



Member Handbook

YOUR UNION WORKING FOR YOU

WE ARE GRASSROOTS

Welcome to the New Brunswick Nurses Union!

We're a grassroots, bilingual labour union who protects the workplace rights of Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and Licensed Practical Nurses employed in various healthcare facilities throughout the province of New Brunswick including Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Community Health Centers, Extra-Mural Program, Addictions & Mental Health, Public Health, Correctional Services, Rehabilitation, Veterans' Health Units, Air Ambulance.

Together we are 8,700 members strong.

We're dedicated to upholding and promoting the economic wellbeing and rights of our members. Founded in 1978, we are an open and democratic grassroots organization that promotes the participation of the maximum number of members in decision-making.

We provide effective provincial leadership, valued membership services and grassroots member representation. We are an organization that recognizes that progress is achieved by promoting and supporting social issues in solidarity with other labour organizations and community groups.

Mission

The mission of NBNU is to enhance the work-life, as well as, the social, economic and personal well-being of nurses.

Vision

NBNU is the professional, credible and respected voice for nurses and the public healthcare system.

Values

Equality and Diversity: We value diversity and are guided by the principles of equality and inclusivity in all we do.

Language of Choice: We value our members' right to communicate and interact with the NBNU in either official language.

Trust and Respect: We believe trust and mutual respect are fundamental to our work and our relationships.

Communication and Education: We share information, encourage participation, and support learning opportunities for our members.

Accountability and Transparency: We are transparent in our decision-making and are accountable to our members.

Professional Responsibility: We balance the needs of our members with our commitment to a sustainable public healthcare system for the people of New Brunswick.

Unionism and Solidarity: We promote unity and solidarity within our membership and the broader labour movement.

Our Principles

At our core, they're what we believe in as a union.
They're our commitment to each other, every day.

Our nurses are our members.

Nurses save patients.

Members save each other.

We're all on the same team. And they can't separate us any longer. Every nurse is here to provide care. Every member is here to protect.

Our conversations are our currency.

There is no union if we isolate.

All we have is each other. We use our conversations for strength and for resilience. We rely on and relate to one another in a way we have never before. Talk about everything, always. Nothing scares the system more than nurses talking.

Our experiences are our truths.

We know what's brought us here,
and no one can take that away from us.

With the utmost compassion and strength, we believe each other. Share your stories to heal, to celebrate, to feel. No one can take your experiences away from you. Take those experiences, and turn them into action.

Our hallways are our union.

At the workplace. On shift.

Every hour of every day.

A huddle. A lunch break. A quick chat. A passing in the hallway. Every interaction counts. Every moment matters. We rely on connection, listening and action to overcome our obstacles.

Our walls are our protection.

Together we stand. Together we fall.

Always we protect.

No issue too small. No idea dismissed. We put up walls to protect each other. We tackle problems on the floor, as they happen.

Our voices are our power.

We speak up when we've had enough.

We speak out when we're silenced.

We speak up when we've had enough. We speak out when we're silenced. We've been silenced for too long. Language is power, and our voices are what amplify it. Our voices outnumber theirs. Our collective power is stronger than theirs.

Leadership

Board of Directors

Members of the Board of Directors are elected officials to represent NBNU.

- President
- 1st Vice-President
- 2nd Vice-President
- Vice-President of Finance
- Unit Representative – Part III Hospitals
- Unit Representative – Part III Community Care
- Unit Representative – Nursing Homes
- Unit Representative – Nurse Managers and Nurse Supervisors

Committees of the Board of Directors

- Staff Relations Committee

Committees of the Union

- Annual Meeting Operations Committee
- Finance Committee
- Negotiating Committees, 1 per bargaining unit.

Staff

NBNU staff carry out the day-to-day operations of the Union. The following is the complement of NBNU Staff:

- Executive Director
- Director of Operations
- Labour Relations Officers
- Communications Officer
- Research & Education Officer
- Administrative Officers
- Administrative Staff
- Executive Assistant

Union Dues

All NBNU members benefit from a collective agreement and pay provincial union dues which are deducted once a month from the members' pay. Voting delegates at the Annual General Meeting determine the amount to be deducted.

All members pay the same base amount of dues in the amount of \$67.91 which was set at the 2024 Annual General Meeting to be 1.025% of the annual salary of an RNCA2 Step G.

Union dues help provide the following services to nurses:

- Negotiating and administering collective agreements.
 - Member representation at Nurses Association of New Brunswick and Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurses discipline hearings.
 - Supporting injured and disabled nurses or providing assistance with employment issues.
 - Providing union education opportunities.
 - Researching matters relating to the Union.
 - Providing a legal assistance plan for members.
- Advocating for quality healthcare on behalf of New Brunswickers.
- Maintaining a close affiliation with the CFNU, NBFL and CLC.
 - Building relationships with other unions and nursing organizations.

HERE'S HOW WE ARE GOVERNED

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- Members representing each Union local attend the AGM as delegates
- The number of delegates each local is entitled to is set out in the NBNU Constitution and By-Laws
 - Delegates vote on resolutions and motions that guide the NBNU in the coming year

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Oversees the affairs and activities of NBNU between AGMs
 - Addresses issues that are provincial in scope and impact
 - Liaises with the executive council for input and direction
- Provides direction and oversight to the president and executive director
- Includes an elected president, vice-president, 2nd vice-president, secretary-treasurer and unit representatives, and the executive director is an ex-officio member

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

- Includes over 100 local presidents elected by and representing their respective bargaining units
- Meets at least once a year, in addition to the AGM
- Approves reports and provides direction to the Board of Directors
- Works to resolve issues facing nurses at the Union local level
- The council meetings are also an open forum for communication between locals and the board on matters that are provincial in scope and impact

UNION LOCALS

- Administers Union business in each workplace
- Provides a direct line of communication with local management
- Handles and files grievances on behalf of local members, serves on professional practice committee and supports local political lobbying needs
- Local meetings are generally held monthly, open to local members

MEMBERS

- Eligible to participate in any level of Union governance
- Encouraged to participate at the local level by attending local meetings
- Encouraged to serve as and support the representatives on your local executive
- Encouraged to attend NBNU meetings as a delegate
- Encouraged to stay informed about Union activities through various communications (i.e. newsletters, website, emails)

PRESIDENT

- Highest elected leadership role in the Union
- Accountable to the Board of Directors
- Presides at all provincial Union meetings and serves as ex-officio on all Union committees
- Responsible for carrying out NBNU policies of the NBNU and acting in the best interest of the Union
- Responsible for the overall management of the NBNU
- Official NBNU spokesperson
- Represents New Brunswick nurses on CFNU Board as NBNU national officer

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- Hired by and accountable to the Board of Directors
- Chief negotiator for NBNU
- Responsible for, with the President, the overall management and activities of the NBNU and its staff
- Sits as ex-officio member of the board and non-voting member of all Union committees

PROVINCIAL OFFICE STAFF

- Works to deliver the various member services required relating to collective bargaining, labour relations, grievances, representation, communication, education and research

NBNU Working for Members

As a labour union working on behalf of Registered Nurses, Nurse Practitioners and public sector Licensed Practical Nurses, NBNU is responsible for offering a wide range of services to assure the socio-economic welfare of its members either directly or indirectly through its network of bargaining units. NBNU is also the credible and respected voice of nurses in the province.

Role of Provincial Office

The president and the staff of NBNU coordinate the delivery of member services relating to collective bargaining, labour relations, grievances, representation, education and communication.

Role of Local Executives

Union local executives administer the business of the Union in the workplace through:

- Direct line of communication with the employer.
- Grievances (handling and filing).
- Professional Practice Committee.
- Hold local meetings with members.

Role of members

Each nurse has three responsibilities in order to benefit fully from union activities:

- **Participate:** Attend union meetings in the workplace and serve as a representative on your local executive and as a union conference delegate.
- **Support:** Show enthusiasm and encourage those elected to leadership positions at the local and provincial level.
- **Educate:** Keep informed on how the Union works and what it is doing by talking to other nurses, reading union correspondence, Parasol, e-newsletters and visiting NBNU's website.

Collective Agreements

A collective agreement is a written, binding contract between the Union and the employer, which specifies the terms and conditions of employment.

Please note that the current collective agreement for all three bargaining units expires on December 31, 2023 and remains in effect until a new agreement is negotiated.

Negotiating Collective Agreements

Collective agreements protect the rights of members, individually and collectively, and is the primary purpose of NBNU. The negotiating teams, supported by the President and Executive Director, use the information provided by membership to identify members' negotiating priorities. Once a negotiating team has reached a tentative agreement, members of the respective bargaining unit can vote on its ratification.

Wage Benefit Summary

Below is a summary of wages for all three collective agreements (Part III, Nurse Managers & Nurse Supervisors and Nursing Homes) signed in 2022. The contracts expire December 31, 2023.

Salaries:

- January 1, 2023 – 1.0% general salary increase
- July 1, 2023 – 1.0% general salary increase

Negotiated Benefits

- Pension Plan
- Health Benefits
- Paid sick days
- Bereavement Leave
- Paid vacation days
- And so much more!

Legal Representation

Grievances are complaints against the employer by one or more employees alleging a breach of the collective agreement. The collective agreement contains the terms and conditions of employment with which members should become familiar.

Adjudication/Arbitration is a method of settling disputes through the intervention of a third party whose decision is final and binding.

Representation during Nurses Association of New Brunswick and Association of New Brunswick Licensed Practical Nurse disciplinary investigations and hearings is offered to Union members.

Professional Practice Committee/Work Situation Report – The collective agreement requires the establishment of a Professional Practice Committee in each workplace. This committee provides an avenue to address professional practice concerns, protect patients and advocate on their behalf. Concerns about particular incidents are to be documented using a *Work Situation Report*. NBNU's *Work Situation Report* is available at www.nbnu.ca or provincial office.

Workers' Compensation, Long-Term Disability (LTD) and Duty to Accommodate – If members find themselves requiring Workers' Compensation or LTD benefits, NBNU's labour relations officers are able to offer advice on filing claims, preparing for meetings, developing a return-to-work plan and the duty to accommodate.

Lobbying

NBNU actively lobbies government on health-related issues. Such efforts involve developing, drafting, and presenting briefs and position papers, organizing public awareness campaigns and proposing legislative change in the best interest of registered nurses and New Brunswickers.

Public Relations

In addition to lobbying government, NBNU proactively advances a positive image of nursing through various media relations campaigns, public relations initiatives, and community activities. All nurses featured in NBNU photos and commercials are real Union members who live and work in New Brunswick! NBNU is always looking for members who want to be involved in our campaigns. If you would like to be involved in upcoming projects, please contact us at info@nbnu.ca.

Research

Through research conducted by staff and through affiliation with similar organizations, NBNU researches key healthcare issues and develops bargaining proposals aimed at improving the well-being of registered nurses and their patients. NBNU also conducts research to hear the voices and experiences of its own members, shares this research, and advocates for improvement with the data found.

Educational Assistance

Union Education

NBNU is committed to the ongoing education of its members. Existing education programs are directed by a full-time education and research officer.

In addition, NBNU can provide a variety of general membership education sessions at the facility level on such topics as retirement and pensions and workplace bullying.

Educational Assistance Fund

The collective agreements (Part III and Nurse Manager & Nurse Supervisor – Article 26, Nursing Home Article – 23) require employers to annually provide money that is disbursed to NBNU members to further their nursing education. An “Educational Assistance Application” can be downloaded from the Members Only section of NBNU’s website (www.nbnu.ca) or members may contact NBNU toll free at 1-800-442-4914 to receive an application.

Annual Scholarships

- NBNU Family Scholarships –\$1,000 (3)
- NBNU Nursing Scholarships (2nd and 3rd Year Students – \$1,000 each year.
- NBNU Post-Secondary Scholarships – \$1,000 (3)
- CFNU Scholarship –\$1,000
- John MacDonald Memorial Scholarship – \$1,000

Scholarships are also available through the New Brunswick Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress

9 Reasons to Become an NBNU Activist

Having your voice heard in negotiations

One of the core reasons why nurses become active in the Union is so their voices can be heard at the bargaining table. If you attend local meetings or take the time to fill out a bargaining survey, you are helping to inform the Union as they prepare to go to the table. If you have ever wanted to be involved in determining your own contract, being engaged with the Union is how you do it.

Finding your niche within the union

There is a lot more to union life than just signing your contract on the dotted line. Nurses are multi-talented, well informed and have a lot to offer.

Members hold executive roles within their locals, they help plan the AGM and events. There is something for everyone at NBNU.

Advocating for your patients

Few know what patients, clients and residents need more than the nurses who take care of them daily. Advocating for those in your care is one of the most important parts of your job.

The position of the Union on issues related to patient care comes from our membership – those who speak to us directly or share their thoughts at local meetings. Members often find that one voice isn't enough to change the way things are in healthcare – but the voices of 8,500 nurses together are difficult to ignore.

Joining a community of nurse activists

There are so many wonderful people to meet who understand your experiences as a nurse. Many friendships have been forged between members from across the province and country, as members come together for meetings, events and rallies.

Speaking for your profession

One of the most important reasons to be involved with NBNU is the opportunity to speak for nurses. Your experiences are unique and valuable, but they often go unheard outside of your inner circle. Engaging with the Union allows you to take what you know and use it to influence outcomes and, ultimately, improve work life for yourself and your colleagues.

Being informed about issues that affect you

Nursing and labour groups across Canada do research and prepare reports on all kinds of issues that affect you as a front-line healthcare worker. They use this information to lobby the government, fight detrimental legislation and promote positive changes

Represent your union and your profession

Have you ever seen an NBNU commercial or newspaper advertisement and wondered who our fabulous actors and models are? Fun fact: they are all members. NBNU loves to showcase real nurses in all of our materials, and we encourage anyone who is interested in being a part of our future campaigns, contact NBNU at info@nbnu.ca.

Being a part of the labour movement

When nurses choose their careers, it's rarely with an eye toward activism, but one of the great privileges of being part of a public-sector union is the opportunity to connect with others as a member of the labour movement.

There are perks to being involved with organizations like the Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU), the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC), or the New Brunswick Federation of Labour (NBFL). NBNU activists attend conventions around the country, take part in rallies, and forge wonderful bonds with people from diverse backgrounds all in the name of improving the lives of working people. The experiences that come with being a member of the labour movement cannot be replicated and are worth taking advantage of.

Opening yourself up to new experiences and opportunities

NBNU members have many incredible opportunities to try new things, meet new people and enjoy once-in-a-lifetime experiences. Through our connections with CFNU and other labour groups, members have travelled nationally and internationally for conferences, and some have even gone on volunteer trips partially financed by the CFNU Solidarity Fund.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Union Local?

A local is comprised of a group of nurses in a common workplace who have been certified under the Public Service Labour Relations Act or the Industrial Relations Act for the New Brunswick Nurses' Union to be the bargaining agent for the nurse. The local would be created by a Charter from the Union.

The members of a local will nominate and elect officers to provide leadership and to deal with issues of the local. Counseling, labour/legal assistance and experienced negotiators are provided by NBNU provincial office upon request.

Why is it important to be a member?

Without union collective agreements, employers can decide to reduce your wages or benefits at any time. The NBNU collective agreements are legal and binding documents that both employers and the Union must uphold for a defined period of time. The agreement cannot be altered without approval from both parties.

Labour organizations work hard to ensure members have fair contracts that protect their rights and offer recourse when things go wrong.

What are Union dues and how are they determined?

Union dues are monthly contributions individual members make to the Union. By paying union dues, members pool their resources to ensure protection of the membership as a whole.

Any changes to provincial union dues must be voted on and approved by the delegates at the Annual General Meeting.

Locals receive \$5/member/month from provincial office as dues rebate to locals to give them funds to operate at the local level. These funds are used at the discretion of the local executive. Any expense must be approved and documented in the minutes of the local.

What if I pay Union dues to more than one employer in the same month?

NBNU shall reimburse an amount equivalent to the monthly union dues minus the local rebate to any nurse who pays monthly union dues to two or more separate employers for the same month. NBNU will calculate the refund based on dues collected in the previous calendar year and will provide automatic payment to members by March 31 of the following year.

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 the contract is entirely dependent on the strength and unity of the workers who fight for it and enforce the rights. The voice of many is stronger than the voice of one.

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

We only know what we know and can only cure mischief that we are aware of—if something does not seem right through your eyes—the first step is to raise it at the local level and then make sure your labour relations officer has been advised if necessary.

CONTACT

Stay in touch with your Union.

NBNU communicates with members on a regular basis about major issues, opportunities and events through newsletters, social media, our website and the member portal.

Member Only Portal

For the most reliable and accurate information pertaining to everything NBNU and you, you are encouraged to visit the Members Only section of the NBNU website. To create an account, go to the NBNU homepage www.nbnu.ca and in the top right corner, click on Member Portal. You will need to register for an account by providing your contact information.

You should receive an email within 24-48 hours after registering to notify you that your account has been approved and is fully accessible. Sometimes confirmation may go to your spam folder, so if you do not receive an email within that time period, please check there first.

Should you have any questions or difficulty logging in, please contact the provincial office.

Keep your information up to date

It is important for NBNU to have the most correct and up-to-date information possible to enable the Union to reach members with relevant information about bargaining, tentative agreements and other items of interest.

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