

A Definitive (Re-)Introduction to



**WRITERS' FEDERATION
OF NOVA SCOTIA**

A Definitive (Re-)Introduction to WFNS

- 1. The Basics**
(Stats; Memberships; Literary Forms)
- 2. Programs & Awards**
(Our Mission; Fostering, Advising, & Recognizing)
- 3. Resources**
- 4. Ways to Shape WFNS**
(volunteering; Writers' Council; Board Committees; Board of Directors)



**WRITERS' FEDERATION
OF NOVA SCOTIA**

1. The Basics



The Stats

Founding: 1976

Foundational philosophy: “writers helping writers”

Organizational type: provincially registered nonprofit + federally registered charity

Funding sources: provincial funding, municipal funding, endowments, and donations

Permanent staff: 3 (two full-time + one part-time)

Short-term contractors: ~50 each year (primarily Writers' Council members)

Board of Directors: 12

Board type: governance (overseeing strategic direction, fundraising, budget, & policy)
+ some working committees (designing and delivering special projects & events)

Our Membership

*often grouped & referred
to as "emerging"*

- **New writers:** <2 years' creative writing and/or no short publications
- **Emerging writers:** 2+ years' creative writing and/or numerous short publications
- **Early-career authors:** 1 or 2 books (or equivalent short publications)
- **Established authors:** 3 or 4 books
- **Professional authors:** 5+ books

*often grouped & referred to as "established";
may be eligible for Writers' Council*



Our Membership

General Membership (writers.ns.ca/membership) includes ~800 writers each year

- Annual (up to 13 months)
- Dues-based
- Provides program fee discounts + voting rights + access to Members-only programs, resources, and weekly member newsletter (*Subtext*)

Writers' Council (writers.ns.ca/membership/writers-council) includes ~400 authors, ~200 of whom are active as General Members each year.

- Permanent (active whenever General Membership is active)
- Experience-based
- Provides eligibility for contract employment through WFNS programming



Our Forms:

- **Fiction** (all genres)
- **Nonfiction** (including 'creative nonfiction,' memoir, personal essay, etc.)
- **Poetry**
- **Writing for children** (including illustration)
- **YA** (writing for young adults)

In general, not our forms:

- **Scripts for stage or screen**
(See Theatre Nova Scotia, Playwrights Atlantic Resource Centre, and Screen Nova Scotia)
- **Graphic novels & comics**
(We're assessing how WFNS could support graphic and comic writers)
- **Academic nonfiction**
- **Journalism**
- **Reference & educational titles**



1. The Basics



- 2025** **Fifth year of steady General Membership growth to 800 by year-end**
(up from 550 by 2020 year-end)
- 2025** **Points-based Writers' Council eligibility criteria** introduced:
 - More pathways to eligibility for interdisciplinary & indie authors
 - Higher requirements for experience engaging in literary community
- 2024** **Comprehensive General Member Survey** conducted to captures members' ages, backgrounds, geographic areas, experience in creative writing, literary forms of interest, & patterns of engagement with WFNS programming
- 2024** **Comprehensive Policy Manual** revisions and additions completed



**WRITERS' FEDERATION
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2. Programs & Awards



Our Mission

- **Foster creative writing** and the profession of writing in Nova Scotia
- **Provide advice and assistance** to writers at all stages of their careers
- **Encourage greater public recognition** of writers and their achievements
- **Enhance the literary arts** in our regional and national culture

Fostering Programs

create space, time, or occasion for writing

	Open to new & emerging writers?	Open to early-career authors?	Open to established & professional authors?
Emerging Writers Prizes	✓	✓	
Jampolis Cottage Residency Program	✓	✓	✓
Message on a Bottle	✓	✓	✓
Writers In The Schools		✓	✓
(See also: Workshops)	✓	✓	✓

Advisory Programs

facilitate direct writer-to-writer assistance

	Open to new & emerging writers?	Open to early-career authors?	Open to established & professional authors?
Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program	✓	✓ if emerging in the form	✓ if emerging in the form
Coffee Chats	✓	✓	✓
Manuscript Review Program	✓	✓	✓
(See also: Resources)	✓	✓	✓



Recognition Programs help writers grow their readerships

	Open to new & emerging writers?	Open to early-career authors?	Open to established & professional authors?
Book Awards		✓	✓
Booktoberfest		✓	✓
Micro-Anthology Series	✓	✓	✓
Nova Writes Competition	✓	✓ if emerging in the form	✓ if emerging in the form
(See also: Events)	✓	✓	✓



50th Anniversary Programs are limited in term

	Open to new & emerging writers?	Open to early-career authors?	Open to established & professional authors?
50 for 50 Contest Series (Fostering)	✓	✓	✓
Writers of Nova Scotia profile series (Recognition)	✓	✓	✓



2. Programs & Awards



- 2026 **Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program + Writers In The Schools (WITS)**
paused due to provincial defunding of the arts
- 2026 **Micro-Anthology Series** launched
- 2025 **Nova Writes Competition** redesigned, with introduction of printed anthology
Manuscript Review Program expanded to include queries/pitches
- 2023 **Jampolis Cottage Residency Program** launched
- 2023 **Emerging Writers Prizes** launched
- 2023 **Message on a Bottle** launched
- 2022 **Booktoberfest** launched
Writers In The Schools expanded to include WITS Originals
- 2020 **Book Awards** expanded include Maxine Tynes Nova Scotia Poetry Award
Coffee Chats launched



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**Annual programs
launched, redesigned, or expanded
since 2020:**

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3. Resources



Resources

- **Directories & indexes:**
 - **Atlantic Publishers & Periodicals** (markets for your writing)
 - **Literary Services Directory** (private literary contractors)
 - **NS Independent Bookshops** (event spaces)
 - **NS Literary Festivals, Book Fairs, & Reading Series** (publicity opportunities)
 - **NS Writing Groups** (fellow writers seeking peer feedback)
 - **Opportunities for Young Writers** (opportunities for writers 18 and under)
 - **Organizations for Writers** (find funding & other support for your writing)
- **Literary Events Calendar** (opportunities to learn, network, and participate)
- **Professional Development Guides** (free, written tips from professional authors, editors, and publishers)



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4. Ways to Shape WFNS



Volunteer opportunities

Who: General Members and, in some cases, non-members

What: Short-term fundraising, editorial, and event-based roles

How: At any time, express interest in volunteer roles: writers.ns.ca/volunteer.
WFNS staff will reach out when seeking to fill volunteer roles that are relevant to your interests.

Why: Connect with fellow WFNS members, other NS authors, and readers.



Writers' Council status

Who: Early-career, established, and professional authors living in Nova Scotia

What: Permanent eligibility for contract employment through WFNS programming, active whenever your General Membership is active

How: At any time, apply with documents demonstrating (a) your publishing experience and (b) your literary community experience (e.g., instructing, mentoring, performing, reviewing): writers.ns.ca/membership/writers-council.

Then, each May, express your interest in short-term contracts for instructional, peer assessment, and mentorship/advisory roles: writers.ns.ca/membership/great-call.

Why: Get paid for your literary experience and expertise.



Board Committee participation

Who: General Members & Writers' Council members

What: A one-year term (June to June) on a standing or ad-hoc committee

How: Express your interest at least one day before the Annual General Meeting. (See writers.ns.ca/workshops-events/wfns-agm-2026.)

Why: Volunteer your nonprofit, charity, or other community experience to ensure WFNS is capable of evaluating and improving its programming and of adapting with the times.



Board of Directors

Who: General Members & Writers' Council members

What: A two-year term (June to June) on WFNS's 12-person Board

How: Declare your candidacy for election at least one month before the Annual General Meeting (e.g., writers.ns.ca/workshops-events/wfns-agm-2026).

Why: Volunteer your leadership or other community experience to vote directly on crucial updates to WFNS policy, to lead committees in their work, and to help WFNS continue as an adaptive and successful literary support network.