WRITERS' FEDERATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Writers helping writers

Since 1976, the Writers' Federation of Nova Scotia (WFNS) has built on this foundational philosophy — **"writers helping writers"** — to support the craft of creative writing, the business of being a writer, and the promotion of Nova Scotia writers as integral to the province's cultural life and creative economy.

Our **800+ annual members** come from all career stages and parts of the province and engage in a diverse range of forms, genres, and writing practices.

writers.ns.ca/**Membership**

WFNS **General Membership** is open to anyone with an interest in writing, regardless of their writing experience or place of residence. General Members receive access to members-only programs and resources, discounts on program and registration fees, and our weekly email newsletter full of literary news, events, and opportunities.

WFNS is based in Kjipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki, ancestral & unceded Mi'kmaq territory.

writers.ns.ca | contact@writers.ns.ca
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RECOMMENDED WFNS PROGRAMMING

writers.ns.ca/**Workshops**

Our annual **in-person & virtual** creative and professional development workshops invite writers with similar interests to gather, share, and learn from experienced authors.

writers.ns.ca/**Programs**

Our annual programs facilitate direct writer to-writer assistance.

The **Alistair MacLeod Mentorship Program** supports writers who are on the cusp of book-length publication through disciplined, focused, and supportive one-on-one mentorships with experienced authors.

The members-only **Coffee Chats** program and **Manuscript Review Program** help writers seeking affordable career/creative advice and developmental feedback on works-in-progress

The **Jampolis Cottage Residency Program** hosts group retreats and solo residencies in Avonport, Nova Scotia.

The **Micro-Anthology Series** provides publication opportunities for emerging and established writers of romance, speculative, and crime & mystery fiction.

The **Nova Writes Competition** offers feedback on all entries and publication of the winning entries in an annual print anthology.

RECOMMENDED WFNS RESOURCES

writers.ns.ca/**Resources**

Our free public resources help writers to orientate within the writing and publishing landscape and plot their course forward.

Atlantic Publishers & Periodicals indexes the many presses and literary magazines based in the four Atlantic provinces and links to Canada-wide indexes.

Our **Literary Service Directory** features editing, design, publicity, and other freelance services provided by WFNS members.

Organizations for Writers showcases other provincial and national sources of creative instruction, professional development, and arts grants.

Our **Professional Development Guides** provide samples of the experience and expertise gathered by our members.

writers.ns.ca/**Calendar**

Our public **Literary Calendar** features Nova Scotian literary events organized by WFNS, by its members, and by local publishers, literary magazines, independent booksellers, libraries, universities, arts centres, and nonprofits.

WFNS **General Members** can also submit events to the Literary Calendar and book free in-person (Halifax) or virtual event space.

Editing & Publishing

A field guide for the journey from manuscript to book

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TYPES OF EDITING

DEVELOPMENTAL EDITING
(major revisions)

Developmental editing (also called manuscript review) involves big-picture critique of an incomplete manuscript. Even if the manuscript is a full draft, a developmental editor will treat it not as *finished* but as *ready for major revisions*, providing feedback on what the manuscript is trying to 'say' or 'do,' how well it achieves those effects, and how revisions could achieve those effects differently or better. Feedback may consider genre and audience expectations, authenticity of plot or character, and areas where the work could benefit from greater attention, research, or creative exploration.

CONTENT EDITING
(minor revisions)

Content editing (also called substantive editing or line editing) focuses on manuscript clarity, on how readers are likely to react to various passages, and on how the author's creative choices support or work against the desired reader reactions. A content editor will provide extensive suggestions for revising the structure, order, and length of particular sentences and paragraphs as well as feedback on word choice, clichés, filler text, and other bad writing habits. A single editor is likely to perform both content and copy editing, either simultaneously or in stages.

COPY EDITING
(major corrections)

Copy editing involves identifying errors in language use (grammar, spelling, punctuation), style (readability; tone; word choice; suitability for intended audience), and fact (accuracy in citing sources; consistency in chronology or character) as well as correcting the identified errors and suggesting ways to strengthen language use and style. A copy editor should record or track all changes made or suggested for final approval or rejection by the author. They may also flag problems with structure or organization and refer these back to an earlier editor.

PROOFREADING
(final corrections)

Typically after all other editing has been completed, a manuscript will be paginated and visually arranged for print or digital publication to create a 'galley proof.' Proofreading involves double-checking this proof and flagging errors (*without* suggesting corrections) that were missed by earlier editors or introduced during the layout process; other editors (or the author) will then provide corrections. If the author is asked to proofread—a common experience when publishing short-form work in a literary magazine—they should both flag *and* correct any errors.

FINDING AN EDITOR

If publishing with a traditional or hybrid/partner press, you'll usually have editors assigned to your manuscript. If indie/self-publishing or *preparing* your manuscript for submission to a press, you can hire freelance editors by private contract.

Ask writers in your community or social media circle for recommendations of effective, reliable, and professional editors. Check with professional editing organizations (see Editors Canada's job board) or writing organizations (see WFNS's Literary Services Directory). Read editor bios to determine if their experience suits your manuscript. And be sure to ask potential editors for references.

AUTHENTICITY READERS

Authenticity readers (formerly called sensitivity readers) are experts on particular lived experiences or backgrounds. When you're writing a character or plot point that falls far outside your own lived experience, an apt authenticity reader can help identify if and how your manuscript may have misrepresented a community or relied on common misconceptions or clichés.

Although a traditional or hybrid/partner press may contract an authenticity reader for you, you can avoid many manuscript rejections by contracting a reader *in preparation for submitting to a press*. Look for freelance readers as you would editors. When querying a potential reader, respect their time and fee rates.

LITERARY AGENTS

About 80% of published Canadian writers do not have agents, but agent representation can be helpful or essential when submitting to or signing a contract with a large traditional publisher. Literary agencies' websites provide guidelines for contacting their agents, which should be respected. The multi-stage process of landing an agent resembles that of submitting to a press, beginning with a "pitch" or "query letter."

TYPES OF BOOK PUBLISHING

TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING

Large & mid-sized traditional publishers include the "Big Four" Canadian publishing houses as well as smaller but sizeable presses that operate for-profit. Authors receive advances on royalties, while the press takes on all financial risk and uses substantial resources to promote and distribute books. Their contracts often stipulate the press's control over book design and marketing and its rights with regard to future adaptations and formats (e.g., audiobook or film).

Small presses are often funded privately and through arts grants, meaning they must take on less financial risk with each book. Authors typically receive a small advance, or none at all, but royalty rates are usually higher. With fewer resources, small presses have smaller distribution networks and may rely on authors to collaborate on book design and marketing. But with less money at stake, these presses can take chances on newer authors, regional writing, experimental writing, and niche genres and subjects.

HYBRID PUBLISHING

When publishing with a hybrid or 'partner' press, an author takes on some of the financial risk of book publishing by paying fees for traditional publishing services: editing, design, printing, marketing, and distribution are offered as part of publication 'packages,' and an author becomes a financial partner in the success of their book. These presses provide access to editors and designers, high royalty rates (though no advances), and much shorter turnaround from submission to print. Avoid presses offering 100% royalty, as they have no incentive to provide quality services or a saleable book.

INDIE/SELF-PUBLISHING

Independent ('indie') or self-publishing requires an author to take on all financial risk; oversee editing, design, printing, marketing, and distribution; and find and contract service providers to fill various roles in the process. Authors who self-publish have total creative control, but they often need project and people management skills. Quality production is expensive, but returns can be high, particularly if sales are conducted through e-book retailers or print-on-demand services, which eliminate the risk of paying upfront for large print runs.