

February 27, 2024

Dear Employer,

As you may already be aware, the Nova Scotia College of Social Workers (NSCSW) exists to serve and protect Nova Scotians by effectively regulating the profession of social work, and working to advocate for conditions that contribute to public well-being and safer social work practice in our province.

I am excited to share this update about our current activities with you, and hope to spark an ongoing dialogue about how we can support each other in working towards the public interest. Please forward this message internally as needed, to staff members who manage or supervise social workers, and to those in human resources roles.

## Celebrating social workers

March is National Social Work Month. The theme selected by the Canadian Association of Social Workers for March 2024 is **Seven Points of Unity; Many Possibilities**. As an employer of social workers, I hope you will take advantage of this annual opportunity to celebrate the compassion, hard work and commitment of the social workers on your team. Celebrating the best of what social workers bring to the table also strengthens professional identity, which contributes to safer practice.

Resources for the national campaign can be accessed at [nationalsocialworkmonth.ca](https://nationalsocialworkmonth.ca) beginning on March 1. Information specific to Nova Scotia, including poster downloads and details about free local and virtual events, will be at [nscsw.org/nswm-2024](https://nscsw.org/nswm-2024).

Another opportunity for employee recognition later this year is our **annual awards program**; nominations will open at the end of May. These awards recognize dedication and hard work from social workers across the province, and I hope you will take this chance to highlight the contributions of your own staff. Recipients and their nominators will be invited to an awards banquet in the fall (visit [nscsw.org/2023-nscsw-awards-spotlight](https://nscsw.org/2023-nscsw-awards-spotlight) to learn about last year's recipients).

## Professional development

To maintain professional registration, social workers must demonstrate ongoing engagement with learning, creating and sharing knowledge related to social work practice. We made significant changes to our professional development requirements in 2022 (visit [nscsw.org/pd](https://nscsw.org/pd) for details) to reflect evolving best practices and our commitment to serve the public interest, and identified five themes that all social workers must include in their professional development every year: social work ethics; truth and reconciliation; anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice; vicarious trauma and secondary stress; and the pursuit of social justice.

The programming we offer to support our members in continuing to meet those requirements includes a year-round selection of lunch & learn webinars, occasional mini-conferences, quarterly ethics cafés, virtual communities of practice, and an annual conference in May.

Our next free mini-conference is **Advocacy Day on March 25**, which invites participants to increase their skill and capacity for advocating alongside their clients and communities. ([nscsw.org/advocacy-2024](https://nscsw.org/advocacy-2024))

Our annual NSCSW conference will be on **May 24-25**. This year's theme of **Celebrating Courage** centres on how practitioners can develop safer social work practice – individually and systemically – by understanding their own intersectional positionality and learning from first-voice speakers. ([nscswconference.org](http://nscswconference.org))

Our ongoing **collaborative care series** considers ways that health professionals in multiple disciplines can work together to achieve better outcomes for the people they care for, and to alleviate compassion fatigue and burnout among service providers. ([nscsw.org/collaborative-care-pd](http://nscsw.org/collaborative-care-pd))

I hope some members of your team can join us at these events.

## Co-creating conditions for safer practice

The Social Work Act that was passed in 2016 requires the registration of every social worker in Nova Scotia. This includes anyone who has graduated from an accredited social work program, and who is doing work in our profession's scope of practice, regardless of their job title. This legislation also requires NSCSW to act in the public interest, to ensure Nova Scotians can rely on social work services to be delivered by people who are ethical, competent, and accountable.

I must note that there is a particular need to address the well-being of equity-deserving demographic groups who have been marginalized and disempowered. We therefore continue to refine our efforts to align with the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, the Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children Restorative Inquiry, the Nova Scotia Health Equity Framework, *Turning the Tide*, and the *Access by Design 2030* roadmap for inclusion.

Our mandate also largely aligns with priorities shared by organizations that hire social workers, like yours. This is why I am reaching out to you, to begin a conversation about how NSCSW can work together with you and other employers in achieving our shared goals, in the interest of the public. I am working with our staff and council to develop a new strategic plan for NSCSW and would love to hear from you with any questions or concerns, ideas or suggestions.

I'm looking forward to discussing social work with you, whether you're curious about the scope of our practice, mentorship and supervision, recruitment and retention challenges, or supporting regulatory compliance. Let's talk.

Regards,



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