

Membership

The Nova Scotia Nurses' Union represents 8,000 Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Nurse Practitioners working in Acute, Long-Term and Community Care settings in Nova Scotia.

Annual General Meeting

The NSNU holds an Annual General Meeting each year to update members on Union activities and review Union business.

The number of voting delegates per local is decided by the size of the local. In most cases, locals are entitled to one (1) voting delegate per 100 members.

Dues

Provincial Union Dues are set by the general membership at the Annual General Meeting.

RN/NP: \$29.24 bi-weekly

LPN: \$21.48 bi-weekly

Local dues are set by local membership and range from \$0.12 to \$4.00 bi-weekly. Please contact your local president or executive for details about local dues.

NSNU Staff

NSNU staff complete the day-to-day activities of the Union. **The following is the current complement of NSNU staff:**

- Executive Director
- Director of Finance & Operations
- 5 Labour Relations Representatives
- 2 Education/Research Staff
- 2 Communications Staff
- 2 Financial Staff
- 4 Administrative Staff

NSNU 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 Licensed Practical Nurses
- Vice-President Long Term Care
- Vice-President Community Care
- IWK Vice-President

Committees of the Board of Directors:

- Personnel Committee

Committees of the Union:

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

Member Services

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

- Contract Interpretation
- Assistance with Grievances
- Negotiations
- Advocacy
- Nursing Issues/Trend Research & Education
- Affiliations with Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions and Canadian Labour Congress/Nova Scotia Federation of Labour

- **Labour Education:**
 - AGM Education Day
 - Shop Steward Training
 - Local/Administration Organizing
 - Regional Workshops
 - Eastern Labour School
 - CFNU Educational Events/Biennial Convention

- **Legal Representation:**
 - Arbitration
 - Labour Relations Board Matters
 - Discipline Complaints before Licensing Body
 - CPP & LTD Appeals
 - Initial Legal Consultation on Work-Related Civil & Criminal Matters

Annual Union Scholarships & Bursaries

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:**

- **Dolores Chase – \$1500**
- **Nursing Degree or Diploma Program – \$1500**
- **Certificate Program – up to \$1500**
- **Elizabeth & Brittany MacPherson – \$1500**
- **Annual Family Scholarships (x2) – \$1000**
- **NSNU Bursary Program – \$1500**

Visit nsnu.ca/scholarshipsandbursaries for details.

Additionally, the **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions** (nurseunions.ca) offers a \$1000 scholarship that members and their family can apply for.

Scholarships are also available through **Johnson Insurance** and the **Nova Scotia Federation of Labour**.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED IN UNION ACTIVISM

There are many ways you can become more involved in the labour movement. Through engagement with your Local and 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.

Embracing the Labour Movement

As a member of the NSNU you are already a member of the **Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL)** and the **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**.

Local Union Involvement

- Attend local meetings
- Attend Union events, like the **AGM & Education Day**
- Take on a role in your local executive
 - President
 - Vice President
 - Treasurer
 - Secretary
 - Shop Steward
 - Joint Occupational Health & Safety Rep

You can get involved at this level 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

Provincial Union Involvement

- Board of Directors
- Committees
 - AGM Operations & Nominations Committee
 - Education Committee

EDUCATION

Members of the NSNU can take advantage of many educational opportunities throughout the year. You may be eligible for premium points based on the courses you take, including participation at the AGM.

Practice and Leadership 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 at the end of October each year. You should always check with your employer to determine if a particular course or event is eligible for points.

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.

These are a few more opportunities available to members of the NSNU:

- NSNU AGM & Education Day
- NSNU Webinars/Courses
- CFNU Biennial Convention
- Eastern Labour School
- On-Site Education

COMMUNICATION

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

Campaigner Email Service

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

What's Nu?

We publish several NSNU Newsletters each year, which are mailed directly to members and are also available digitally on our website.

Visit nsnu.ca/newsletter-archive for past editions

The MyNSNU App

Download from Apple & Google by searching "MyNSNU"

Visit online at nsnu.itacit.ca



JUST FOR MEMBERS

Participate in Videos and Photoshoots

Did you know all of the nurses featured in NSNU photos and commercials are real Union members who live and work in Nova Scotia?

The NSNU is always looking for members who want to be involved in our campaigns. If you would like to be involved in an upcoming project, contact us at nsnu.office@nsnu.ca

Access the Member Discount List

Members of the NSNU have exclusive access to a list of discounts offered by businesses across the province. Simply show your NSNU member card, which will be sent out upon receiving your information, and save! An up-to-date list of discounts is available at nsnu.ca/memberdiscounts

Shop the NSNU Boutique

The Nurses' Union has a store at our head office in Dartmouth that sells NSNU branded merchandise. Members can set up a time to shop in person or go online to view a selection of our merchandise at nsnu.ca/merchandise

NSNU LABOUR/LEGAL REPRESENTATION

There are several situations in which a nurse and/or a local may need representation in matters related to their employment or breach of the collective agreement.

The following describes what the NSNU will do in such situations:

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.

VIOLENCE: IT'S NOT PART OF THE JOB

Nurses are among the most likely professionals to become victims of violence at work. This is not a new problem, but it is one that the NSNU takes very seriously. Our **advocacy around violence** in the workplace began during the 1991 Annual General Meeting, when attendees decided enough was enough.

They left that AGM with a mission and a rallying cry: We **shouldn't** have to put up with it. It's **wrong**. It **can** be prevented. It's **not** part of the job. It has nothing to do with **nursing**.

Since then, the NSNU has taken a leading role in working to eliminate workplace violence. We developed a "Violence in the Workplace Handbook" that was made available to all members. We created a Workplace Violence course that is offered to members and locals year-round and during special events, like Eastern Labour School. 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.

In 2007, NSNU and other health care unions were instrumental in advocating for the enactment of violence in the workplace regulations made under Section 82 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Although more progress is needed, we have come a long way since the 1991 AGM where our workplace safety advocacy officially began. We will continue our work for as long as it takes to have safe workplaces for nurses and all health care workers.

NSNU members attending the 2016 Annual General Meeting were the first to recite the Nurse Safety Pledge, below. As a new member of the NSNU, we encourage you to symbolically take the pledge as well, and to remember to report any incidents of violence that you experience on the job to your employer and to the Union.

Nurse Safety Pledge

I, _____, 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.

X _____

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.

What are Union dues and how are they determined?

Union dues are monthly contributions members make to the union based on their working status. By paying union dues, members pool their resources to ensure protection of the group as a whole and achieve fair wages and benefits, safe working conditions and representation.

Any changes to provincial dues must be voted on and approved by the delegates at the Annual General Meeting. All provincial dues paid to the NSNU are retained by the Union to operate the office, pay staff, cover expenses of the Union executive for Union business, salary replacement and expenses for members attending Union events and meetings. An audit of all dues and expenses is available to members upon request.

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.

Find more FAQs and answers at nsnu.ca/resources/FAQs