

COMMUNITY
SECTOR COUNCIL
of NOVA SCOTIA



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS:

Capacity Building Programming

Published date: February 8, 2022

Closing date: March 10, 2022

Submissions and questions are to be sent to the contacts listed at the end of this RFP. For quick reference, any communications about this RFP should have a subject line of "Capacity Building RFP" for quick reference and directed to ncammaert@csc-ns.ca

CSCNS CAPACITY BUILDING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia

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Background

The Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia (CSCNS) is committed to the success and sustainability of a vibrant network of over 6,000 non-profit and voluntary sector organizations that collectively contribute \$1.7 billion in direct, indirect and spinoff benefits to the gross domestic product (GDP) of Nova Scotia. We connect, advocate for, and provide capacity building opportunities for nonprofits, social enterprises, and voluntary organizations across the province. This sector contributes to our collective wellbeing by providing communities with inclusive social, cultural, health, recreational, and economic programs, and services. Since 2020, CSCNS has undergone substantial sector engagement to identify our strategic priorities for 2020-2023: Educate and Innovate, Collaborate and Activate, and Advocate and Celebrate. Shortly following the release of our strategic plan, COVID-19 forced major adaptations both within CSCNS and across the sector. Through two COVID-19 impact surveys we heard that the sector is facing greater demands with fewer resources, while also needing to increase collaboration and innovation to meet the needs of communities.

The death of George Floyd in 2020 catapulted the Black Lives Matter movement into a period of global consciousness-raising. Calls to action for truth and reconciliation and the discoveries of mass graves at Canadian residential schools have shone a light on Indigenous rights. At the same time, inequities have continued to increase during the pandemic and crises related to mental health, housing, and economic disparities have worsened. The need to commit to justice, equity, decolonization, diversity, and inclusion (JEDDI) across all that we do has never been greater. The sector is facing a critical point in time. There is a need to reimagine existing ways of working and attract new talent and strong leadership to navigate the challenges ahead.

Our Learning Framework

In this new reality, we need to do things differently across the sector. We need new skills, mindsets, and ways of being that can help us understand and navigate the complex problems we're facing. In early 2021, we set out to go deeper in our understanding of the sector's current capacity needs. We designed an engagement process to address the following questions:

- How can CSCNS help the community impact sector increase its impact on complex problems like poverty and injustice?
- What obstacles is the sector facing?
- How can CSCNS support the sector's capacity building needs?
- What root cause issues are standing in the way of impact in the sector?

We collected feedback and insight through an open forum, focus groups, and a capacity building survey. Based on the feedback from the sector, we developed our [Learning Framework](#) to guide our approach to offering skill building opportunities for the sector going forward. Based on our research and analysis, by investing in these areas, organizations will be better able to achieve the impact they strive for, and staff and volunteers will have more positive experiences in the workplace.

Three main themes emerged as priority areas for sector capacity building:

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1. **Healthy Workplaces**

Organizations that are healthy workplaces actively practice behaviours that cultivate trust-building and spaces of psychological safety. There is an understanding that it is safe to disagree, make mistakes and try new things. Time for reflection is incorporated and feedback is a regular process. Leaders model with humility and a learning mindset and have strong relational skills. Without a healthy workplace culture, JEDDI efforts are greatly compromised. Under this theme, we will offer content specifically related to:

- Conflict resolution and holding generative conversations
- JEDDI
- Psychological safety
- Addressing and preventing burnout

2. **Systems Change and Innovation**

To address systemic inequities, people across the sector need to develop skills for being able to visualize issues at the systems level and refocus efforts from reactive problem-solving to co-creating a different future. Collaboration, strong communications, and the ability to adapt based on experience are all needed for widescale change. Here, we will offer content related to:

- Generating new ideas and risk-taking/ experimentation
- Collaboration
- Communications and advocacy
- Evaluation and impact assessment

3. **Sustainable Operations**

In addition to the relational and creative skills needed to affect change and motivate staff, there are foundational operational elements that need to be in place for organizations to be sustainable. There is a wide range of capacity across leaders in the sector and need for training aimed at implementing efficient, accountable policies and procedures. Content under this theme will focus on:

- Financial management
- Governance
- Human resource policies and staff development
- Fundraising
- Strategic thinking and planning
- Succession planning

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Our Learning Principles

Based on our values and what we heard we identified, four main principles will guide our approach to developing training and learning opportunities for the sector:

- **Decolonizing pedagogy and content and integrating JEDDI principles into all training.** We will ensure that facilitators have the necessary competencies and life experiences to navigate issues related to JEDDI, such as holding challenging conversations, gently challenging people to shift mindsets, and creating inclusive and accessible training environments.
- **Learning through networks and collaboration.** Opportunities to collaborate and build relationships through reflection, shared projects, and support for challenging conversations will be prioritized. We will integrate interactive learning experiences and support pathways for participants to move from the training experience into ongoing communities of practice and opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and networking.
- **Experiential and participant-centered learning.** We will have an ongoing focus on learning through practice, opportunities to participate in “real world” learning in action, and a recognition that the most effective learning happens through a focus on head, hands, heart, and spirit.
- **Integration of systems thinking, innovation, and collaboration.** We’ll seek to include opportunities for creativity, innovation, stretch mindset, and meaningful dialogue to cultivate competencies for systems leadership and strategic thinking.

Invitation

As the next stage in the implementation of our Learning Framework, CSCNS is developing a library of content that will be available to staff and volunteers in the sector to help develop capacity in skills aligned with the learning themes that emerged. This first round of content will focus primarily on foundational topics and information that can be digested in a variety of ways.

Since March of 2020, learning opportunities have been restricted to online formats due to COVID-19. There are benefits associated with this move to virtual training such as the ability to reach people across the province more easily, attracting high caliber facilitators and reduced time commitments associated with travel, etc. In the development of our learning framework, we asked the sector if we should continue to focus on virtual training or reintroduce in-person opportunities when feasible. It was clear from the responses that in-person training is still highly desirable, and as such, course content will be designed so it can be delivered both as asynchronous online learning and synchronous in-person or virtual environments.

We are seeking proposals from organizations, firms, or sole proprietors with experience in content development and facilitation to develop a suite of CSCNS-owned courses addressing a variety of foundational skills that can be accessed for free by anyone in the Community Impact Sector to help them work more effectively. Interested parties can submit proposals to develop one or more of the courses outlined in the scope of work. Collaborations with nonprofit organizations are encouraged

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where appropriate. We are specifically interested in those with experience working with impact (nonprofit and voluntary) organizations.

The CSCNS has a strong commitment toward ensuring synchronous in-person learning opportunities are accessible across all regions of Nova Scotia. To deliver on this commitment we will be engaging with highly trained and reputable facilitators, in community, to deliver learning content that is developed through this RFP. As detailed in the Deliverables section of this document, there will be a “train the trainer” component to each course. Reasonable effort will be made to first engage the content developer when offering in-person learning opportunities, based on availability within the desired timeline and budget.

The Community Impact Sector is incredibly diverse, encompassing non-profits, social enterprises, voluntary organizations, and grassroots organizations. The sizes, missions and targeted clientele of organizations vary widely. The sector disproportionately employs women and members of underrepresented groups and is more racially and gender diverse than any other sector. As a result, we are seeking evidence of cultural and diversity competencies, and demonstrated alignment with our four learning principles from the contractors we engage.

Course Topics

We are seeking submissions for course content development in the following areas. Again, proposals may include the development of one or more course topics depending on the proponent’s skillset and expertise. Topics span the themes of the Learning Framework. The descriptions below are meant to be a starting point for thinking about content that could be included related to each topic and we encourage applicants to develop them further based on their own knowledge and expertise.

Note that we are open to considering other topics that relate to those in the table below and can be flexible on the final wording. If you have a suggestion, please reach out prior to submitting to Nicole Cammaert at ncammaert@csc-ns.ca to discuss further.

Theme	Topic	Desired Outcome
Healthy Workplaces	Navigating Conflict	Participants will develop a foundational level of understanding of how to constructively deal with conflict in the workplace and be exposed to basic practices for navigating challenging conversations. Topics could include, but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understanding the importance of psychological safety in the workplace.• Practices for fostering productive conversations that enable diverse perspectives to emerge.• Identifying patterns of personal and interpersonal conflict habits.• Exploration of different forms of decision-making (consensus-based vs. not).

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Healthy Workplaces	Developing a Feedback Culture	<p>Participants will be exposed to rationale for why ongoing feedback is important for skill development and work effectiveness. Content will go beyond traditional approaches to performance measurement to include participatory and generative practices. Topics could include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of approaches to performance management and feedback delivery.• Practices for developing a culture of ongoing, two-way feedback.• Practical systems that can be put in place for culture development.
Healthy Workplaces	Promising Practices for Working Virtually (2-part program)	<p>With many organizations having to shift their way of working to a virtual environment, while also responding to the changing pressures of COVID-19 left many scrambling to quickly find ways of adapting the way work is done, often leaving relationship management as an afterthought. This program will explore a range of cloud-based solutions for working while placing a priority on maintaining strong communications and building healthy and respectful workplaces. Topics could include, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Exploring popular platforms for work efficiency such as Google and MS Teams.• Cloud-based collaboration tools such as Miro, Mural, Google Jamboard, Padlet etc.• Practices for remaining connected through meetings and group activities.• Practices for video on /off and addressing “zoom fatigue” while also valuing relationship, sense of belonging, testing assumptions around body language.• Tools for authentic and brave conversations in a virtual space such as Wheel of Emotion. <p>Due to the extent of suggested topic areas this course could be designed as a 2-part program with Part 1 focused on virtual tools for organizational communications, and Part 2 with a focus on relational practices using technology and establishing organizational practices.</p>

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<p>Healthy Workplaces</p>	<p>Building Burnout Resiliency in Ourselves and our Teams</p>	<p>Burnout in the For-Impact sector was at pandemic levels long before COVID-19 struck. Burnout is commonly seen as an individual’s shortcoming that can be mitigated by simply doing more yoga, more counselling, getting outdoors more, etc. As Burnout has been widely studied over the last decade, we now know that burnout is an organizational problem that requires an organizational solution. In this course, topics could include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to recognize passive and active burnout in yourself and in your teams. • Burnout as reflection of your workplace culture, not your people. • The importance of being an empathetic leader. • Building healthy organizational culture for burnout prevention. • How to foster Burnout Resiliency in yourself, for yourself, and as a leader and role model to your teams.
<p>Systems Change & Innovation</p>	<p>Evaluation for Learning</p>	<p>Participants will be provided an overview of key topics in evaluation for systems change including Theories of Change and developmental evaluation, and how they differ from traditional, linear approaches to impact assessment with a particular focus on JEDDI, including how and what is measured and why Tips for implementing reflective practices and collecting data to inform decision-making will help staff and volunteers to be more learning-oriented, even in the absence of a trained evaluator.</p>
<p>Systems Change & Innovation</p>	<p>Developing a Culture of Experimentation</p>	<p>Participants will be exposed to foundational topics related to complexity, systems change and adaptive cycles. They will come away with enhanced understanding of the importance of embracing some degree of risk and experimentation to iterate and continuously improve their approach to working toward their mission. They will explore a “Fail Forward” approach in the interest of organizational learning.</p>
<p>Systems Change & Innovation</p>	<p>Telling Your Story – Basics of an Impactful Narrative</p>	<p>Participants will learn how to think about their impact story and share their experience to raise awareness and support of their work in various contexts ranging from elevator pitch introductions, impact reporting to grant writing. Skills will be developed related to story development and sharing via a variety of media.</p>

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<p>Sustainable Operations</p>	<p>Fund Development – Grants & Diversification</p>	<p>Participants will learn about how granting works and develop skills related to effective grant proposal development including exposure to tips and practices to influence the chances of success. Funder perspectives will be included in the development of the content. Foundational information about possible options to consider in the context of funding diversification will also be included such as partnerships with foundations and the private sector.</p>
<p>Sustainable Operations</p>	<p>Financial Management for Nonprofits</p>	<p>Participants will learn about financial information that is important to track in nonprofit contexts, how to read basic financial reports and prepare information for board meetings. Practical tips for implementing efficient systems will be embedded to help improve operational processes, including best practices in meeting fiduciary responsibilities in a virtual/cloud-based atmosphere.</p>
<p>Sustainable Operations</p>	<p>Board Governance for Impact</p>	<p>Participants will learn about different governance models relevant to nonprofit organizations, the role of boards and the ED in relation to the board, and practices for effective board meetings and information-sharing. Emphasis will be on practical tools for meetings and relationship management, and on shedding light on myths, assumptions, and harmful behaviours that can be present in board governance. Emerging practices around decolonizing board practices will also be introduced.</p>
<p>Sustainable Operations</p>	<p>JEDDI Informed HR Practices (2-part program)</p>	<p>Participants will learn how to make meaningful improvements in employee experience in support of JEDDI goals and values. Focus will be on identifying systemic barriers and implicit biases faced by members of equity seeking groups (Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians or people of African Descent, other racially visible persons, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, women and persons with disabilities). Topics could include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and retention practices including selection, hiring, compensating and onboarding • Training and leadership development • Performance management • Inclusive built spaces such as breastfeeding and inclusive washrooms, visual aids, and physical access • Accommodation practices <p>Due to the extent of suggested topic areas this course should be designed as a 2-part program.</p>

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Sustainable Operations	Strategies and Practices for Effective Project Management	The move to working virtually not only affected external programming, but also internal processes including project management. Participants will learn effective strategies and best practices that value high levels of transparency, accountability, managing workflows, communication and minimizing duplication of effort. Topics could include, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clarity of roles and responsibilities using tools such as RACI matrix.• Risk and scenario management.• Managing team workloads and future planning.• Review of project management software.• Defining project deliverables and avoiding mission creep.• Collaborating with external partners.• Programming in for planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation processes.
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Scope of Work

We encourage submissions from individuals, organizations, and groups of organizations – in other words, we welcome creativity in approach! Submissions may include content development for one course or multiple. The successful contractors will manage the project timelines, deadlines, and budget, adjusting when necessary and with CSCNS approval. Contractors will report to the Director, Learning and Sector Development and may work with other members of the CSCNS team throughout the process.

Key activities and deliverables for CSCNS Capacity Building courses include:

- Provide leadership, direction, and expert consultation and advice related to the development of the proposed course content.
- Create content that is accessible to diverse people and learning styles.
- Create training materials using current learning strategies and standards, including learner knowledge retention and reflective and interactive activities.
- Develop and deliver a train the trainer session(s) and corresponding handbook.
- Articulate plans and resources to support learning during the course and after to respond to individuals impacted by the learning.
- Work with a dedicated CSCNS staff support person to ensure quality and consistency across learning while also monitoring and reporting on the progress relative to the development of this plan.
- The contractor will manage the project timelines and deadlines, keeping the CSCNS team on track and readjusting timelines when necessary and as approved by contracting staff at CSCNS

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Deliverables

Each course's curriculum will be designed to be delivered in both a self-paced asynchronous manner and uploaded to a Learning Management System (LMS), as well as in a 2–3-hour instructor-led (synchronous) manner. Curriculum should be topic-specific based on the values and framework described above.

Specific deliverables follow:

Asynchronous:

- Customize and develop curriculum for 50 - 60 minutes of self-paced learning on a course topic. Information should be organized by modules that focus on different aspects of the topic and in a video format to be ready to upload to Learning Management System (LMS) platform. Awardees will attend mandatory training session on the LMS platform to help visualize final product and expectations.
- Deliverables include:
 - Course outline, introduction, learning objectives and outcomes, and summary.
 - Participant guide including key takeaways and learning outcomes.
 - High quality audio and video recording files that CSCNS staff will upload to LMS platform.
 - Scripts for e-learning and educational audio resources (both static and video copy).
 - Visual aids (i.e., Slide deck etc.) with voiceover.
 - Links to e-resources for deeper learning for participants and copy to post online that describes each resource.

Synchronous:

- Repackage the asynchronous curriculum for delivery in a 2-3 hour synchronous, instructor-led course that can delivered in a variety of ways (live webinar, in-person, hybrid). In accordance with our Learning Framework and approach to adult education, courses are intended to have an interactive component with engaging questions for breakouts group discussion and reflection.
- Deliverables include:
 - Course outline, introduction, learning objectives and outcomes, and summary.
 - Participant guide including key takeaways and learning outcomes.
 - Facilitator guide including list of resources and course agenda (ie. Train the Trainer resource).
 - Visual aids (i.e. Slide deck etc.).
 - Links to e-resources for deeper learning for participants.

Design and Facilitation Competencies

JEDDI Competencies:

These kinds of decolonizing and justice-based approaches require program designers, educators and content experts who can hold a particular kind of space for learning.

1. The ability to build and maintain relationships within a “brave space,” rather than a safe space, for group conversation and conflict, meaning supporting participants to recognize that learning requires a level of manageable and supported discomfort, especially when our unexamined ways of understanding the world are being stretched and challenged. The idea of a “brave space” benefit from being combined with a trauma informed and relational perspective, that recognizes that discomfort can be extremely troubling for people, particularly when belonging is at risk. A trauma-informed approach to brave space involves building a container of respectful relationships coming from principles of “generosity of spirit,” to facilitate stepping into discomfort.
2. Deep awareness of systemic injustice, and the ability to facilitate difficult conversations around the causes and effects of both historic and current harms.
3. A recognition that mistakes will be made, by the facilitator and participants, and commitment to ongoing learning and humility.
4. A commitment to making choices toward allyship with those with marginalized identities that the facilitator doesn’t share.
5. A fluidity and capacity to integrate a range of ways of knowing and ways of learning into training content and process, including head (cognitive and information-based learning); heart (social and emotional learning); hands (embodied and action-based learning); and spiritual learning, meaning learning through connection to something bigger than ourselves.
6. A commitment to being healing-centred/trauma-informed in facilitation methods, to recognize the endemic and ongoing effects of trauma, and to minimize unnecessary harm.
7. A commitment to building a respectful and accountable environment of cultural safety, in which there is a shared belief that people are coming from good intentions, but the impact of behaviour is still taken seriously, named, and addressed.
8. A recognition that knowledge is shared and experiential, and we all have it, and a capacity to elicit and amplify the knowledge in the room. This may also include having multiple facilitators with different experiences and knowledge.

Technical Competencies:

As we aim to deliver high calibre content paired with JEDDI informed design and delivery, we also require consultants to have the following technical skills to create modern audio and visual support materials for use in both synchronous and asynchronous learning environments, such as:

1. Audio / video recording – demonstrate knowledge and ability to provide high quality audio and video within the budget and timeline allocated in this RFP.
2. Graphic design – ability to produce visually appealing, learner-centered, engaging support materials such as slide deck and handouts with competency on designed for visually-impaired

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learners (font legibility, colour contrast, etc.). CSCNS will provide additional direction and support to successful contract awardees to ensure consistent branding across all programs.

3. Preference will be given to submissions demonstrating proficiency in tech-savvy environments with additional leaning bonus of familiarity and comfort working with Learning Management Systems (LMS). The LMS is an online platform used to upload and host teaching materials such as slide decks, handouts, and video content in a user-friendly digital format. Specific orientation and training on the LMS platform will be provided to successful applicants.

Timeline

Request for Proposals Published	February 8, 2022
Consultant questions due	February 24, 2022
Deadline to submit	March 10, 2022, at 11:59 pm (AST)
Review of applications (may include follow up questions)	March 11, 2022
Consultants selected & advised	March 18, 2022
Midway point of contract	April 29, 2022
Completion of project	June 3, 2022

Proposed Budget

The total maximum budget for this project, inclusive of all applicable fees, is \$15,000 CDN excluding HST per course and \$25,000 excluding HST for courses that have 2 sections (such as JEDDI, Informed HR Practices, and Promising Practices for Working Virtually). Contract fees will be disbursed with 25% upon awarding of contract, 25% at midway point, 50% upon completion of project. All proposals must include the proposed costs to complete the deliverables as described above.

Evaluation Criteria

- Clarity, presentation, and organization of the proposal.
- Demonstration of project understanding.
- Demonstration of sector understanding.
- Demonstration of capacity to fulfil project requirements and deliverables.
- Understanding and demonstration of facilitator competencies.
- Understanding and demonstration to fulfill technology aspects of deliverables.
- Demonstration of your team's and/or subcontractor's cultural competency and approach for including a JEDDI lens in the project.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Ability to adhere to timeline.

**Preference will be given to local firms / collaborations that are located and operate in Nova Scotia.*

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Our Team

The successful firms will work in close collaboration with CSCNS representatives that includes:

- The Executive Director
- Director of Learning and Sector Development
- Learning and Engagement Coordinator
- Operations Manager
- Communications Manager

Submissions

Submitted proposals must demonstrate knowledge about the community sector, as well as a deep understanding of course design, content development, delivery (synchronous and asynchronous), engaging and interactive facilitation, as well as ability to train others on content delivery. The submitted proposal must clearly indicate which of the above course topics are being proposed along with a statement of understanding and demonstration of the facilitator competencies identified. As the CSCNS serves and aims to be inclusive of diverse groups of people and organizations across the province, the firm must demonstrate cultural competency and an appreciation for how intersecting identities dictate a person's lived experience in Nova Scotia and broader society.

Organizations/collaboratives who have an area of specialty are also encouraged to submit for more than one course or present as a course design bundle along with rationale for doing so. Courses will still be paid at the same rate/course however there may be added consideration for awarding more than one course to a supplier to ensure design and content consistency across multiple courses. Clear capacity to develop and deliver multiple courses while meeting deadlines with high quality materials should be demonstrated in the proposal.

Submission Requirements

All submissions should include the following content:

- Cover Letter and Proposal Summary.
- Profile / CV of individual, organizational and/or collaborative.
- Relevant Skills, Experience and Qualifications including recent examples of similar work.
- Proposed approach and methodology (content and design of courses) and approach to “train the trainer.”
- Critical path timeline with staged and clear milestones.
- Detailed Project Budget and Fees.
- Specification of any deliverables that are subcontracted or outsourced.
- A brief statement on relinquishing ownership of intellectual property and copyrights of the produced materials demonstrating understanding and agreement to the terms outlined in this RFP.
- Three references.

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Submission Information & Questions

Proposals can be submitted electronically as a pdf file via email, with the subject line “CSCNS Capacity Building RFP” to Nicole Cammaert, Director of Learning and Sector Development at ncammaert@csc-ns.ca no later than March 10, 2022, at 11:59 pm AST.

Late submissions will not be considered. Questions regarding this request for proposals should also be directed to ncammaert@csc-ns.ca before February 24, 2022.

Additional Terms

It must be clearly stated in the proposal if the firm submitting the proposal is working alongside another firm or must outsource or contract work to meet the deliverables listed above. The subcontracted firm’s name and a description of the organization must be provided in the proposal. Additionally, the total proposed budget and fees must be inclusive of any outsourced or contracted work. The CSCNS reserves the right to decline to work with firms or subcontractors that are not aligned with the organization’s values or the Learning Framework and that may reflect negatively on the organization, stakeholders, and/or the sector at large.

All material and collateral produced, data collected, and reports generated by the contractor or subcontractor on behalf of CSCNS are confidential and become the property of CSCNS. The creation of courses and corresponding materials does not preclude the subcontractor from also offering the courses they developed and can be further discussed upon award and offer of contract

Contracting Authority

Annika Voltan

Executive Director

Community Sector Council of Nova Scotia

avoltan@csc-ns.ca

(902) 456-9089