

# **NEW BRUNSWICK NURSES UNION**



**Your Union Working for You**

## About NBNU

The New Brunswick Nurses Union (NBNU) is a strong, 6900-member labour organization offering bilingual services to nurses employed in various settings throughout the province. NBNU is an open and democratic organization which promotes, through its internal structures, the participation of the maximum number of members in decision-making.

Members of NBNU work in a variety of settings including:

- hospitals,
- nursing homes,
- community health centers,
- extra mural program,
- addiction services,
- community mental health,
- public health,
- correctional services,
- rehabilitation,
- veteran's units, and
- Victorian Order of Nurses.

### MISSION

The mission of NBNU is to enhance the social, economic and general worklife of nurses.

### VISION

NBNU is a professional, credible and respected voice advocating for nurses and quality health care.

### VALUES

*Equality* – NBNU believes in the fundamental equal worth of all individuals and is guided by the principle of equality in its work on behalf of members.

*Trust and Respect* – NBNU believes trust and mutual respect are fundamental principles that guide its work and which it fosters among its membership.

*Communication and Education* – NBNU believes that knowledge confers power and that it has a responsibility to build this capacity into its work.

*Accountability and Transparency* – NBNU believes it must consistently demonstrate accountability and transparency to its members through regular reporting and monitoring of its activities.

*Caring* – NBNU believes that one of its unique differentiating factors is that it is the sole body that truly cares about nurses’ concerns.

*Professional* – NBNU believes it has a responsibility to take a broad systems view and resultantly carefully consider the impact of its actions on the quality of health care.

*Unionism and Solidarity* – NBNU believes it must always focus on achieving collective gains which are enabled by collective unity and solidarity.

*Bilingual* – NBNU values its linguistic diversity and offers all services in both official languages.

## **Union dues**

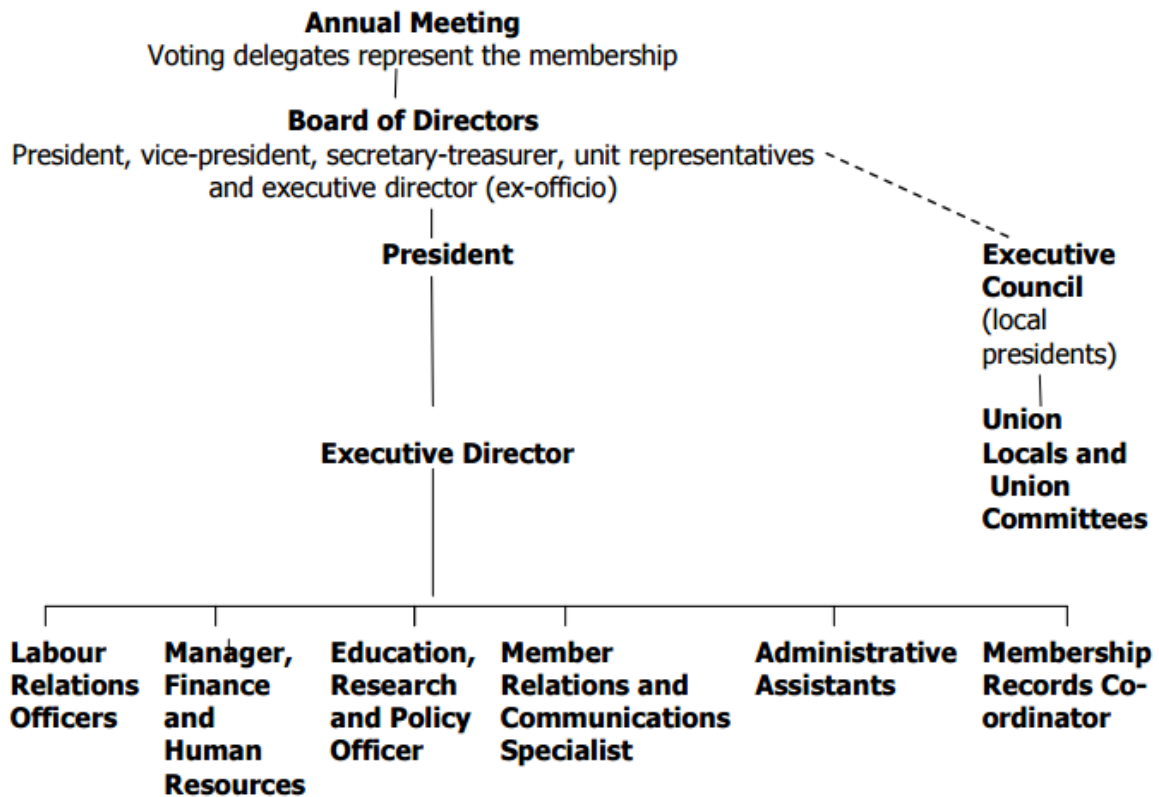
All nurses who benefit from a collective agreement pay provincial union dues which are deducted once a month from members’ pay cheques. Voting delegates at the annual meeting determine the amount to be deducted.

Union dues help provide the following services to nurses:

- negotiating collective agreements;
- administering collective agreements through grievances, mediation, arbitration, and member representation at Nurses Association of New Brunswick discipline hearings;
- supporting injured and disabled nurses or providing assistance with employment issues;
- providing union educational opportunities;
- researching matters relating to the Union;
- providing a legal expense assistance plan for members;
- preparing and distributing information to members;
- advocating for quality health care on behalf of New Brunswickers;
- planning and executing public relations activities;
- maintaining a close affiliation with the Canadian Federation of Nurses’ Unions (CFNU), New Brunswick Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC); and
- Building relationships with other unions and nursing organizations.

# NBNU Leadership and Governance

## How We Are Governed



## NBNU Structure

### Annual Meeting

Voting delegates attending the annual meeting vote on resolutions and motions and provide direction on the affairs of the organization for the following year. Each local is entitled to a number of voting delegates in accordance with the NBNU *Constitution and By-Laws*.

### Board of Directors

Responsible for the administration of the affairs and activities of the Union between annual meetings, the board of directors is composed of the following:

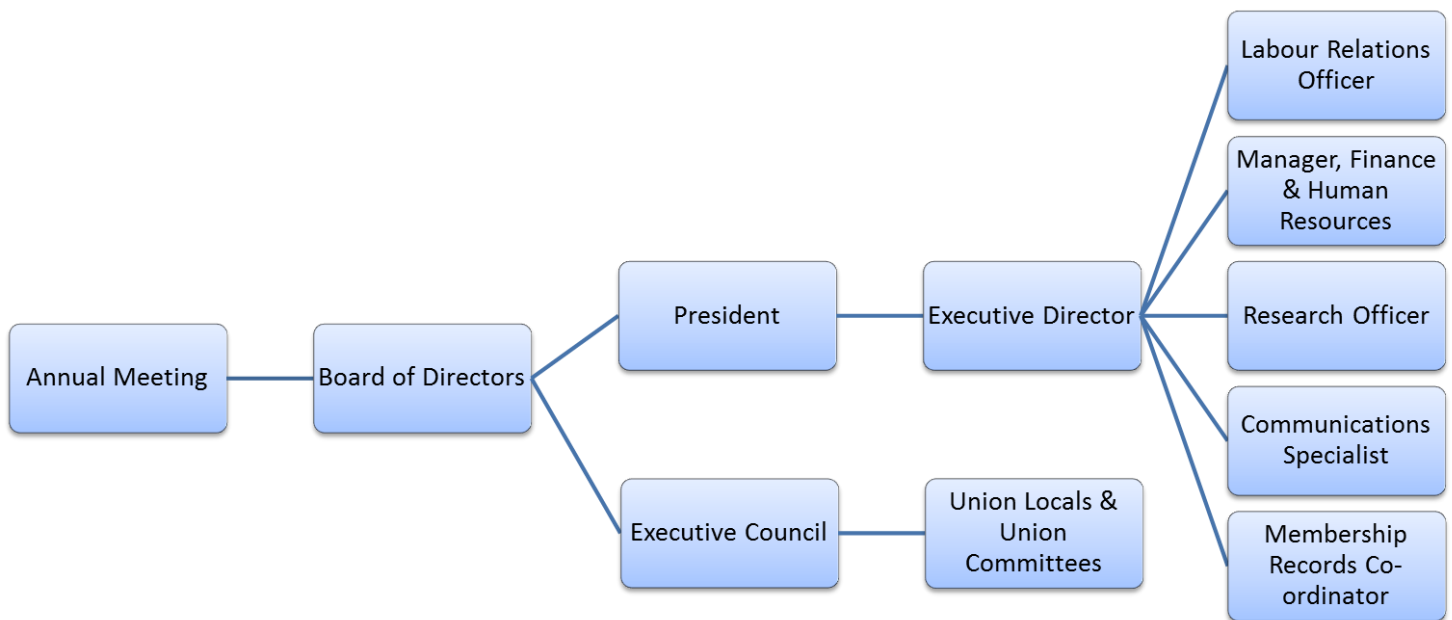
- a president and secretary-treasurer elected at the annual meeting in even numbered years;
- a vice-president elected at the annual meeting in odd numbered years;

- a 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president elected in odd numbered years;
- unit representatives for hospitals, community care, nursing homes, nurse managers/supervisors, elected by respective members within 90 days after the signing of a new collective agreement; and
- an executive director who is an ex-officio member.

### Executive Council

The executive council is made up of over 98 local presidents who represent the respective NBNU bargaining units. The Council meets once a year in addition to the annual meeting. Local presidents are elected by their local membership and work at resolving issues faced by nurses at the local level.

Approving reports and providing direction to the board of directors are the executive council's primary mandate. As well, council meetings serve as an open forum for communication between locals and the board of directors on concerns and matters which are provincial in scope.



## NBNU: Working for Members

As a labour union working on behalf of 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.

### Role of Provincial Office

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

### Role of Locals

Union locals administer the business of the Union in each workplace through:

- direct line of communication with management,
- grievances (handling and filing),
- the professional practice committee, and
- local political lobbying.

Local meetings are generally held on a monthly basis.

### Role of members

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

1. **Participate** – Attend Union meetings in the workplace and serve as a representative on your local executive and as a Union conference delegate.
2. **Support** – Show enthusiasm and encourage those elected to leadership positions at the local and provincial level.
3. **Educate** – Keep informed on how the Union works and what it is doing by talking to other nurses, reading Union correspondence, *Parasol*, and *NBNU News* (newsletter) and visiting NBNU's Web site: [www.nbnu.ca](http://www.nbnu.ca).

## Member Services

### Negotiating Collective Agreements

Negotiating collective agreements that protect the rights of members, individually and collectively, 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 unit have the opportunity to vote on its ratification.

## Representation on Individual Issues

**A grievance** is a complaint 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. Members with questions regarding the agreement should contact their local president.

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

**Representation** at Nurses Association of New Brunswick disciplinary investigations and hearings is offered to Union members.

**Workers' compensation, LTD and duty to accommodate** – If members find themselves requiring workers compensation or long-term disability (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.

**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." The professional practice committee brings these reports as well as other issues to the employer's attention for corrective action. NBNU's "Work Situation Report" is available by contacting local executive members or provincial office.

## Education

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

There are three levels of union education for activists:

**Level I** provides an orientation and basic knowledge of union structures and labour relations for new presidents.

**Level II** provides a variety of courses delivered in workshops at executive council and annual general meetings.

**Level III** courses are available at the Eastern Labour School held every two years and hosted by nurses unions in Atlantic Canada. The School provides in-depth training on labour relations and other topics relating to union leadership.

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

## Research

Through research conducted by staff and through affiliation with similar organizations, NBNU researches key health care issues and develops bargaining proposals aimed at improving the well-being of registered nurses and their patients.

## 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.

## Educational Assistance Fund

The collective agreements 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 NBNU’s website ([www.nbnu.ca](http://www.nbnu.ca)) or members may contact NBNU toll free by telephone (1-800-442-4914) to receive an application by mail.

## Scholarships

- **NBNU Family Scholarships** – Three \$1,000 scholarships are awarded annually to students entering a baccalaureate nursing program in New Brunswick. Applicants must be a relative of a current or former NBNU member.
- **CFNU Scholarship** – This \$1000 scholarship is awarded annually by the Canadian Federation of Nurses’ Union to a recipient selected by NBNU. Recipients must be a relative of a current or former NBNU member. Applications are made through NBNU.



- **NBNU Nursing Scholarships (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Year Students)** – On a provincial basis, NBNU offers one (1) \$1,000 scholarship to a full-time second year student and one (1) \$1,000 scholarship to a full-time third year student studying in the baccalaureate program and enrolled in either the Francophone or Anglophone program. Applicants must be a relative of a current or former NBNU member.
- **NBNU Post-Secondary Scholarships** – Each year, NBNU offers three (3) \$1,000 scholarships to the children of NBNU members enrolled in a community college or university program.
- **NBNU Bursaries** – On an annual basis, one \$800 bursary is awarded to a student graduating from the BN program at each university campus or educational delivery site.

## Communications

NBNU publishes a variety of educational materials to assist its members. The following publications are available to members:

- *Charting: A Guide to the Law,*
- *Collective Agreements,*
- *Constitution and By-Laws,*
- *Environmental Sensitivities,*
- *The Strength of One* (history of NBNU),
- *How NBNU Negotiates Contracts,*
- *Latex Allergies,*
- *LTD Questions and Answers,*
- *NBNU News* (newsletter),
- *Taking Care of Our Business,*
- *The Parasol* (newsletter),
- *Your Care Plan for Retirement,*
- *What Day Is It? Strategies for Shiftworkers, and*
- *Zero Tolerance: Violence in the Workplace.*

## Affiliations

### **Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions (CFNU)**

CFNU is a strong national organization representing nurses unions in Canada and is part of the world voice for unionized nurses. On a national level, the Canadian Federation of Nurses' Unions promotes a strong and sustainable health care system with nurses playing a key role in the delivery of health care. As an affiliate member, NBNU attends the CFNU biennial convention, participates on the CFNU national executive board and supports national campaigns. NBNU members benefit from research and a variety of initiatives undertaken by CFNU.

### **Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)**

The Canadian Labour Congress is the largest labour organization in Canada with over three million members. NBNU's affiliation with the CLC enables the Union to participate in the fight for strong workplaces, to pressure governments for change, and to educate unionists on employment and social issues.

### **New Brunswick Federation of Labour**

As of January 1, 2010, NBNU became a member of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour. Members of the board of directors and local representatives have an opportunity to attend meetings and be active participants in the provincial labour movement.

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