



Nova Scotia Teachers Union

Dr. Tom Parker Building, 3106 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax, NS B3L 4L7 (902) 477-5621 Toll Free 1-800-565-6788 Fax: (902) 477-3517 nstu@nstu.ca www.nstu.ca

NSTU Request for Proposals (RFP): Equity Audit of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union

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Enquiries and Communications

All enquiries and communications respecting this RFP must be made through email to: bmacleod@staff.nstu.ca.

Please reference *RFP-Equity Audit* in the title of your email.



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INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) invites proposals from local consultants or consulting firms to conduct an independent, comprehensive equity audit of the organization.

In May of 2026 the NSTU's Annual Council passed the following Resolution:

2026-01 Adopted as Amended Costed \$100,000

BE IT RESOLVED THAT the NSTU engage an external local expert consultant through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to conduct an equity audit of the organization, to assess how effectively the NSTU is promoting equity, inclusion, and fair treatment across its policies, practices, and outcomes, and that the findings of said audit would be reported to Annual Council the following year.

Halifax City Local

Brief:

An equity audit would help the NSTU identify systemic barriers and assess how effectively it promotes equity, inclusion, and fair treatment. While definitions and commitments to equity exist, they have not yet led to sufficient change in representation within our organization. By examining access, treatment, and outcomes for equity-deserving members—such as racialized, Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, disabled, and newcomer educators—the audit can reveal whose voices are still missing, strengthen transparency, and guide meaningful, measurable change in policy, leadership, and member engagement.

The purpose of the equity audit is to assess the extent to which the NSTU's policies, practices, governance, services, workplace and member culture, and organizational systems promote equity, diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging, and to identify opportunities for improvement.

The audit should specifically examine representation, participation, advancement, retention, leadership pathways, workplace culture, governance structures, and decision-making processes to determine whether systemic barriers exist for equity-deserving groups.

The audit should focus on member-facing systems and identify any historical or current patterns of underrepresentation, exclusion, inequitable treatment, or barriers to leadership and advancement.



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Additionally, the equity audit should:

- Assess the current state of equity within the organization;
- Identify systemic barriers;
- Identify strengths and best practices;
- Evaluate whether policies are implemented consistently;
- Examine member and employee experiences;
- Evaluate organizational culture;
- Assess governance through an equity lens; and
- Provide recommendations for continuous improvement.

The NSTU defines “equity” in its Operational Procedures as:

9 DEFINING EQUITY

In instances where there are references to terms such as Equity-Owed, Equity-Deserving, or Equity-Seeking in NSTU documents these terms are defined as: a traditionally underrepresented in Union Leadership individual who self-identifies as being Mi’kmaw, Wolastoqew, First Nations, Indigenous, Inuit, or Métis; Black, African Nova Scotian, or of African Descent; Acadian; Person of Colour or Racialized; Two-Spirited, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning, Intersex, Asexual, or additional sexual orientation or gender identity; a person with a Disability; a woman; or an individual from any other group traditionally underrepresented in union positions.

The successful proponent will provide objective findings together with practical, prioritized recommendations that support the NSTU’s strategic goals and legal obligations.

ABOUT THE NSTU/ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Founded in 1895, the NSTU is a professional organization serving approximately 10,500 members. The NSTU central office is located in Halifax, Nova Scotia and provides numerous services to teachers through various professional divisions.

The NSTU has a Provincial Executive consisting of 25 members, 22 Locals, 7 Regional Representative Councils, and 21 Professional Associations. The Union is affiliated with the Canadian Teachers Federation and the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour.



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The NSTU is also an employer to approximately 43 employees who are divided into the following groups: Executive Staff; General Counsel; Finance; Member Assistance Program; Professional Services; and Support Staff.

Subject to any applicable privacy rules/laws, the successful consultant will be provided access to organizational documents, demographic information (where available), staffing information, governance records, election information, committee composition records, and other relevant materials necessary to conduct an independent assessment.

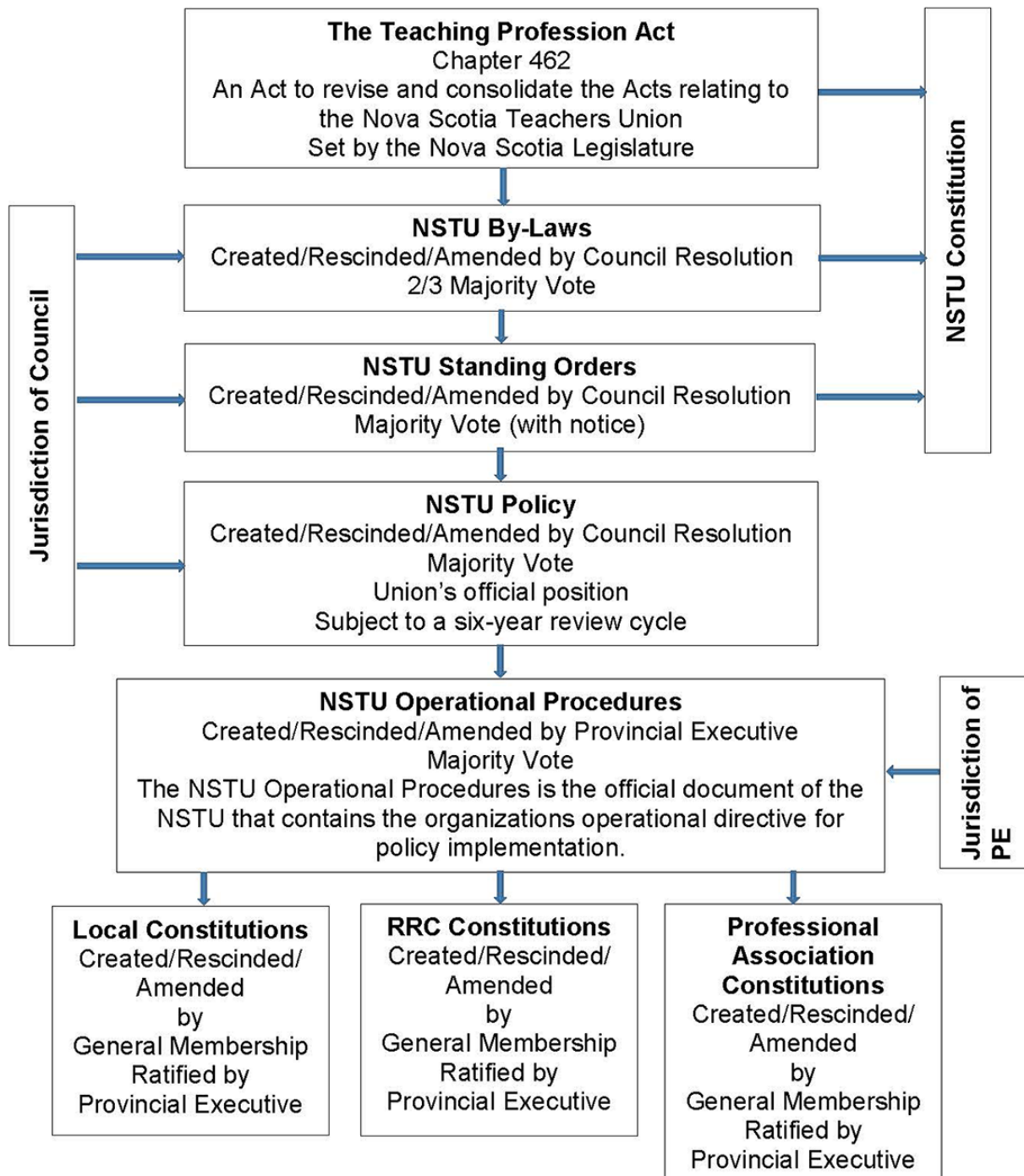
The Constitutional Framework of the NSTU is as follows: *[on the following page]*



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CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NOVA SCOTIA TEACHERS UNION





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QUALIFICATIONS

The consultant and/or consulting firm should demonstrate experience in all, or most, of the following areas:

- Equity audits/employment systems reviews (within membership-based organizations);
- Human Rights;
- Organizational reviews;
- Union environments (preferred);
- Governance reviews (preferred);
- Accessibility, Anti-racism, and LGBTQ+ work, assessments and organizational change;
- Indigenous engagement;
- African Nova Scotian and people of African decent community engagement;
- Employment equity;
- Workplace investigations relating to discrimination, harassment, and psychological safety;
- Collection and analysis of demographic and representation data; and
- Experience working with organizations addressing systemic and institutional barriers.

INSTRUCTIONS & REQUIREMENT

Submission of a proposal will indicate that you have read and understand the NSTU's terms and that you accept and agree to be bound by all terms and conditions. Including:

Confidentiality

The successful proponent must maintain strict confidentiality regarding all information obtained during the audit and comply with applicable privacy legislation. The successful proponent will be required to enter into a confidentiality agreement with the NSTU.

Ownership of Work

All work products, reports, data, and materials produced under this project shall become the property of the NSTU.

THE SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR RFP PROPOSALS IS: NOVEMBER 27, 2026.

- All evaluation dates and timelines contained in this document are estimates and the NSTU reserves the right to revise any time-period herein.



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Proposals should be sent via mail in hardcopy; but may be additionally sent via email, and must include the following information:

- **Consultant/Consultant Firm Information:**
 - Include proposed project team and staffing; who will be assigned to the audit; include resumes; relevant experience; and roles.
- **Methodology**
 - Provide a detailed approach and description on how the work will be done and provide a scope of work and project schedule; provide a timeline for the audit's completion; risk management; and any third-party engagement (if applicable).
- **Similar Projects/Experience**
 - Include if you have participated in any comparable projects; or done equity audits previously.
- **References**
 - Provide a minimum of two (2) client references.
- **Pricing/Cost/Budget**
 - Present the proposed cost of the audit.
 - Provide detailed pricing information, including but not limited to (where applicable): final total cost; fixed fee; breakdown by phase; hourly rates; expenses charged; operational services.
- **Any other relevant information to assist the NSTU in reviewing your RFP.**

Please include one (1) original RFP and four (4) copies.



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SCOPE OF THE WORK

The successful consultant/consulting firm will examine, at minimum, the following:

1. Governance Review: Including but not limited to:

- The NSTU Constitution, By-Laws, Policies (review for policies relating to equity, diversity, accessibility, human rights, anti-racism; LGBTQ+ inclusion);
- Governance Structures, Committee Composition, Election processes;
- Representation of equity-deserving groups;
- Decision-making processes;
- Historical and current representation of equity-deserving groups in elected and appointed leadership positions;
- Analysis of barriers to participation in governance and leadership pathways;
- Review of election processes and whether they support equitable participation;
- Assessment of succession planning and leadership development opportunities;
- Assessment of concentration of authority and power within governance structures and organizational decision-making; and
- Review of relationships, responsibilities, and accountability structures between elected officials and administrative staff.

2. Member Services Review: Including but not limited to:

- Accessibility of services;
- Equity in representation;
- Professional development opportunities;
- Communications;
- Complaint handling;
- Member support;
- Whether members from equity-deserving groups experience services differently than other members;
- Whether complaints related to discrimination, racism, accessibility, or inequitable treatment are addressed consistently and effectively;
- Perceptions of inclusion and belonging among members from equity-deserving groups;
- Accessibility of participation in NSTU programs, committees, governance structures, and leadership opportunities.



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3. Data Collection: Including but not limited to:

- Existing demographic data;
- Collection practices;
- Privacy considerations;
- Ability to measure equity outcomes;
- Historical and current demographic data relating to employees, leadership, committees, and governance bodies;
- Representation trends over time;
- Availability and quality of demographic information;
- Gaps in demographic data collection and monitoring; and
- Comparison of organizational representation to the diversity of NSTU membership, where feasible.

4. Programs and Services: Including whether programs are equitable, reach diverse members, or have unintended barriers.

5. Human Resources and Workplace Equity Review:

The consultant shall conduct a review of NSTU employment systems, workplace culture, and human resource practices, including but not limited to:

- Recruitment, hiring, onboarding, retention, promotion, and succession practices;
- Workforce demographics and representation across all employee groups and leadership positions;
- Pay equity and employment equity considerations;
- Distribution of leadership opportunities and decision-making authority;
- Workplace accessibility and accommodation practices;
- Performance management and disciplinary processes;
- Experience of staff from equity-deserving groups;
- Employee perceptions of inclusion, belonging, psychological safety, and organizational fairness;
- Complaint, reporting, and resolution processes (including perceived retaliation) related to discrimination, harassment, racism, accessibility, workplace conflict;
- Exit and termination practices where relevant to understanding organizational culture and equity outcomes.



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6. Organizational Culture Assessment/Review:

The consultant shall evaluate organizational culture through interviews, focus groups, surveys, and document review and assess:

- Experiences of inclusion and exclusion;
- Experiences of employees and members from equity-deserving groups;
- Psychological safety within the organization;
- Organizational responses to concerns regarding discrimination, racism, harassment, accessibility, and bias;
- Perceptions of fairness, respect, and transparency;
- Barriers created by organizational hierarchy or decision-making structures;
- The extent to which employees and members feel able to raise concerns without fear of negative consequences.

METHODOLOGY

The proposal should include a methodology that incorporates multiple sources of evidence, such as:

- Policy and document review;
- Interviews with members, staff, elected leaders, and partners;
- Focus groups;
- Surveys;
- Demographic analysis;
- Governance review;
- Employment systems review; and
- Comparative review of leading practices where appropriate.



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DELIVERABLES

THE CONSULTANT SHALL PROVIDE A FINAL EQUITY REPORT TO THE NSTU AND INCLUDE IN THEIR RFP THE ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE FOR THE FINAL REPORT.

The consultants reporting shall include:

1. An interim progress update.
2. A final equity audit report.
3. An executive summary (suitable for public release at the discretion of the NSTU).
4. Findings supported by evidence.
5. Practical recommendations prioritized by short-term, medium-term, and long-term implementation timelines.
6. Recommended measures and indicators for ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

REVIEW AND ACCEPTANCE

- The NSTU is under no obligation to accept any proposal.
- No one who submits a proposal in response to this request for proposals shall have any claim against the NSTU or seek indemnity from NSTU for compensation of any kind whatsoever as a result of participating in this RFP.
- By submitting a proposal each proponent agrees that it has no claim, whether legal or equitable for damages or equitable relief arising from any aspect of this RFP process or, should claim later arise, that such claim shall be and is hereby forever waived.
- The NSTU reserves the right to award any contract arising pursuant to this RFP in whole or in part.
- The successful consultant/consulting firm will be contacted by the NSTU within 90 days following the RFP close; following which the negotiation of the final contract will proceed.
- **Selection of a successful consultant/consulting firm, through this RFP, does not constitute a binding agreement. The successful consultant/consulting firm will be required to negotiate and enter into a mutually acceptable agreement with the NSTU prior to the commencement of any services.**