

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

Business & Operations Plan

2026

*Approved by the NSFM Executive Committee
December 2, 2025*

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1. Executive Summary

The Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) is a member-based, non-profit organization that advocates on behalf of the province's 49 municipalities. This includes identifying priorities from a diverse range of local governments by engaging with municipal councils, meeting with senior officials at the provincial and federal levels to communicate and share priorities, negotiating opportunities for consultation, and securing the necessary resources to fund municipal services for Nova Scotians.

NSFM draws its authority from provincial legislation. *An Act to Incorporate the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (1981)*, adopted on June 24, 1981 and amended in 2003, identifies the organization's objects, powers, and non-profit status. The Province of Nova Scotia also granted a request from the organization on September 3, 2019, to amend the legislation to incorporate Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities as the new name of the organization.

NSFM also leads the coordination of cross-sector policy research relating to the implementation of municipal legislation and regulations by engaging with academia, the business community, senior administrative officials, and relevant stakeholders. The organization administers initiatives, such as the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund, which offer much needed support within our communities.

Member municipalities encompass the following seven regions, which are outlined in the NSFM By-laws:

- Cape Breton-Strait
- Cape Breton Regional Municipality
- Cumberland-Colchester-Pictou
- Halifax Regional Municipality
- South Shore
- Southwestern
- Valley

The diversity of our membership means that NSFM is involved in a broad spectrum of issues affecting urban areas, towns, and rural communities.

2. Mission Statement

To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia's communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education, and collaboration.

3. Vision Statement

Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities.

4. Guiding Principles

The Board of Directors ratified the following Guiding Principles on April 30, 2025:

We commit to focused advocacy, passionately championing the causes and issues that align with our vision and mission.

We commit to continuity rooted in the belief that financial stability is essential to achieving our mission and making a lasting impact.

We commit to honesty, transparency, and ethical behaviour in all our interactions and decisions.

We commit to being responsive in all our interactions and operations.

We believe that collaboration is essential for achieving our best outcomes.

5. Role of the Business & Operations Plan

- Acts as the guiding document for reporting to the Board
- Ensures alignment with departmental workplans
- Is an integral tool in evaluating and measuring organizational success
- Serves as a high-level map of priorities for the upcoming year, as defined by the CEO in collaboration with the Senior Management Team, and approved by the Board
- The plan's priorities will inform performance of the Senior Management Team

6. Priorities of the Office of the CEO

The three priority areas that the CEO will address are Governance, Leadership, and People.

Governance

- Conduct a Board self-evaluation and reflection process
- Continue efforts to develop and implement a renewed accountability, training, and transparency strategy
- Improve Board orientation, onboarding, and role clarity
- Maintain improvements on elections, Board Meetings, & AGM
- Review and evaluate the roles of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, and Vice-President

Leadership

- Continue sound financial management and enhance business practices, ensuring the organization is well-run and performing efficiently at a high standard
- Create cohesion in approach to all parts of the organization: engagement, strategy, planning, performance, and outcomes
- Expand Senior Management Team effectiveness with continued professional development and coaching
- Increase efforts to expand our network of national affiliations
- Increase strategic thought, leadership, and advocacy practices toward greater fiscal capacity and authorities for local governments
- Manage continued growth and measures of effectiveness

People

- Continued advancement in organizational commitment to equity and community wellbeing
- Evaluate staff capacity, based on needs and resources
- Increase engagement with aligned stakeholders with a view to increasing strategic partnerships
- Strong people-focused organizational practices and culture to support staff growth, retention, and wellbeing

7. Organizational Transformation & Resilience

- Become a forward-thinking employer that attracts high-caliber people
- Develop and deliver innovative and supportive approaches to the workplace, designed to build organizational culture
- Foster authentic teamwork and cooperation within the organization
- Implement strategic planning processes

8. Organizational Culture

- Develop people management capacity for Senior Management Team

- Enhance programs that will drive employee engagement, wellness, and connectivity
- Implement recruitment and retention initiatives that will make NSFM an attractive workplace for employees and prospective employees
- Improve employee performance, evaluation, development, and recognition initiatives
- Leverage technology to improve service delivery
- Liaise with the Equity and Community Wellbeing Committee to incorporate leading anti-racism, equity, and reconciliation practices within the organization
- Update and implement, where necessary, our monitoring, evaluating, and learning process

9. Key Aims to Serve Membership

1. Understand our members and the communities that exist within our province.
2. Members recognize the positive results of NSFM's advocacy efforts.
3. Management of programs with accountability, good stewardship, integrity, and transparency.
4. Municipal priorities are represented and responded to at the provincial and federal government levels.
5. NSFM members (municipal elected officials and staff) receive value-added programs, services, and information sharing opportunities.
6. NSFM is recognized by members, media, and other stakeholders as the premiere source of information on current and emerging province-wide municipal priorities.
7. Organizational structure and operations are optimized to achieve results for our membership, build capacity, demonstrate accountability and transparency, and mitigate risk.
8. Re-define and modernize the working relationship between NSFM and AMANS.
9. Strengthen collaboration with the Atlantic Mayors Congress, other municipal associations, and FCM to enhance joint efforts.

10. Key Aims, Strategies, & Tasks

- Key aims
- *Intention of the key aims*
- Strategies to support the aims

1. Understand our members and the communities that exist within our province.

Intention: Knowing our communities and establishing relationships to strengthen NSFM.

- Conduct and communicate a self-identification survey to determine the demographics of the membership

2. Members recognize the positive results of NSFM's advocacy efforts.

Intention: Celebrate excellence and use our website and social media platforms to communicate the results of our advocacy as well as increase the profile of our Board, membership, and staff.

- Communicate excellence and success at conference events, in the reports and remarks of the President and CEO, and in the organization's regular communication channels
- Design, compile, and promote the Annual Report to members
- Engage members to participate in advocacy committees
- Feature advocacy successes on social media, website, and in the *Monday Memo*
- Inform members on procedures for submitting advocacy issues and communicate committee results through the website

3. Management of programs with accountability, good stewardship, integrity, and transparency.

Intention: Provide excellence in stewardship of government programs, including high standards of accountability and transparency in managing public funds.

- Compliance for projects funded through the Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund
- Fulfill contractual obligations to the province for the Canada Community-Building Fund
- Expand member services and programs for the review of the Board, including the revenue contribution of programs
- Promote and coordinate compliance for the HST Offset program

4. Municipal priorities are represented and responded to at the provincial and federal government levels.

Intention: President and Chief Executive Officer meet with elected officials and senior staff at the federal and provincial levels to build productive relationships. Consultation is held with the membership on issues that will impact municipal finances or service delivery, and support is provided to members on provincial or federal committees that influence municipal government.

- Administer projects addressing municipal climate adaptation issues, such as coastal land use planning and flood adaptation, which are managed by NSFM and funded by the province
- Assemble and communicate funding opportunities to the municipal sector through the Fund Navigator, offer support where appropriate, and collect statistical information relative to the funding needs of the sector
- Continue to advance policy files
- Coordinate and collaborate on advocacy issues, in conjunction with FCM
- Ensure other levels of government are aware of, and engaged in, issues pertaining to the five main policy priorities of NSFM: Climate Change, Equity & Community Wellbeing, Municipal Autonomy, Municipal Infrastructure, and Public Safety
- Outreach to the federal level of government, including all federal MPs
- Participate and engage in FCM advocacy days
- Support the committee negotiating the Service Exchange Agreement Schedule "A"

5. NSFM members (municipal elected officials and staff) receive value-added programs, services, and information sharing opportunities.

Intention: Members will have access to events, training, and webinars that will address issues of interest in municipal government, benefit from quality group programs and services, and receive benefit from programs and services provided by NSFM either directly or in partnership with other organizations. NSFM will leverage resources to support municipalities.

- Build relationships and identify potential areas of collaboration with Post Secondary Education (PSE) institutions
- Coordinate Elected Officials & CAO Info Sessions to address emerging issues with subject matter experts and political leaders
- Deliver regular webinars and member conference calls on identified areas of importance and in various formats, including a "Lunch & Learn" format
- Support DMA on the new Code of Conduct and participate in a review of the regulations
- Development of Online Training Modules for elected officials

- Development of yearly exhibitor, partnership, and sponsorship options
- Organize a Fall Conference for the membership that will include our AGM, concurrent sessions on relevant topics, and keynote speakers
- Organize a Spring Conference for the membership that will provide information sessions of interest on current and emerging municipal issues in NS
- Oversight, governance, and evaluation of programs and services for the benefit of members
- Promotion of access to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) supports for municipal elected officials

6. NSFM is recognized by members, media, and other stakeholders as the premiere source of information on current and emerging province-wide municipal priorities.

Intention: Research and other public reports are disseminated to stakeholders; news releases and NSFM publications enhance and promote our advocacy objectives.

- Collect, measure, and analyze usage data from our current social media handles (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Bluesky, and Instagram) and benchmark against prior periods
- Enact and periodically review the communications strategy
- Ensure members and stakeholders can find and engage with us on social media

7. Organizational structure and operations are optimized to achieve results for our membership, build capacity, demonstrate accountability and transparency, and mitigate risk.

Intention: Compile and implement changes to organizational structure. Ensure agreements with vendors who provide services to either the organization or the membership are updated to meet current needs. Ensure accurate and up-to-date records management practices are in place.

- Conduct regular staff training and provide development opportunities to enhance the skill set of staff
- Coordinate a committee of the Board to clarify the roles of the CEO, President, and Vice-President
- Communicate Guiding Principles for the organization
- Review and revise records management policies and procedures in coordination with the Office Administrator and Director of Operations & Communications
- Review and update the Employee Handbook
- Review records in storage, digitize necessary documents, and follow approved retention policies
- Review staff compensation
- Support Stakeholder Committees and Boards in which NSFM participates

8. Re-define and modernize the working relationship between NSFM and AMANS.

Intention: Recognize both organizations as separate and distinct, but who share a common mandate to support the municipal sector.

- Review existing processes and structures to clearly outline responsibilities
- Establish joint Executive Meetings to facilitate regular communication
- Where appropriate, work in collaboration to establish and inform NSFM's policy positions for other levels of government
- Strengthen the role of NSFM as the primary municipal program administrator

9. Strengthen collaboration the Atlantic Mayors Congress, other municipal associations, and FCM to enhance joint efforts.

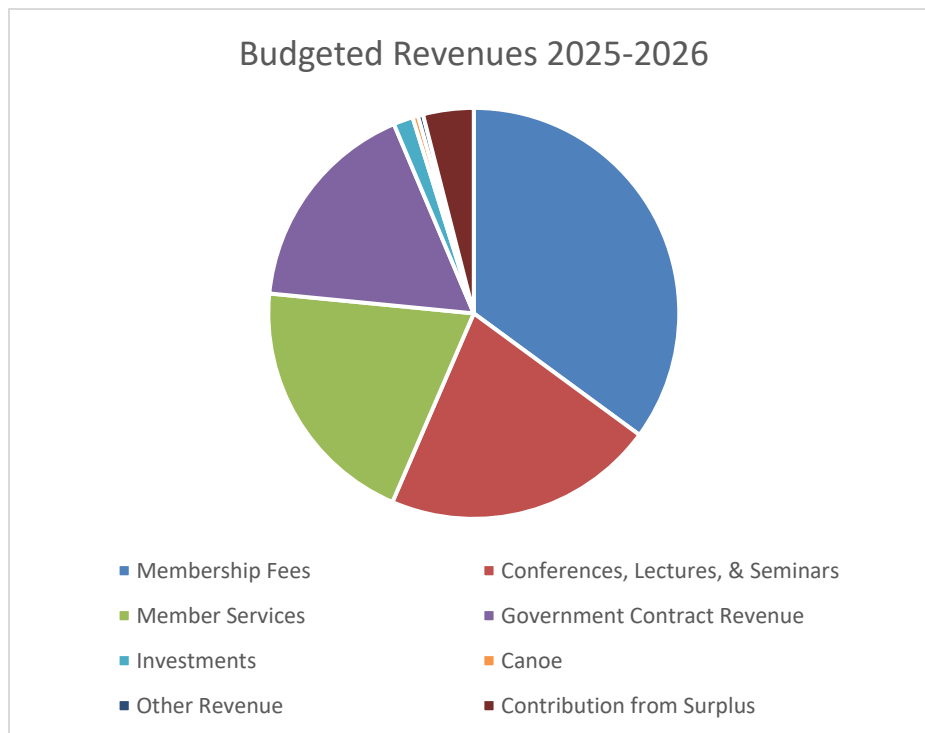
Intention: Share best practices, information, priorities, and success stories between these collaborative partners.

- Continue to participate in Atlantic Mayors Congress and identify mutual areas of collaboration
- Continue to participate in Atlantic and national PTAs and identify mutual areas of collaboration
- Host a joint Board meeting with the boards of the four Atlantic municipal associations

11. Revenues

Revenues, based on the 2025-2026 Budget, are outlined below:

35.07%	\$567,988	Membership Fees
21.41%	\$346,700	Conferences, Lectures, & Seminars
20.07%	\$325,000	Member Services
17.09%	\$276,854	Government Contract Revenue
1.54%	\$25,000	Investments
0.43%	\$7,000	Canoe
0.40%	\$6,500	Other Revenue
3.98%	\$64,473	Contribution from Surplus
100.00%	\$1,619,515	Total Revenues



12. Organizational Chart

Organizational Chart

Effective April 2025

