



Meet Your Newly Elected Board of Directors

(PG 6-7)



Civil Service Bargaining Update

(PG 4-5)



Nova Scotia Federation of Labour Convention

(PG 10-11)

THE UNION STAND

A PUBLICATION OF THE N.S. GOVERNMENT & GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION

Fall 2025

Dear members,

Fall is a busy and exciting time: the long, hot days of summer are behind us, our members working in the public education and post-secondary sectors have gotten students back into their routines, and here at the union, we are busy in bargaining new contracts for many of the 38,000 members we represent.

More than 80 of our members' collective agreements

are either expired or set to expire shortly, and our negotiating committees are either already at the bargaining table or making preparations to get there. That process was expedited by the recent arbitration award that was handed down to our 8,500 Civil Servants in mid-September, resulting in a new collective agreement that establishes a wage pattern more than 12 per cent (compounded) over the life of the four-year agreement and, perhaps just as importantly, maintains the strong job security language that exists in their current agreement.

That language is key as both our province and country face uncertain economic conditions – or perhaps more accurately, as we wait to see whether our Premier and Prime Minister decide whether or not they enact austerity measures in response to the changing economy.

At a federal level, we have already witnessed Carney's government interfere in the collective bargaining process during the Air Canada strike and the Canada Post negotiations. Meanwhile, closer to home, Premier Houston's government has passed legislation that would allow deputy department heads the ability to fire

non-unionized bureaucrats without cause, and dissolved Communications Nova Scotia, forcing unionized members to either take non-union positions or be laid off.

Given these signals, we are doing our best to ensure jobs are protected, while still fighting for the wage and language improvements that we know are still so desperately needed.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen attended the NSFL Convention at the Westin in Halifax on October 26, 2027.

Because while economists may say that inflation numbers are down, I know that many Nova Scotians – including public sector workers – are still struggling to afford the basics. Housing costs are astronomical (not just in Halifax, but within our rural communities, as well), power and water rates continue to climb, and the Galen Westons of the

world have not lowered grocery prices.

With the help and guidance of your newly elected Board of Directors (see page 6-7 to see who is on the Board this term!), we are preparing to help ensure that NSGEU members are recognized for the incredible work that you do, delivering important public services throughout Nova Scotia.

In Solidarity,

Sandra Mullen
NSGEU President

FEATURES

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CONNECT WITH US!

We want to hear from our members. If you have thoughts on this issue of The Stand, or ongoing union issues, send us your feedback! You can email us at inquiry@nsgeu.ca or connect with us:



Hugh Gillis, 1st Vice-President, NSGEU.

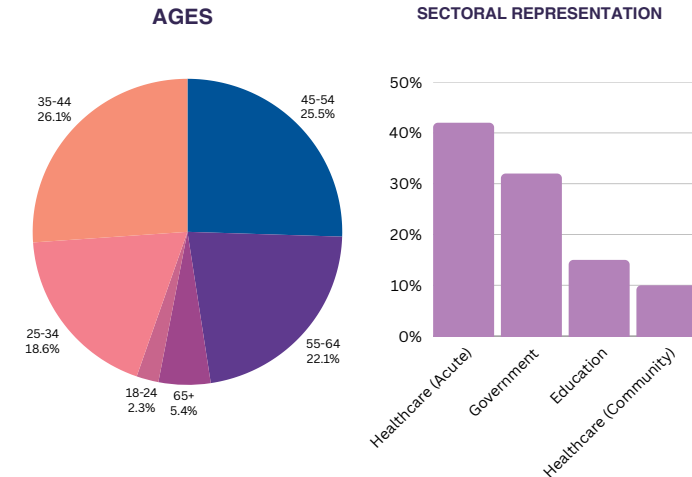
The role of 1st Vice President is to assist the President and work directly with local executives to strengthen the membership and move the unions agenda forward.

If you have any questions, you can contact Hugh at:

hgillis@nsgeu.ca



YOUR UNION AT A GLANCE



NSGEU STAFF



NSGEU HAS 71 PEOPLE ON STAFF THAT WORK TO SERVICE THE UNION MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERS

38,041

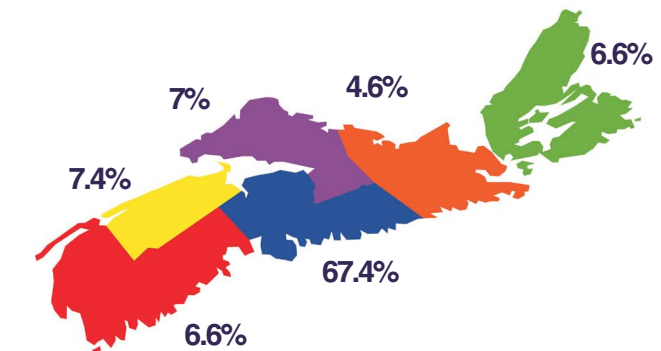
SIGNED MEMBERS

80.4%

FUN FACT

The total number of NSGEU members are equal to more than the populations of Richmond, Inverness and Guysborough Counties combined. Our memberships is large enough to span three counties; that's strength in numbers!

MEMBERS BY REGION



THE STAND

is a publication of the Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union
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Executive Officers

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The NSGEU is affiliated with the Canadian Labour Congress, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, and the National Union of Public and General Employees.



The Union Stand is proudly produced by NSGEU with the help of members of IAMAW Local 2797.



Arbitrator Orders New Collective Agreement for Civil Service

Civil service bargaining concluded on September 11, with Arbitrator Karen Hollett ordering a new collective agreement, which was binding on both parties.

The lead up to this order included all bargaining being put on hold for a provincial general election. Once the newly elected government returned to the bargaining table, they remained firm on their goals to roll back key job security language and deny civil servants the

pocketbooks.”
The membership responded with an overwhelming rejection of the governments offer. Of those who voted, 99% voted to reject the offer.
The results sent a clear message to the Premier: civil servants want to be treated fairly and maintain the job security provisions they have traditionally had.
The union moved swiftly and applied to move the



previously established wage pattern.
In December 2024, both sides agreed to move the process to conciliation and after an impasse was reached the process moved to mediation where some progress was made.
Early in 2025, the employer presented an offer to the union. The bargaining committee strongly recommended that members vote to reject the offer. As NSGEU Sandra Mullen said at the time: “The government’s offer included significant concessions to important job security language as well as a wage package that does not reflect the current state of the economy and the impact that inflation has had people’s

process to arbitration. The Labour Board appointed an Arbitration Board, with Karen Hollett named as Chair, Paul Cavalluzzo was named as nominee for the union and Noella Martin as nominee for the province.
Both sides met with the arbitrator to try and settle as many issues as possible ahead of a formal hearing scheduled for October.
In early September Arbitrator Hollett called all parties back to the table for another day of negotiations. The union came prepared and after a long day, the Arbitration Board had ordered an agreement, binding on all parties.
The new collective agreement included an 11.5% wage

increase over four years, that when compounded over the life of the agreement amounts to a 12% increase. This is consistent with the previous wage pattern as settled in other agreements. The order also included all previous job security language, so members remain protected into the future. The full contract can be found on the NSGEU website.
The union thanks the tremendous work of the bargaining committee for their leadership and perseverance during a very long round of bargaining. The government, armed with a strong majority mandate, was focused on weakening the union and its members and tried to pay them less than what they deserved. The order by the Arbitrator was a win for working people and highlighted the strength of the union when it’s fully mobilized.
The next step is for members to receive their retroactive pay as the previous contract had expired on March 31, 2024.
Thank you to the members for being patient during this process. In the end and based on what the government wanted to roll back, this was an overall positive result for the members.



Civil Servants Win On Wages & Job Protection

September 18, 2025
Brian Flinn

Nova Scotia’s 8,500 unionized civil servants will get a 12% pay increase over four years.



The government quarter in downtown Halifax.
(Brian Flinn)

Their contract, negotiated last week in front of an arbitrator, could become a pattern for other public sector workers.

Nova Scotia Government and General Employees Union president Sandra Mullen said she expects her members will be more pleased to see the new contract preserves job security.

She said the **Progressive Conservative** government initially demanded employees give up a memorandum of understanding that requires the province to offer laid-off employee other positions at a similar wage. That triggered a 99% no vote by union members (see 2025-03-07).

That was around the time the Tories passed legislation that made it easier to eliminate non-union employees.

“We’re very pleased,” Mullen said Wednesday in an interview.

“To have protected job security in this environment, I think is huge.”

The union negotiated a deal with the province Thursday. The disputed contract was on its way to arbitration.

Meet Your New NSGEU Board of Directors

Your new Board of Directors has been elected, following our Triennial Convention in May! This Board consists of 38 members representing all occupations and provincial regions in which the union has members.

The Board consists of the five Provincial Executive Committee members elected by delegates during the NSGEU Triennial Convention; eight members elected from each of the NSGEU Regional Councils; 20 members elected from the 14 NSGEU Occupational Councils (Councils with more than 2,000 members get two seats on the board); one member elected from any local to represent members who are 35 years of age or younger; and one member elected from any local to represent members who self-identify as having experienced barriers due to sexuality and/or gender identity, race and/or ethnicity, culture and/or Religion, abilities and/or disabilities.

The Board meets almost every month, usually at the NSGEU office in Burnside. Input from our individual locals is shared through our Regional and Occupational Councils, which is how the Board keeps its finger on the pulse of the entire union and makes all the union's major decisions between conventions!

The Board sets overall bargaining strategies; initiates public-relations campaigns; sets the strategic direction and priorities; and offers solidarity, support, and/or financial assistance to other unions or social-justice organizations throughout the term.

Your Board for the 2025 to 2028 term includes:

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS (5):

- President Sandra Mullen (Local 16, Civil Service, Professional)
- 1st Vice President Hugh Gillis (Local 480C, Civil Service, Technical & Services)
- 2nd Vice President Tammy Gillis (Local 2, Civil Service, Technical & Services)
- 3rd Vice President Peter Perry (Local 122, Health Care)
- Treasurer Darren McPhee (Local 8, Civil Service, Professional)



REGIONAL MEMBERS (8):

- Matthew Beson (Local 14, Pictou/Antigonish/Guysborough)
- Mary Otto (Local 43, Metro A)
- Sherry Dennis (Local 8, Metro B)
- Nicole Turple (Local 7, Metro C)
- Neil Poirier (Local 1670, Cape Breton)

- Holly Martin (Local 17, Cumberland/Colchester)
- Tanya Steadman (Local 25, Valley)
- Lynette Hayward-Byrd (Local 190, South Shore)

OCCUPATIONAL MEMBERS (23):

- Laura MacMillan (Local 100, Health Care)
- Vera McCarthy (Local 100, Health Care)

- Uta Berthold-Brush (Local 195, Health Care)
- Heather MacAdam (Local 88, Post Secondary)
- Tammy Zinck (Local 77, Post Secondary)
- Leslie Anderson (Local 222, Municipal)
- Annette Leyenaar (Local 73, Public Education)
- Donna MacGregor (Local 71C, Public Education)
- Misty Camick (Local 1670, Liquor Stores)
- Danielle McNutt (Local 35, Home Care)
- Sarah Hollahan (Local 66, Group Homes)
- Cindi Mattinson (Local 195, Nursing)
- Vanessa Beaton-MacKinnon (Local 104, Nursing)
- Pamela Grace (Local 423, Administrative Professionals)
- Heather Tucker (Local 1246, Administrative Professionals)
- Darcy Arsenault (Local 41, Long Term Care)
- Raymond Theriault (Local 119, Support Staff)
- Keisha Miller (Local 68, General)
- Rocky Beals (Local 8, Civil Service)
- John Bueglas (Local 4, Civil Service)
- Benny Singler (Local 480, Civil Service)
- Andrea Hancock (Local 480, Civil Service)
- Vacant (Civil Service)

EQUITY COUNCIL BOARD MEMBER (1):

- Krista-Lynn Caldwell (Local 86, Long-Term Care)

YOUNG WORKER COUNCIL BOARD MEMBER (1):

- Leta Lowthers (Local 51, General)

Eight days in the Legislature – Efficient and Productive? Or Democracy Curtailed?

Nova Scotia’s fall legislative session lasted a grand total of eight days. The Progressive Conservative government, under Premier Tim Houston, rapidly pushed through 10 bills, including five omnibus bills that enacted over 45 changes to provincial laws and regulations.

The brevity of the session, coupled with the extensive use of omnibus bills – which package numerous unrelated amendments into single pieces of legislation – rightly drew sharp criticism from opposition parties. Both the NDP and the Liberals accused the government of deliberately stifling debate, limiting public scrutiny, and avoiding accountability on pressing issues such as the rising cost of living and soaring power rates.

A central point of contention during the session was a new law, embedded within one of the omnibus bills, that criminalizes the blocking of logging roads on Crown land. This legislation introduces substantial fines and potential jail time for individuals who impede access. This move was seen by many as a direct attempt to curb protest and dissent. Peaceful public protest is a right protected by the Charter and we

should all be concerned with any laws curtailing that right. Think back to 2014 and then Premier McNeil’s legislating wages and unilaterally removing long-standing articles from collective agreements. The only recourse workers had was to take to the streets



in protest. Democracy should never be afraid of protest. Premier Houston defended the government’s strategy, characterizing the session as “efficient and productive.” He asserted that the government was focused on enacting legislation deemed crucial for Nova Scotians, including initiatives aimed at reducing red tape, stimulating economic growth, and

advancing clean energy projects. However, the use of omnibus legislation to ram through changes erodes the participation of the people and their elected representative. In the race to end the session there was some positive change: amendments to the Workers’ Compensation Act (WCB Act) expand presumptive cancer coverage to include wildland firefighters and fire investigators, bringing them in line with municipal firefighters who already receive this coverage. This change

The advantages and disadvantages of a short sitting at Province House

Fall sitting of legislature wrapped up Friday after just 8 days

 [Michael Gorman](#) · CBC News · Posted: Oct 06, 2025 6:00 AM ADT | Last Updated: October 6



Listen to this article

Estimated 6 minutes



The Nova Scotia Legislature wrapped up its fall session on Friday after eight days. (Michael Gorman/CBC)

acknowledges the heightened risks faced by those who combat forest fires and fire-related hazards, ensuring that if they develop certain prescribed cancers, it will be presumed to be due to their work, simplifying access to compensation and benefits. However, like all amendments introduced, these positive changes were bundled with numerous other amendments. The NSGEU will be working to ensure that all changes benefit workers across Nova Scotia.

As the dust settles on this whirlwind session, the debate over the balance between governmental efficiency and democratic accountability will and should continue. The swift passage of extensive legislation, through the use of extended hours, limited sitting days and omnibus bills, signals a clear strategic direction from the Houston government towards “efficiency”, but it can also be viewed as an attempt to limit debate and has come at the cost of weakening public input and legislative scrutiny. ■



Eight days and out: Fall sitting of Nova Scotia legislature one of the shortest on record

Opposition calls it ‘a mockery,’ premier says it was efficient and productive

By Jen Taplin
Published Oct 08, 2025 4 minute read



Premier Tim Houston in the legislature in this file photo from February. PHOTO BY RYAN TAPLIN /The Chronicle Herald

Eight-Day Fall Sitting Framed As Efficiency

October 6, 2025
Brian Flinn

Nova Scotia’s legislature wrapped up what Premier **Tim Houston** described as an “efficient” fall sitting Friday — and went on break until spring.



Tim Houston
(Brian Flinn)

It all took just eight days, the shortest autumn schedule since the height of the COVID-19 pandemic five years ago.

“We did it very efficiently and I’m proud of what was accomplished,” he said.

MLAs passed nine pieces of **Progressive Conservative** government legislation, including five omnibus bills. They contained a wide range of measures lumped into broad themes.

The new law that drew the most attention was *Bill 127*, the *Protecting Nova Scotians Act*. It amended eight statutes, putting guardrails on companies that collect social insurance numbers and outlawing protesters who block roads on Crown land.

The **Assembly of Nova Scotia M’kmaq Chiefs** condemned the government Friday for creating new restrictions on their unceded territory without consulting them. They demanded a meeting with the premier.

Historic Election For The Nova Scotia Federation of Labour

For the first time in its 53-year history, the Nova Scotia Federation of Labour (NSFL) has elected a woman of colour as president.

Melissa Marsman is a long-time NSGEU activist and staff member and was acclaimed as President at the NSFL's Convention in Halifax in late October.

"This marks a historic and proud moment for the labour movement in Nova Scotia," says Marsman. "This election represents progress and inclusion at a time when working people across the province are demanding stronger voices, fairer workplaces, better pay & job security, with a renewed focus on equality and justice for all workers."

NSGEU's 3rd Vice-President, Tammy Gillis, was also acclaimed as Secretary-Treasurer of the organization, and NSGEU President Sandra Mullen will return in her capacity as 1st Vice-President to the NSFL.

Retiring President Danny Cavanagh was recognized for his service to the organization for 10 years, and to the larger labour movement for more than 35 years. ■



Melissa Marsman, NSFL President



Sandra Mullen, NSFL 1st Vice President

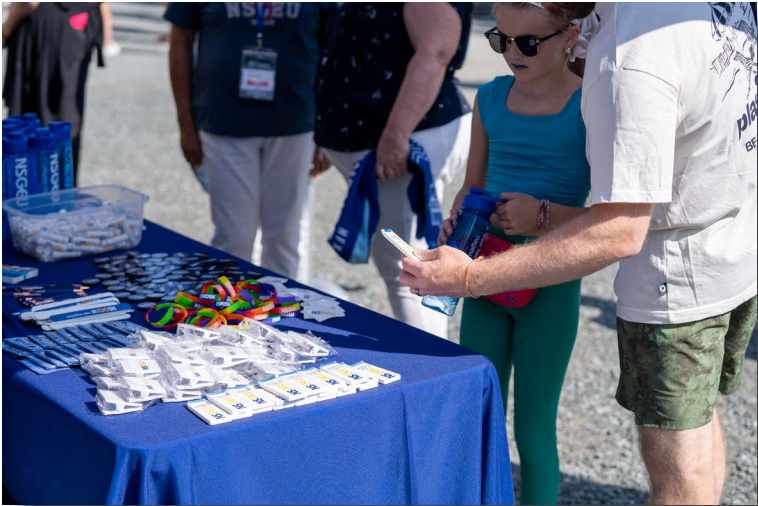


Tammy Gillis, NSFL Secretary-Treasurer



Halifax Wanderers Game

The NSGEU was proud to sponsor the 2025 Halifax Wanderers’ Labour Day match again this year! President Sandra Mullen was on-hand to meet with many of the NSGEU members who were in attendance, and most importantly, to celebrate the Wanderers’ 4-0 win!



NSGEU Family Picnic



Halifax Labour Day 2025





NSGEU President Sandra Mullen at a Healthcare Ontario rally during Council of Federation of Premiers.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen at a rally for striking Dalhousie Faculty Association members.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen at the Canadian Police and Peace officers memorial with Local 1995.



NSGEU members including members of the Social Recreation Committee at the annual Family Fun Day Corn Maze in Truro.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen and NSFL Secretary Treasurer Melissa Marsman at a rally for Canadian Postal Workers, who have been fighting for a collective agreement for nearly two years.

Right: NSGEU 1st VP Hugh Gillis attended the Wije'winen Kijipuktuk Gala, hosted by the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre on October 4, 2025, at the Halifax Convention Centre. The gala celebrated the 300th anniversary of the 1725 Peace and Friendship Treatie.



NSGEU President Sandra Mullen at a rally in support of Air Canada Flight Attendants and their fight for fair wages and an end to unpaid work.



Members of the NSGEU Board of Directors along with Delegates attended the 2025 NUPGE Convention.

New NSGEU Staff

Recent staffing changes at NSGEU

Prior to working at NSGEU, Sarah was a member of Local 423, and worked at the IWK, Maritime Psychiatry unit.

Sarah Covey
Servicing Administrative
Assistant Supervisor

Sarah says one of the most fulfilling parts of her work is the ability to contribute to social justice issues as part of her daily responsibilities.

She is a wife and mother of two boys, and they love spending time on their boat near Peggy's Cove.



Dustin has been a staff member for NSGEU for ten years and has worked multiple positions at the union including: Labour Relations Officer, Occupational Health and Safety Officer, and his current role as Servicing Coordinator.

Dustin Rioux
Servicing Coordinator,
Government and Education

Prior to 2016, he worked in the Department of Justice, Sheriff Services as a Sheriff Deputy for 14 years.

He has always appreciated the opportunity to advocate for our members when it comes to better wages, benefits, working conditions and fighting to ensure our public services are protected.



Stephen is a recent LRO who services Local 480, Local 6, and Local 1995.

Stephen Seney
Labour Relations Officer

Stephen was a Provincial Civil Servant for 24 years before working for the NSGEU. His jobs within the Civil Service included: Opportunities and Social Development (DCS) as a Counsellor, Teams Leader, and Youth Worker, and Service Nova Scotia (Alcohol, Gaming, Fuel and Tobacco) as a Compliance Officer (Inspector Specialist).

What he likes about working at the NSGEU is the ability to help members every day.



Prior to working at NSGEU, Kyle worked at the Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration; Labour Standards Division. He was a Labour Standards Officer 3.

Kyle Barrie
Labour Relations
Officer

Kyle enjoys helping members with their issues and says no day at the office is the same.

In his spare time he likes to play Ultimate Frisbee.



Prior to working for the NSGEU, Angela was the Atlantic Regional Organizer with the Council of Canadians and was active within her local.

Angela Giles
Labour Relations Officer

Angela says she really enjoys supporting workers, and is enjoying learning from members and colleagues.

She is a surfer and all-around active and outdoors person, who cares deeply about issues of social and environmental justice ■



NSGEU Financial Statements

NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION 6
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT DECEMBER 31, 2024

	2024	2023
	\$	\$
ASSETS		
CURRENT		
Cash	1,250,737	792,867
Accounts receivable	1,456,373	1,194,489
Prepays	541,240	529,408
	3,248,350	2,516,764
RESTRICTED INVESTMENTS (Note 4)	19,823,554	17,735,576
CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 5)	14,305,157	13,516,504
	37,377,061	33,768,844
LIABILITIES		
CURRENT		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	1,369,214	1,292,790
Current portion of long-term debt	482,962	445,295
	1,852,176	1,738,085
LONG-TERM DEBT (Note 6)	3,783,422	4,750,161
LONG-SERVICE OBLIGATION (Note 7)	2,487,802	2,116,650
POST-RETIREMENT BENEFITS OBLIGATION (Note 8)	2,341,001	2,286,760
	10,464,401	10,891,656
MEMBERS' EQUITY		
INVESTED IN CAPITAL ASSETS (Note 9)	10,038,773	8,321,048
UNRESTRICTED	16,873,887	14,556,140
	26,912,660	22,877,188
	37,377,061	33,768,844

COMMITMENTS (Note 11)

Approved by the Board


President


Secretary-Treasurer



NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT AND GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION 4
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024

	2024 Budget \$ Unaudited	2024 Actual \$	2023 Actual \$
REVENUES			
Member dues	22,945,000	23,420,853	20,895,806
Other income (Note 10)	555,000	1,748,931	1,029,936
	23,500,000	25,169,784	21,925,742
EXPENSES			
Wages and benefits	9,855,437	9,647,881	7,905,542
Staff travel	440,000	451,125	402,875
Negotiations and servicing			
Arbitrations and grievances	2,567,500	2,255,993	2,552,571
Negotiations	725,000	662,682	490,249
Organizing	175,000	136,374	62,914
Education	915,000	707,626	665,084
Communications and research	560,000	487,235	256,550
Health, safety and environment	7,500	-	2,477
Convention	300,000	1,373	-
Defense fund	836,550	455,750	279,830
	6,086,550	4,707,033	4,309,675
Administrative and financial			
Rebates to locals	375,000	361,925	342,579
Meetings, provincial committees and councils	1,150,429	891,917	639,902
General and office	1,423,437	1,311,037	1,339,163
Affiliations	1,512,717	1,403,854	1,468,213
Building	1,369,948	1,262,476	1,049,637
Amortization	809,550	651,672	583,348
	6,641,081	5,882,881	5,422,842
Officer off the job			
Wages, benefits and housing	187,177	183,914	171,305
Travel	30,000	22,969	21,786
	217,177	206,883	193,091
Presidential			
Wages, benefits and housing	214,755	206,714	196,417
Travel	35,000	31,795	25,923
	249,755	238,509	222,340
TOTAL EXPENSES	23,490,000	21,134,312	18,456,365
EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENSES	10,000	4,035,472	3,469,377





Help the NSGEU Sock It To Poverty this winter!

Donate new socks, mittens, hats or cash to our annual Sock It To Poverty campaign.

Donations are collected until December 31, 2025, and distributed throughout your region to help those in need.

Arrange to make a donation or help with the campaign by contacting your Local President, or by calling the NSGEU at 902-424-4063 or 1-877-556-7438 (toll-free)

You can send an email to inquiry@nsgeu.ca, visit nsgeu.ca or find out more on our socials.



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Publication Mail Number 40010698

