

Request for Proposals:

The Nova Scotia Nonprofit Coalition Strategy & Action Plan

Published Date: July 24, 2023

Closing Date: August 18, 2023 at 11:59 p.m AST

Submissions and questions can be sent to kristen@ions.ca with the subject line "Nonprofit Coalition Strategy RFP" for quick reference.



United Way
Halifax



**COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
FONDATION COMMUNAUTAIRE
OF NOVA SCOTIA
DE LA NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE**



**Impact Organizations
of Nova Scotia**

The Nova Scotia Nonprofit Coalition (the Coalition) is an inter-organizational body of Nonprofits who are collectively organizing to identify and address both opportunities and challenges in the sector by: driving public policy and sector awareness, re-envisioning an innovative and sustainable future for the sector, and ensuring community voices are actively participating at decision-making tables.

Background: Coalition Origins

The Coalition formed at the onset of COVID-19 to support the sector in navigating the impacts of the pandemic. A secondary goal emerged to inspire ideas for changing how work is conducted in the sector to strengthen impact. In its first year, a series of webinars were hosted with speakers on a variety of relevant topics. Founding members met regularly to discuss new topics, liaise with government, and strengthen relationships across the Coalition and with government partners. The original Co-Chairs included the Community Sector Council of NS (now IONS, Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia) and the Community Foundation of NS (CFNS). United Way Halifax (on behalf of the United Ways across NS) was also a key contributor to the Coalition from the beginning, although not as official Co-Chair.

Background: Coalition Evolution

Over the summer of 2021, conversations began about the evolution of the Coalition beyond the pandemic. It was clear that energy existed to continue collaborating for impact, and COVID-19 was dropped from the name. It became the Nova Scotia Nonprofit Coalition, with the formation of a Working Group consisting of United Way Halifax, IONS, and CFNS. The broader group was renamed the Advisory Group and membership was expanded in the late summer and fall. The intent is for the Working Group to handle much of the heavy lifting, and for the Advisory Group to have a light touch, high impact role in steering the focus and work of the Coalition. Members are generally provincial in scope and support a network of non-profits in Nova Scotia, with openness to exceptions to ensure diversity of participation.

In 2021, a researcher was engaged by the Coalition Working Group to consider the history and evolution of the sector in NS, identify policy areas to pursue sector sustainability, and make recommendations on raising the sector's profile and working effectively with government.

IONS received funding to conduct research and develop ideas related to COVID recovery and transformation in the community impact sector. These efforts were aligned with the Coalition's work, who gathered around the topic of sector transformation.

A State of the Sector Survey in NS was also conducted through IONS, to better understand current priorities and challenges. A dashboard with data from Statistics Canada, organized by sub-sectors, was created to highlight key data about the sub-sectors of Nonprofits in NS. An accompanying searchable map of the sector was also developed and both are available on the IONS web site.

In winter 2022, a series of “Salons” were hosted with the Coalition Advisory Group, policy makers and sector influencers, to discuss ideas for change – informed by a series of articles written to provide context for the discussions, and research about history and evolution of the sector in NS.

The Coalition held gatherings in 2022 and 2023 that led to the following statement and three priority area:

Coalition Purpose Statement

We are a coalition that knows Nova Scotia is best served when community knowledge and expertise is valued by all, and present at decision-making tables. We centre community voices and act together to drive policy and champion a thriving nonprofit sector, in order to improve the quality of life of every Nova Scotian, now and in the future.

Coalition Priorities

Priority 1: Drive Public Policy and Sector Awareness

Through an equity lens, use our collective voices to increase public understanding of, and inform government policy priorities for, the nonprofit sector.

Priority 2: Champion Strategy and Investment

Engage in cross-sector collaboration to re-envision the future of the sector so it is valued for its knowledge, respected for its impact, and flourishes in innovation and resourcing.

Priority 3: Secure an Equal and Respected Seat at Decision-making Tables

Ensure sector voices and community leaders are actively participating at key committees and multi-sector tables that aim to influence our province’s future.

Invitation

The Coalition is seeking an experienced consultant to develop a strategic framework and action plan for the next three years. The goal of this process will be to build on the research and foundational work of the Advisory Group, to identify a strategic framework and develop an action plan with insight and collaboration of the Coalition members.

We are interested in individuals with significant experience working in the For-Impact (Nonprofit, not-for-profit and voluntary organizations) and government sectors, with a proven ability to develop strategic action plans, work within complexity, across partnership, and generate action through advanced facilitation skills.

It is key that the candidate works with a sense of urgency to give us a tangible plan forward. Much research, consultation and thinking has been done, and as a Coalition we want to honour that work and focus on filling gaps, and finalizing a plan with feedback from the Coalition Advisory group, rather than initiating a full consultation and engagement process. In addition, the ideal candidate will have experience working in policy and/or advocacy within the sector and understand the critical role the sector contributes to systems change.

Scope of Work

The Coalition currently represents ~30 organizations across a range of sub-sectors with varying priorities. The strategy and action plan developed must advance the Coalition's collective work and priorities, while acknowledging the complexity of needs across organizations.

An important consideration of the Coalition's work is to ensure representation of voices from diverse populations. The community 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 when engaging with contractors.

Key Activities

- Lead a strategic planning process from September 2023 – March 2024 resulting in a framework and action plan based on the Coalition purpose statement and priorities. (Note: these can be changed in language and scope, but it's important the intent is honoured and the line can be drawn from this work to the strategy & action plan).
 - Document review of the Coalition's work to date, including externally commissioned reports and relevant IONS sector research. Provide a summary of strategic themes, identifying gaps and priority conversations needed to guide the strategy development.

- Conduct select interviews with the Coalition working group and Provincial Government representatives, and others as needed to inform the plan.
- Input into the design of the Coalition Advisory Group meetings and fall retreat so it is engaging and action and decision-focused.
- Work collaboratively, including ongoing/regular communication, meetings, and reporting to the Coalition Working Group and Coalition Organizer.
- Provide guidance on government and community relations approach to seek support for Coalition's work, including for the strategic plan.
- Conduct a jurisdictional scan of policy priorities for the sector across Canada to inform the NS Coalition's strategy.
- Review of existing research from national and provincial organizations (such as Imagine Canada, Volunteer Canada, Statistics Canada, funding organizations, etc.) to help shape the strategic planning.
- Review of achievements in policy advancement and advocacy efforts in the community impact sector internationally.

Deliverables

- Strategic Framework with clear priorities and an action plan for the Coalition by March 2024. This must build off of the foundational work undertaken by the Coalition to date. The action plan must be clear and focused on the most important work we need to achieve as a Coalition over the next three years in order to fulfill the strategic plan. Recommendations on accountabilities, timelines and resourcing are needed as part of the action plan.
- Summary of the scan of policy priorities and advocacy efforts for the sector across Canada and internationally, with recommendations for the Coalition including how the recommendations connect with the action plan.
- Co-design and co-facilitate November Coalition retreat.

Proposed Budget

- The estimated budget range for this project is \$30,000 - \$40,000 CDN.

Submissions

The submitted proposal must demonstrate experience and understanding of leading a strategic planning process and mobilizing groups to action. The successful candidate will demonstrate deep understanding of the community impact and government sectors in Nova Scotia, and experience in developing strategies and action plans for public policy change.

Submission Requirements

- Cover letter and CV
- Summary of strategic development experience
- Relevant skills, experience, and qualifications, including examples of recent work
- Proposed approach and methodology, suggested timeline by activity/deliverable with associated budget
- Contact details for 3 references

Submission Deadlines

RFP Published	July 24, 2023
Deadline to submit	August 18, 2023
Review of applications (may include follow up questions)	August 28 - September 1, 2023
Consultant selected and advised	September 5, 2023
Anticipated commencement date	September 11, 2023
Project complete	March 31, 2024

Evaluation of the Proposal

- 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, specifically in mobilizing a group to action with clarity, confidence, and ease.
- Demonstrated effectiveness at working with collaborative initiatives on complex issues.
- Demonstration cultural competency and approach.
- Cost effectiveness.
- Ability to adhere to timeline.
- Demonstration of commitment to urgency and momentum of this work.
- Demonstration of ability to distill, add value, and move forward work that is joined mid-way through.

Our Team

The successful applicant will report to the Coalition Working Group and work closely with the Coalition Organizer (IONS staff member).

Organizations represented in the Coalition Working Group:

[Impact Organizations of Nova Scotia](#)

[Community Foundation of Nova Scotia](#)

[United Way Halifax](#)

Submission Information & Questions

Proposals can be submitted electronically via email, PDF preferred, with the subject line "Nonprofit Coalition Strategy RFP" to Kristen Faulkner, Coalition Organizer, at kristen@ions.ca by **Friday, August 18 by 11:59PM AST**.

Applications will be reviewed at this time. Submissions may be considered beyond this time until the right candidate has been selected.

Questions regarding this request for proposals can be directed to Kristen Faulkner at kristen@ions.ca. Daniel Holland, CEO, Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, will be the Co-Chair supporting queries for this RFP on behalf of the Coalition Working Group.

