

Community Foundation OF NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia Organizations Awarded Inaugural CFNS VISIONS Fund Grants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HALIFAX, NS — The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia (CFNS) is pleased to announce the recipients of its inaugural CFNS VISIONS Fund. Established with an anonymous \$8.5 million endowment entrusted to CFNS, the Fund will support Nova Scotians for generations to come. This year, nine grants have been awarded throughout the province, reflecting a diverse range of impactful programs.

The CFNS VISIONS Fund embraces a trust-based approach to philanthropy, providing grants to cover essential yet often overlooked expenses like overhead, salaries, supplies, and other costs crucial to the success of a program. The CFNS VISIONS Fund proudly awarded several multi-year grants to ensure programs can make hiring decisions and launch new initiatives knowing that their funding is secured for the next three years.

The CFNS VISIONS Fund grants to charities, nonprofits, and educational institutions for work in two key priorities outlined by the donor: supporting individuals who have faced significant challenges in life, and funding innovative educational initiatives for post-secondary institutions. The Fund received numerous applications showcasing remarkable initiatives across Nova Scotia. Following a comprehensive evaluation by two community-driven committees, grants were awarded to the following grant recipients:

- **Acadia University:** The Land-based Learning Field Course will immerse students in eco-cultural approaches to sustainability and community through a partnership between Nestuita'si Storytelling based in L'sitkuk and the Environmental and Sustainability Studies and Community Development programs at Acadia. This course combines land- and community-based teachings with hands-on projects, strengthening community-university partnerships. A multi-year grant from the CFNS VISIONS Fund will fully fund one cohort of the program for three years.
- **After the School Bell Food Program:** The funds will support a volunteer-driven initiative providing 200 weekend food bags per week to children when school meals

are unavailable. This project will help reduce food insecurity in Cumberland County and ensure children have access to nutritious meals, promoting better health and development.

- **Autism Nova Scotia:** A grant from the CFNS VISIONS Fund will help fund a summer camp program in Cape Breton that offers a recreational and social environment for children and youth on the autism spectrum. With a 1:1 camper-to-counselor ratio, this initiative provides personalized support and opportunities for campers to build social connections and independence.
- **Dalhousie University:** The CFNS VISIONS Fund will support the Assistive Technology Lab and University Accessibility Hub, which will improve access to learning for students with disabilities by providing them with specialized tools and technology. This initiative will support up to 3,000 students annually, helping to foster an inclusive academic environment and increase retention rates.
- **Fairview Resource Centre:** This multi-year grant will support the "Thriving Families NS" program, which aims to provide education and family assistance to immigrants, refugees, Asylum seekers, first-time parents or caregivers looking for a refresher. The program offers workshops on child/youth safety, family violence laws, child/youth protection laws, injury prevention, and connects families to essential resources like food programs, housing, and one on one support. This new initiative would not be possible without the multi-year funding awarded to the Fairview Resource Centre from the CFNS VISIONS Fund, which will support the new staff needed to lead this program.
- **Halifax Sexual Health Centre:** This grant will support the Compassionate Comprehensive Care Program, which provides essential health products and services, such as medications and post-operative kits, for sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming healthcare.
- **Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC):** The Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Entrepreneurship Program will support Mi'kmaw and Indigenous NSCC students and alumni in launching and growing businesses. This initiative will provide business and cost of living grants, along with mentorship and culturally relevant programming in partnership with Mi'kmaw and Indigenous entrepreneurs in Unama'ki (Cape Breton), with plans to expand in partnership with Mi'kmaw communities throughout Nova Scotia. Multi-year funding from the CFNS VISIONS Fund will be used to pilot and scale this program, including both participant grants and facilitation.

- **Pathways to Employment Society:** Pathways to Employment is a community-based service center that supports individuals in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality living with mental illness or substance use disorders by providing holistic, participant-directed programming focused on skill development, social enterprise, and community integration. The CFNS VISIONS Fund grant will allow the organization to expand its services with a peer support program designed to offer flexible, accessible support, enhance employability skills, and create peer reciprocity opportunities, ultimately helping participants gain sustainable employment and greater community attachment.
- **PiCCoLA:** This initiative will establish a community kitchen in Pictou County to help adult learners combat food insecurity while also providing job training in food preparation, nutrition, and food safety. The kitchen will serve as a social enterprise and offer fundraising opportunities to support PiCCoLA's ongoing educational programs. The entire kitchen build is funded by the CFNS VISIONS Fund.

Grant recipients were quick to share their gratitude. Natalie Brown, Executive Director of the Fairview Resource Centre, says support from the CFNS VISIONS Fund will bring their *Thriving Families NS* program to life.

"*Thriving Families NS* fills a gap in Nova Scotia for low barrier educational opportunities for families to learn the laws and legislation in this province for caring for children and youth," says Brown. "Education and early support for families is key for long term success. We know this is going to be a game changer for families in Nova Scotia, providing an educational platform and reducing the number of families who fall through the cracks."

Nova Scotia Community College is launching The Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Entrepreneurship Program with their funding from the CFNS VISIONS Fund.

"We're grateful to receive this funding to pilot the Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Entrepreneurship Program at NSCC," says Denise Pictou Maloney, Senior Advisor of Mi'kmaw and Indigenous Initiatives at NSCC. "By developing culturally appropriate programming with our Mi'kmaw community partners that address the unique considerations of Mi'kmaw and Indigenous entrepreneurs, including wrap-around supports to reduce systemic barriers to participation, we address a number of calls to action set forth by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada thanks to the VISIONS Fund's support."

The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia is thrilled with the success of this grant in its first year.

"We are incredibly proud to support these diverse, impactful programs that will create lasting change across Nova Scotia," says CFNS CEO Daniel Holland. "For generations to come, the CFNS VISIONS Fund will continue to provide support to initiatives that align with its mission to make Nova Scotia a better place to live, learn, and thrive."

The Community Foundation of Nova Scotia plays a key role in fostering positive change across the province and looks forward to collaborating with more Nova Scotians interested in establishing grant programs to support causes and communities that are important to them.