

BRIEFING NOTE

Municipal Wellness Program — Transition to NSFM Administration

Purpose

This briefing provides background and rationale for NSFM's decision to assume direct administration of the Municipal Wellness Program effective December 1, 2026, concluding the current arrangement with AMANS.

Background

The Municipal Wellness Program was established in 2014 as a partnership between NSFM and AMANS to promote healthy workplace environments for municipal employees and elected officials. The program has been administered by AMANS under an informal arrangement with no formalized agreement or MOU between the two organizations.

The program is funded through mechanisms tied to NSFM's Group Benefits Program. These funds are held in trust by NSFM, which bears the fiduciary responsibility to manage them for the purpose for which they were received. Despite this responsibility, there is no formal or legal agreement governing the arrangement under which AMANS administers the program. This absence of a defined agreement presents a risk to NSFM's ability to ensure proper accountability, oversight, and alignment with the program's intended purpose.

The Board of Directors has been reviewing the Wellness Program for approximately two years, including a full review of the program's financials and AMANS's delivery of the program. Over this period, instability within AMANS has resulted in repeated interruptions to program delivery, with periods of stoppage, pause, and restart that have affected the consistency and quality of services provided to the membership.

On November 17, 2025, the President wrote to AMANS advising that the current arrangement would conclude on November 30, 2026, and that the Board would continue its review over the following twelve months. AMANS was asked to submit an amended program budget for the period April 1 to November 30, 2026.

At its March 11, 2026 meeting, the Executive Committee discussed the Wellness Program and the November 17 letter. It was agreed that the conversation would continue at the upcoming joint executive meeting and that AMANS would be advised of NSFM's intention to end the current funding arrangement and deliver the program in another way, as reflected in the minutes approved at the April 1, 2026 Executive Committee meeting.

Rationale

1. Program Ownership and Accountability

The Wellness Program exists because of NSFM's Group Benefits Program. NSFM bears full responsibility to its membership for how these funds are allocated. Direct administration ensures that program spending, outcomes, and strategic direction remain under the oversight of the organization that is accountable to the membership for the program's performance.

The Board's review has identified inconsistent program delivery under the current arrangement as a concern. Bringing the program in-house addresses this directly by placing delivery under the same organizational structure that is responsible for the program's funding and oversight.

2. Strategic Alignment

The 2026 Business and Operations Plan identifies as a key aim the need to "re-define and modernize the working relationship between NSFM and AMANS," including to "strengthen the role of NSFM as the primary municipal program administrator." Bringing the Wellness Program in-house advances both objectives. It clarifies NSFM's role as program owner and aligns the program's governance with the organization responsible for its funding and member mandate.

3. Integration with NSFM's Program Portfolio

NSFM administers a portfolio of member programs including Group Benefits, Group Insurance, the Employee and Family Assistance Program, the HST Offset Program, and purchasing programs through Canoe Procurement. The Wellness Program is the one member-facing program in this portfolio that is delivered by an external organization. Integrating it into NSFM's direct operations ensures consistency in program oversight, member communication, and quality standards. Consolidation also reduces overhead costs to the fund, as both NSFM and AMANS currently collect administration fees; under direct administration, this would be reduced to a single fee.

4. Operational Capacity

NSFM has the ability to administer the program by itself. The program's core components, including wellness grants, fitness partnerships, mental health resources, and training coordination, are consistent with the work NSFM already performs across its events, communications, and member development functions, although doing that will require hiring staff support, the cost for which would be drawn from the program.

Transition

AMANS has been asked to submit an amended budget covering program delivery through November 30, 2026. NSFM staff will develop a transition plan to assume administration effective December 1, 2026. Upon assuming administration, NSFM will conduct a full review of the program's structure, offerings, and priorities to ensure it meets the needs of both municipal staff and elected officials.