the future of public health care.

Did you know?

The faces you see on our social media, campaigns and print materials are those of your fellow NSNU members!

The NSNU uses real NSNU nurses in our photoshoots - we think that it is important for our members and other Nova Scotians to see a real reflection of our nursing membership. The photos and videos taken in these shoots are used to develop informative and promotional materials.

If you're interested in participating in an upcoming photo or video shoot, please contact us at communications@nsnu.ca. Our communications team looks forward to working with you on a future project!



NSNU Labour/Legal Representation

As listed below, there are several situations in which a nurse and/or a Local may need representation on matters related to their employment or breach of the collective agreement.

Grievances, Arbitrations, Labour Relations Board Hearings & Appeals from the decisions of Arbitrators or Labour Relations Board decisions:

Legal assistance, in addition to assistance provided by the NSNU labour relations staff, shall be provided where such assistance is deemed necessary by the Executive Director, taking into account the seriousness and complexity of the case. Where such assistance is provided by the Union, costs shall be covered by the Union.

LTD & CPP Claims & Appeals

In addition to NSNU staff representation, legal assistance may be provided and paid for by the Union, where such assistance is deemed necessary by the Executive Director.

Workers' Compensation Appeals Cases

The NSNU does not provide this service as the provincial government pays for the employees legal representation by a lawyer (Worker's Counsellor) who is on an approved list.

Professional Discipline

On the request from a member, the NSNU will provide representation to members who are called before the complaints committee or professional conduct committee of their College for a work-related incident. The representation will be assigned by the Executive Director.

Fatality Inquiries / Coroner's Inquest

Where a nurse believes that a conflict of interest exists between themselves and their employer, and the alleged conflict may result in unfair representation by the legal counsel retained by the employer to represent the interest of the employer in a fatality inquiry or coroner's inquest, s/he may request legal assistance from the Union. Such legal assistance may be provided where it is deemed necessary by the Executive Director.

Judicial Inquiry

On occasion, a major health issue in a facility involving unexplained deaths results in the appointment of a judicial inquiry to investigate the circumstances and to make recommendations to government. Usually, the facility represents the interests of its entire staff, but there can be special circumstances where nurses are singled out for blame. In special circumstances, which justify the significant cost of intervening in such an inquiry, the NSNU may provide representation by a staff member or by a lawyer retained by the Union. Where a nurse believes that a conflict of interest exists between themselves and their employer, and the alleged conflict may result in her not being fairly represented by the legal counsel retained by the employer to represent the interests of the employer in the judicial inquiry, s/he may request assistance from the Union. The request will be considered by the Executive Director.

Criminal Charges

If a nurse is charged with criminal charges related to their job, the nurse, on request, will be entitled to an initial consultation with a lawyer of his/her choice. Up to \$500.00 for the initial consultation shall be paid for by the Union. The Canadian Nurses' Protective Society will cover the payment of all costs and expenses incurred in defence of a criminal charge, provided that the charge was related to the provision of professional nursing services and that your defence was fully successful.

safety first Occupational Health & Safety:

The NSNU prioritizes the safety and wellbeing of members. A dedicated staff member - an OH&S Advisor - is available to guide members through OH&S processes, inform them of their safety rights and support them in exercising those rights.

At the heart of every effective health and safety program is the Internal Responsibility System, which holds that everyone in the workplace has a role in maintaining safety. Hazards are a reality in every workplace - especially in healthcare. Nurses face these risks daily and must identify and report them, while managers must address them. This shared responsibility, along with the rights and duties of both employees and employers, is embedded in OH&S laws and regulations.

Nurses are encouraged to report safety issues to their employer through systems like SIMS, ERS, or SafeLine. However, as the NSNU doesn't have access to these reports, members are also asked to submit a safety form to the Union. This helps keep the NSNU informed and able to advocate on their behalf.

Email safety@nsnu.ca to request a safety form. Thank you in advance for keeping the NSNU informed of safety concerns.

safety rights

The Right to Know

the right to be informed of existing or potential hazards in your workplace
e.g. a patient with a history of violence

The Right to Participate

the right to engage in the process of identification, investigation, review
e.g. you have the right to participate in the activities of the local safety committee, or in an investigation about a hazard you identified

The Right to Refuse

the right to refuse unsafe work
e.g. you can refuse to work with an infectious patient unless you are provided with appropriate PPE

Violence: *it's not part of the job*

Workplace violence is one of the leading causes of physical and moral injury to nurses. Violent behaviour from patients, clients and their families is all too commonly accepted as part of a nurses' work environment.

Violence should not be a part of providing care.

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union has taken a leading role in working to eliminate workplace violence. We conduct research, write reports, lobby and work to inform both nurses and the public about this important issue. We work with government, employers and community partners to address workplace violence in a significant way.

NSNU & Workplace Violence

The NSNU has developed a statement of beliefs on workplace violence. Click here or follow the QR to view:



CFNU & CNA Statement

The Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions, jointly with the Canadian Nurses Association, has developed the following position statement against workplace violence:



Take the Nurse Safety Pledge

We encourage you to take this *symbolic* pledge, and to **report any incidents of violence that you experience on the job to your employer and to the Union.**

I, [Name], am a nurse. I strive to live up to my professional standards of practice and provide the highest level of patient care.

Physical assault, sexual assault, bullying and aggression are not an accepted part of my job. I deserve to return from work every day, safe and sound, and I should not live in fear of my workplace.

I pledge to take a stand against workplace violence. I will report it when I see it. I will work with my colleagues and employers to uproot it from the workplace and I will not accept it as a part of my job.