

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



ASSOCIATION OF
NOVA SCOTIA
MUSEUMS

Land Acknowledgement and Commitment:

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums (ANSM) is located on the traditional and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory in mutual respect and gratitude.

ANSM is a members-based organization that supports museums throughout the province. Due to historical and systemic biases, museums do not currently represent the experience of all Nova Scotians. The loss of language and the colonization of cultural identity, including Mi'kmaq, African Nova Scotian, Acadian, and Gaelic communities, has resulted in incomplete and inaccurate representations of cultural groups.

Narratives relating to Indigenous peoples, Nova Scotia as the birthplace of African presence in Canada for over 400 years, including enslavement and abolition, and the role of women, people of colour, 2SLGBTQIA+ people, and recent refugees and immigrants have not been adequately represented or made accessible.

We—ANSM, museums, and the greater heritage community—are actively addressing these challenges together. ANSM is using our training, resources, tools such as NovaMuse, and programs like TRACK, to work towards the inclusion of these stories in partnership with communities. We are creating spaces and collections in which all Nova Scotians will see their reflection.

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums gratefully acknowledges the ongoing financial support of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism & Heritage.

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From top-bottom

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President's Message

Dear ANSM Members,

As I reflect on my first year as President of the Association of Nova Scotia Museums, I am more certain than ever that I am in the right place, doing the right work, alongside the right people.

The past year presented significant challenges for the museums and heritage organizations across Nova Scotia. Stepping into this leadership role during this time was both an incredible learning experience and a reminder of the power of strong sectoral leadership, cross-sector collaboration, and the importance of continued advocacy. Together, we were pushed outside of our comfort zones, had to adapt quickly, and were called upon to advocate for our work in new and visible ways.

Throughout these challenges, I have been continually inspired by the strength and passion of our sector. I've witnessed the power of collaboration and collective advocacy, and the power of a sector full of passionate professionals working together towards a common purpose. In times of uncertainty, our sector has demonstrated its unwavering commitment to preserving Nova Scotia's diverse shared history.

ANSM's core purpose is to serve our membership, but it is we who are constantly inspired by the passionate, hardworking people that we get to work alongside every day. Thank you to our membership, our funding and sector partners, our committees, our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and our staff for all of your hard work and advocacy. You not only work daily to champion our collective heritage, but you also inspire your communities to fight for this as well, and it has not gone unnoticed.

ANSM is entering a new strategic planning phase, one where we will, with the input of you, our diverse membership, work to support your efforts, while also looking for new and innovative ways to serve the sector, through the TRACK program, NovaMuse Co-op, Prescribing Museums project, our annual conference, and our awards program. In addition, we have exciting new pilot projects and partnerships that will amplify the work of our membership on a national scale.

The Association's accomplishments this year are a direct reflection of the resilience, dedication, and talent of our exceptional staff team. My sincere thanks to Devin Casario, Karin Kierstead, Alyssa Giles, Emilie Surette, our support staff, and interns, who consistently respond to member feedback, embrace innovative approaches, and ensure that ANSM's programs and services remain relevant, responsive, and engaging.

I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to our Board of Directors, working groups, and committees for their time, expertise, and steadfast commitment to strengthening Nova Scotia's museum sector. Their leadership, insight, and willingness to lend their voices to important conversations have been instrumental in advancing our shared priorities and ensuring that ANSM remains a strong advocate for our members. Special thanks to past president Katie Tanner for her invaluable support and mentorship this year as I navigated this new role.

We are grateful for the continued support of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage, the Museums Assistance Program at Canadian Heritage, Halifax Regional Municipality, and Support4Culture. Their partnership and investment help make our work possible.

As we look ahead, the challenges facing museums—from sustainability and workplace pressures to funding and relevance in a rapidly changing world—will require all of us to remain engaged and united. I encourage our members to continue sharing their stories, participating in advocacy efforts, and championing the value of museums in their communities. Together, we can ensure that Nova Scotia's museums continue to preserve our heritage, inspire learning, and enrich the lives of future generations.

Wishing you all a fruitful summer season and a successful year,



Tegan Rowlings
ANSM President



Executive Director's Message

Dear Valued ANSM Members,

Please accept my sincere thanks for your exceptional work in collecting, preserving, interpreting, and presenting Nova Scotia's rich and vibrant heritage and history. Your commitment and dedication to the museum sector have been especially evident during a period of extreme financial and operational pressures. While we have achieved many shared successes, the past year has also presented significant challenges, including several museum closures and funding reductions affecting institutions across the province.

Over the past year, ANSM expanded its membership and continued to deliver its core services at a high standard, while also offering specialized training and project-based initiatives. These included the BC HERN disaster planning workshop in Truro and the Dr. Ligoure project, delivered in partnership with the Black Cultural Centre of Nova Scotia, Africville Museum, and Loyalist Connections. ANSM also partnered with the Council of Nova Scotia Archives and the Nova Scotia Library Association to host the highly successful 2025 LAMNS joint conference in Halifax, which welcomed more than 250 registered attendees. We continued work on Phase II of Prescribing Museums and look forward to launching a pilot program in 2026. Finally, we engaged Sheri Hodds of Plum Group to facilitate the development of our new strategic plan.



Photo by Meghan Tansey Whitton

This past winter, shortly after the provincial budget was announced, ANSM participated in an unprecedented advocacy campaign alongside dozens of cultural organizations across the province to ensure our collective concerns were heard. I am deeply proud of our members, staff, and board for coming together in a historic moment of unity and solidarity. We will continue to advocate at all levels of government and through public engagement to address these challenges, while advancing targeted training initiatives and identifying revenue-generating opportunities beyond government funding. I would like to acknowledge our talented and dedicated staff for their tireless efforts in serving the sector, especially in a time of uncertainty and upheaval. A huge thank you to Karin Kierstead (Programs Manager), Alyssa Giles (Museum Services Coordinator), and Emilie Surette (Programming and Outreach Coordinator).

Lastly, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the ANSM Board of Directors for generously volunteering their time in service to the sector and for their contributions through working groups and committees. I would also like to extend special recognition to outgoing board members Katie Tanner and Joanne Boudreau. Both of you have provided invaluable support and guidance throughout my journey at ANSM. Your deep commitment to the organization has made a lasting impact, and your contributions will continue to be reflected in ANSM's work for years to come.

As many of you have recently opened, or are preparing to open, your museums for the summer season, I extend my best wishes for a successful year ahead. On behalf of ANSM, I reaffirm our commitment to delivering services and programs of the highest standard in the coming year and beyond.

In Solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Devin Casario'.

Devin Casario
Executive Director

Association of Nova Scotia Museums

Our Purpose: To nurture excellence in and champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia.

Our Vision: ANSM is a vibrant not-for-profit organization led by our members. We are a national leader in the museum community that collaborates with many and diverse partners to provide relevant and engaging services that strengthen museums. We celebrate that museums in Nova Scotia are ever-changing. They reflect and are actively engaged in their communities, are environmentally and financially sustainable, and operate according to professional standards. Our natural and cultural history becomes inspiration for a better tomorrow.

Our Values: The following values underpin what ANSM does and how we work:

- Service - meet the needs of member museums so that we can together meet the needs of communities;
- Advocacy - act as a champion on behalf of and raise awareness about museums in Nova Scotia;
- Collaboration - engage in activities with local, provincial, national, and international partners that benefit our members and the museum sector as a whole;
- Inclusivity - recognize historical and systemic practices in museums, decolonize these practices, and work with museums and equity-deserving groups to find appropriate solutions;
- Sustainability - operate in environmentally responsible ways and work to ensure that ANSM and member museums have the resources they need to serve their communities.

ANSM Museum Definition: Museums are public institutions in the service of society and its development, with a shared responsibility to collect, preserve and communicate knowledge. They strive to be safe spaces that provide access to information and foster opportunities for critical thinking, learning, dialogue, collaboration and social action.

Members

As of March 31, 2026, the Association has 136 Members. Of this, 115 are Institutional Members, and 59 of whom are part of the NovaMuse Co-operative. Members are involved with the Association in a variety of ways, including serving as board and committee members, course participants and instructors, conference planners and presenters, as well as project partners.

Honourary Members

Individuals who have made exceptional contributions to the Association and the Museums of Nova Scotia:

Gary Selig
Eric Ruff
Wilma Stewart-White

In Memoriam

ANSM would like to recognize the loss of the following members of the Nova Scotia heritage community.

[Tom Atwell, 1978-2025](#)

Volunteer, Museum of Industry

[Michael Boulton, 1948-2025](#)

Volunteer, Colchester Historeum

[David Flemming, 1945-2025](#)

Former Director, Maritime Museum of the Atlantic

[Yvonne Fox, 1942-2025](#)

Former Curator, Volunteer, Strait Area Museum

[Terry MacDonald, 1949-2025](#)

Curator, Inverness Miners Museum

[Darryl MacKenzie, 1962-2026](#)

Curator/Director, Cumberland County Museum

[Carol Nauss, 1942-2025](#)

President, Lordly House Museum

Leadership

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums is led by its Board of Directors. This governance body is comprised of members elected by the ANSM membership at the Annual General Meeting. The Board is accountable to the membership and is collectively responsible for the governance of the Association. It is responsible for shaping organizational policy and ensuring its implementation. The Board identified the following priorities for 2025-26:

- Continued implementation of ANSM Strategic Plan 2023-2026
- The creation of a new 5-year strategic plan
- TRACK, NovaMuse Co-operative and related activity continue as core programs, including the Unlocking Community Museum Collections Initiative
- Successful execution of the 2025 LAMNS Conference in Halifax, NS
- Broadening advocacy work
- Financial Sustainability, increasing operating reserve
- Strengthening partnerships with our stakeholders



Strategic Plan 2023-2025

The current strategic plan was developed in Fall-Winter 2022-23, and was presented at the June 2023 AGM. The plan will support ANSM's operations until the new plan is completed in 2026. The plan incorporates the following key issues: Transition, Realistic Expectations, and EDIA.

The strategic goals focus on four key areas:

Member Services

Building Capacity

Bridging

Financial

The full plan is located on the [ANSM website](#). The ANSM Staff and Board of Directors continues to make extensive progress on the goals set forth in the plan. The current plan will be extended as we work on the new strategic plan (2027-2032), estimated to be completed by December, 2026.

Board of Directors 2024/2025

President/Director at Large: Tegan Rowlings – 2025-2027
Vice President/Director at Large: Samantha Crowell – 2025-2027
Treasurer/Director at Large: Joanne Boudreau – 2024-2026
Secretary/Director at Large: Katie Tanner – 2025-2027
Cape Breton Regional Director: Angie MacIsaac – 2026
Southwest Regional Director: Andrea Davis – 2024-2026
Northwest Regional Director: Deborah Poole – 2025-2026
Central Regional Director: Barry Rodenhiser – 2025-2027
Director at Large: Heather Stevens – 2025-2027

Staff

[Staff](#) implement the Association's mandate to serve its members through evaluation, training, outreach, and networking activities. They regularly attend regional meetings, events, exhibitions and programs, meetings, and planning sessions. They provide province-wide programs and services, including site visits, consultations, and workshops.

2025-2026 Staff:

Devin Casario, Executive Director
Karin Kierstead, Programs Manager
Alyssa Giles, Museum Services Coordinator
Emilie Surette, Programming and Outreach Assistant



Interns and Practicums:

Emilie Surette (Centennial College - April 2025)
Sophie Armstrong (Saint Mary's University - July-August 2025)
Daniel Englehutt (Saint Mary's University - January-March 2026)
Meredith Black (MacEwan University - March 2026)



Partnerships 2025-2026

Partnerships are an intrinsic part of the operations and success of ANSM programs and initiatives. In turn, the Association offers its support and resources to organizations engaged in related work. The Association partnered with the following companies and organizations in 2025-2026:

[Africville Museum](#)
[Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia](#)
[Canadian Heritage Information Network](#)
[Canadian Museums Association](#)
[Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21](#)
[Centennial College](#)
[Council of Nova Scotia Archives](#)
[Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia](#)
[Department of Canadian Heritage](#)
[Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage](#)
[Forager International](#)
[Halifax Regional Municipality](#)
[Heritage Cape Breton Connection](#)
[Know History](#)
[LAMNS \(Libraries, Archives & Museums Nova Scotia\)](#)
[Loyalist Connections Creative Society](#)
[MacEwan University](#)
[Mount Saint Vincent University](#)

[Nova Scotia Museum](#)
[Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame](#)
[Saint Mary's University](#)
[Support4Culture](#)
[Whirl-i-gig](#)

Memberships 2025 -2026

ANSM is a member of:

[Canadian Museums Association](#)
[Council of Nova Scotia Archives](#)
[Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia](#)
[Discover Halifax](#)
[Heritage Cape Breton Connection](#)
[Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia](#)

The Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (CFNS) is the umbrella organization that provides administrative and operational support for eight cultural federations (including ANSM) sharing combined office facilities and related cost share services. CFNS also provides access to a Pension & Health Benefits program for ANSM member organizations. The Executive Director of ANSM serves on the CFNS Management Committee as well as the Board of Directors.



Images by Support4Culture.



Membership

Types of ANSM Memberships

An ANSM membership is a great way to connect with the museum community in Nova Scotia. ANSM serves as a champion on behalf of museums and educates Nova Scotians about the value of sharing our province's vibrant cultural history. Being an ANSM member offers many opportunities for professional development and networking and is a way to become more involved in our museum community.

The membership year runs from June 1 to May 31.

Institutional Memberships

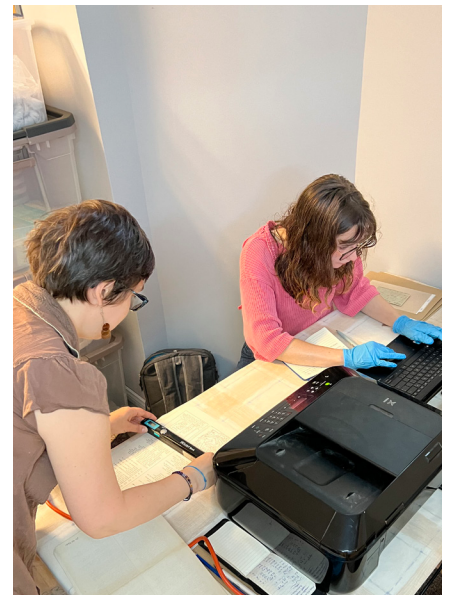
Type	Cost	Benefits
Blue Level: Museums and Societies with budgets of \$100,000 or less	\$100	• Learning event discounts for staff and board members (in-person and virtual), including workshops, symposia, conferences and more • Eligibility to become a member of the NovaMuse Co-operative (additional fees apply) • A link to your museum's website on our Members page • Eligibility to participate in the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia Benefits Program • 2 votes at the Annual General Meeting • Access to resource library • Sharing of job competitions through the ANSM Job Board and our bi-weekly e-newsletter, The Beacon
Yellow Level: Museums and Societies with budgets of \$100,001-\$250,000	\$175	
Purple Level: Museums and Societies with budgets of \$250,001 - \$500,000	\$275	
Green Level: Museums and Societies with budgets of \$500,000 or more	\$500	
Affiliate Membership For organizations that support the activities of museums in Nova Scotia	\$100	• Learning event discounts for staff and board members (in-person and virtual), including workshops, symposia, conferences and more • A link to your organization's website on our Members page • Access to ANSM's resource library • Sharing of job competitions through the ANSM Job Board and twice a year ability to share information in our bi-weekly e-newsletter, The Beacon

Individual Memberships

Type	Cost	Benefits
Individual Membership	\$50	• Learning event discounts (in-person and virtual), including workshops, symposia, conferences and more • 1 vote at the Annual General Meeting • Access to ANSM's resource library
Student Membership	\$25	
Virtual Membership	\$35	• Learning event discounts (virtual only), including workshops, symposia, conferences and more.

Corporate Memberships

Type	Cost	Benefits
Corporate Membership For businesses and organizations that are excited to benefit from visibility in, and engagement with, the museum community, while supporting the activities of museums in Nova Scotia	\$500	• Logo in our bi-weekly e-newsletter, The Beacon • Announcement with your logo in our annual report • A link to your business or organization's website on our Member Museums page • Learning event discounts (in-person and virtual), including workshops, symposia, conferences and more • Access to ANSM's resource library • Sharing of job competitions through the ANSM Job Board and our bi-weekly e-newsletter, The Beacon



Communications

Communication is a key area of activity for ANSM and we strive to keep information fresh, accurate, relevant, and useful. ANSM regularly communicates with members in a variety of ways including the Beacon e-newsletter, social media (Facebook & Instagram), and more. Our website provides information about the Association, its programs and events, job postings, organizational reports, personnel information, museological resources, lists of museum members by region with links, archives and sign-up capacity for the Beacon e-newsletter, and online registration and payment options utilizing Stripe. The website also links users to [NovaMuse.ca](https://www.novamuse.ca) as well as the ANSM and NovaMuse social media pages.

The Beacon e-newsletter is a dynamic communication tool for ANSM. It provides information about professional development opportunities, new services and resources, as well as changes to the organization. Resources link readers to projects, webinars, funding opportunities, advocacy alerts, and job postings, as well as news from ANSM members, government agencies, and heritage-related organizations. Special Beacons are dedicated newsletters that highlight particular ANSM events, news, conferences, or initiatives. Over the past year (April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026), 47 editions (including 22 Special Beacon - many pertaining to the provincial budget response) were sent to 693 subscribers.

Museums participating in the NovaMuse Co-operative and the TRACK program also receive regular communications with information about the current year's activities and key training information. Staff attend seasonal regional meetings and provide reports on ANSM activities. They also participate on committees of related heritage organizations, as well attend meetings, museums' community activities, events, and presentations. Comprehensive written reports are prepared by staff and provided to the Board of Directors by the Executive Director for each board meeting.

Website statistics (April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026)

Visits:

16,000 users (up from 10,810 users in 2024-25)
45,279 page views (down from 59,061 in 2024-25)

A small drop in page visitation for one year is not of concern. This should be monitored for trends over 3-5 years. A drop in page views could indicate that changes to navigation have made content easier to find, and users do not need to load extra pages looking for content. This could also be a result of AI search summaries, since users can now find information without clicking on webpages.

Popular Content:

26.02% of visits - ANSM Home Page
11.2% of visits - ANSM Job Board
8.99% of visits - TRACK content
3.1% of visits - ANSM Conference
3.1% of visits - Resource content

Location:

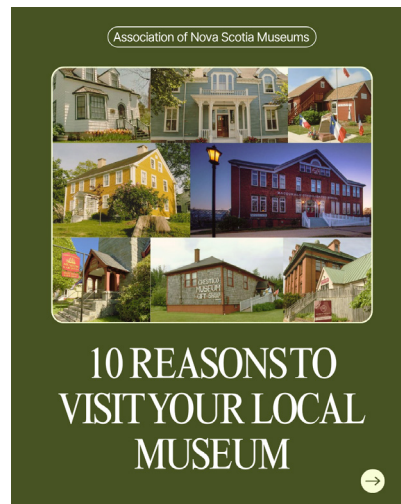
42.2% of users were from Canada
36.35% of users were from China
25.65% of users were from Singapore
9.04% of users were from the US
0.85% of users were from Trinidad and Tobago

Top visits to our site by city found that 33.44% of visits were from Lanzhou, China and 23.48% of visits were from Singapore, and 11.64% were from "location not set". This raises concern, as most of these visits were from 0-4 seconds in duration, so we assume that these are bots.



In February of 2026, the provincial government presented their draft budget for 2026-2027. This included significant cuts to the heritage and culture sectors, including cuts to the Community Museum Assistance Program and the closure of 12 Nova Scotia Museum sites. ANSM was quick to react on social media and amidst all of the confusing information about the cuts, members of the public looked to ANSM for answers. This resulted in media coverage and a surge in traffic to both ANSM's Facebook and Instagram pages.

ANSM currently has 3159 Facebook followers (up 34% since last year). ANSM continues to grow its Instagram following, currently boasting 472 Instagram followers (up 128% since last year). On Facebook, ANSM received 712,792 views over the past year. Instagram does not support historical insights, but from February 25-March 31, ANSM received 31,583 views. ANSM's Facebook also saw 12,845 interactions, up from 699 last year (1738% increase).



The NovaMuse Instagram and Facebook channels also grew this year. The Facebook page grew to 790 followers (5% increase) and grossed 21,704 views, while the Instagram channel grew to 142 followers (51% increase). ANSM is considering retiring these pages and merging the content to our ANSM channels to better invest our resources. Since the ANSM channels have seen so much growth, we believe that this will drive more engagement with NovaMuse content.

Throughout the year, ANSM primarily shared photo content across its platforms. During the wake of the 2026-2027 provincial budget, ANSM also shared many radio, video, and news articles. ANSM also grew its YouTube presence, increasing subscribers from 217 to 261. Our views were up 24% (7153 views), and hours watched were up 8% (418.1 hours). Our top three most watched videos were all [CollectiveAccess tutorials](#) (1. Adding an Object, 2. Creating and Using Sets, 3. Using autogenerated captions on video recordings).

NovaMuse Co-Operative

All NovaMuse Co-operative activities at ANSM are guided by the NovaMuse Co-operative Working Group. This group meets every 2 months, and membership comprises NovaMuse Co-operative members, ANSM Staff, a representative of Nova Scotia Museum (NSM), and a representative of the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

- There are currently 59 museums in the NovaMuse Co-op. The Co-op is an additional fee-for-service that ANSM offers to museums and includes access to and usage of the CollectiveAccess database, NovaMuse.ca, and special projects. It also includes an annual site visit or virtual check-in, training, and remote support. The NovaMuse Co-op is supported by user fees and a Museum Assistance Program grant from Canadian Heritage.
- 37 sites were visited in person and 22 were contacted virtually.

The CollectiveAccess database continues to serve museums well. As of March 31, 2026, NovaMuse Co-op members have collectively documented 401,000+ objects and linked 413,000+ images and media files, demonstrating their commitment to making museum collections accessible online.

- The CollectiveAccess manual was fully redeveloped in both English and French and now provides users with step-by-step instructions on database usage.
- 11 new YouTube video tutorials on database usage were also released to reflect the current version of the database.



NovaMuseEd resources were downloaded 2160 times over the course of the year. 55 existing learning activities on the site were republished with updates to curriculum outcomes and procedures. 13 of these resources have also been translated into French versions as well. A new bimonthly newsletter for educators and other interested individuals was launched in the fall to increase visibility of NovaMuseEd. Aside from resources added as part of the Dr. Ligoure project, 1 new learning activity and 2 new Stories were added to the site.

ANSM successfully concluded the 2025 MAP project, "Inventory Optimization for Community Museums", in the winter of 2025/2026:

- ANSM hosted 6 in-person group training sessions throughout the summer/fall. 57 people from 30 museums were in attendance. This well-exceeds the expected project outcome of 30 workers from 20 museums.
- ANSM also hosted a virtual recap session to review lessons learned over the summer. An additional 8 people received training through this session; there were 15 participants in total. 3 people requested the recording as well. Total training participation was 65 people from 39 museums.



- Several fields in CollectiveAccess were reordered and described to improve workflow and efficiency.
- Instructions on using the inventory tool, a YouTube tutorial, virtual recap slides, and additional resources were all circulated to members.

ANSM submitted the 2025 MAP application (for 2026 Program) to Canadian Heritage on November 1st, 2025:

Project Description: investigate loans in CollectiveAccess and provide training on addressing outstanding loans and using proposed new tools in the database. An initial look in the database shows that there are over 4,700 records listed as loans that are improperly organized/documented; we are also aware that many museums have more loan information on paper records. We proposed redeveloping the loans feature of the database to improve its efficiency for usage by members, including providing reminders and alerts that loans are due/overdue for return. We will also revisit the Loan Reconciliation Toolkit that ANSM developed in 2014. Members also asked for support in how to have conversations with lenders to facilitate returns.

NovaMuse Co-operative Working Group Members 2025-2026

1. Angie MacIsaac (Chair, Cape Breton), Strait Area Museum
2. Anna Cross (ex-officio, NSM), Nova Scotia Museum
3. Madeline Hoyle (Southwest), Annapolis Heritage Society
4. Darryl MacKenzie (Northeast), Cumberland County Museum and Archives (April - December 2025)
5. Kellie McIvor (ex-officio, HRM), Halifax Regional Municipality
6. Ryan McLellan (Northeast), Colchester Historeum (January - March 2026)
7. Katie Tanner (ANSM Board, Central), Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame
8. Alyssa Giles, ANSM
9. Karin Kierstead, ANSM
10. Emilie Surette, ANSM



List of NovaMuse Co-operative Museums (59) 2025-2026

1. [L'Acadie de Chezzetcook / Acadian House Museum](#)
2. [Admiral Digby Museum](#)
3. [Africville Museum](#)
4. [Age of Sail Heritage Centre](#)
5. [Annapolis Heritage Society](#)
6. [Antigonish Heritage Museum](#)
7. [Army Museum](#)
8. [Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum](#)
9. [Avon River Heritage Museum](#)
10. [Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia](#)
11. [Cape Breton Miner's Museum](#)
12. [Cape Sable Historical Society](#)
13. [Charles MacDonald Concrete House](#)
14. [Chestico Museum](#)
15. [Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum](#)
16. [Colchester Historem](#)
17. [Cumberland County Museum & Archives](#)
18. [Dartmouth Heritage Museum](#)
19. [DesBrisay Museum](#)
20. [Fort Point Museum](#)
21. [Fultz House Museum](#)
22. [Islands Museum](#)
23. [Jost House Museum](#)
24. [Kings County Museum](#)
25. [LaHave Islands Marine Museum](#)
26. [LeNoir Forge Museum](#)
27. [Les Trois Pignons Centre Culturel](#)
28. [Little White Schoolhouse Museum](#)
29. [Lordly House Museum](#)
30. [Lunenburg Academy Heritage Classroom](#)
31. [Mabou Gaelic & Historical Society / An Drochaid](#)
32. [MacDonald House Museum](#)
33. [MacDonald Museum \(Annapolis Valley\)](#)
34. [MacPhee House Museum](#)
35. [Malagash Heritage Museum](#)
36. [Margaret Fawcett Norrie Heritage Centre](#)
37. [Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre](#)
38. [Musée des Acadiens des Pubnicos](#)
39. [McCulloch Genealogy Centre](#)
40. [North Highlands Community Museum](#)
41. [Northumberland Fisheries Museum](#)
42. [Nova Scotia Sport Hall of Fame](#)
43. [Old Court House Museum](#)
44. [Old Sydney Society](#)
45. [Orangedale Railway Station Museum](#)
46. [Ottawa House by-the-Sea Museum](#)
47. [Parkdale-Maplewood Community Museum](#)
48. [Pictou County History Museum](#)
49. [Queens County Museum](#)
50. [Randall House Museum](#)
51. [Scott Manor House](#)
52. [Shelburne County Museum](#)
53. [Strait Area Museum](#)
54. [Sydney & Louisburg Railway Museum](#)
55. [Wallace and Area Museum](#)
56. [Waverley Heritage Museum](#)
57. [West Hants Historical Society](#)
58. [Whitney Pier Historical Museum](#)
59. [Yarmouth County Museum](#)

TRACK Program

Participation in TRACK is an eligibility requirement of the Community Museums Assistance Program (CMAP) and has also been adopted by the Nova Scotia Museum. A total of 119 museums were registered for TRACK, with 113 participating in some capacity in 2025. This year's focus areas—Interpretation and Communications—guided museums through needs assessments, standards-based questionnaires, and submissions for peer review and coaching. Participants also engaged in a webinar series featuring subject matter experts and received coaching tailored to their governance and community contexts.

Training

From January through August 2025, six online group training sessions were offered. Recordings were also made available for request through ANSM's website. This year's training included:

- Preparing for TRACK 2025 webinar
- Heritage Group Meetings presentations

Tuesdays on TRACK Webinar Series

- Inclusive Innovation: Using Technology to Make Museums Accessible to All with Vanessa Chatten of CANUS Museum Consulting
- Interactivity: powerful but... with Adam Fine of Fathom Studios
- July 15 - Social Media for Museums: Tackling Today's Challenges with Victoria Castle of the Nova Scotia Museum
- August 12 - Communicating with Communities with Meaghan Patterson of the Royal Alberta Museum



Resources

ANSM staff curated a diverse range of resources in direct response to the needs and requests identified by museums through the TRACK Needs Assessments. These materials—including articles, toolkits, templates, and case studies—were drawn from international, recognized leaders in museum interpretation and communications. Resources were shared through the TRACK email list to ensure timely access for all participating museums, and where relevant, specific resources were incorporated directly into individual museum reports to provide tailored guidance and support.



Assessment

The assessment component of TRACK consisted of three elements:

1. Needs Assessment

Interpretation responses identified the need for assistance and training in accessibility/assistive technology, interactivity/hands-on exhibits, evaluation techniques, and engaging visitors. Communications responses identified social media, public engagement, advocacy strategies, website renewal, and marketing strategies as the top priorities.

2. Peer Coaching

In May, ANSM issued a call for peer coaches, inviting museum professionals with expertise in Interpretation and Communications to apply for this component of TRACK. The Interpretation coaching team included Marc Belanger, Catherine Cole, and Thomas Long, while the Communications team comprised Allison Knott, Casey Smith, and Bryce Watts.

Interpretation peer coaching focused on exhibits and programs. Museums were invited to submit photographs and examples of a recent program, exhibit, or interpretive offering that the museum developed and delivered, explaining why it was developed, what community need the museum was responding to, whether it met those needs, and who was included in the process. Coaches gave their professional opinions on the museums' exhibits/programs, highlighting strong points, sharing suggestions for improvements, and encouraging museums to ask key questions in future development efforts.

Communications peer coaching invited museums to share three examples of marketing files, explaining their goals with each submission. Coaches again gave their professional opinions, celebrating strong and successful campaigns, encouraging museums to put existing branding to good use, and giving suggestions on language, graphic design, audience considerations, and free tools/resources that could help to elevate their marketing efforts.

3. Standards

Responses to the standards questionnaires were reviewed internally by ANSM staff. Individual feedback was incorporated into each museum's report, with links to helpful resources.

The Interpretation Standards questionnaire invited museums to submit their Interpretation Plan for review, and provided a checklist of elements that are usually included in such documents. Many of the submitted plans were very strong and provided excellent guidance to staff and volunteers, including almost all of the elements from the assessment questionnaire.

The Communications Standards questionnaire invited museums to submit their marketing strategy and website url. Both questions also included checklists of elements to be expected in these resources. Marketing strategies vary greatly in their level of detail, but the great majority of museums have a plan in place. Commons questions related to marketing strategies included ethical and efficient use of social media, and how to identify and engage audiences. Museum websites also vary greatly, except for the consistency within the Nova Scotia Museum family. Beyond the basics, many museums are struggling with their web presence. Accessibility improvements should be a priority for many museums, as font choices, page layout, searchability, and visibility of key information is often problematic.

Coaching

ANSM staff provided support to participating museums on an as-needed basis, and each Tuesday on TRACK webinar included a coaching component. In addition to Q&A during the live webinars, a follow-up coaching day was scheduled two weeks later, offering museums 30 minutes of one-on-one time with either the webinar facilitator or ANSM's Programs Manager.

These limited coaching slots were offered on a first-come, first-served basis:

- Inclusive Innovation - 7 museums participated in coaching
- Interactivity - 9 museums participated in coaching
- Social Media - 8 museums participated in coaching
- Communicating with Communities - 7 museums participated in coaching

Knowledge-sharing

Knowledge-sharing was woven throughout this year's training offerings and extended into other ANSM activities. At the LAMNS conference in Halifax in October, TRACK also sponsored a panel session on Accessibility in Practice. Chaired by Laura Jones of the Nova Scotia Provincial Library, Maddi Adams of the Nova Scotia Accessibility Directorate shared information about the Built Environment Accessibility Standard, and Caroline Kovesi explored the technological side of the subject through her discussion on Designing with Accessibility in Mind.

Each participating museum received an individual report in early December. These reports summarized overall participation in TRACK, identified who took part in training, provided overviews and responses to the assessment questions, shared feedback from peer coaches, and offered suggestions for strengthening the museum's Interpretation and Communications practices. Relevant resource links were included where appropriate.

Throughout the year, ANSM staff connected with museums who demonstrated excellence in Interpretation or Communications, inviting them to share their successes as case studies with their peers. Six Knowledge-Sharing sessions were added to ANSM's YouTube channel and one blog post was shared on the ANSM website.

All TRACK activities at ANSM are guided by the TRACK Working Group. This group meets regularly, and membership comprises museums enrolled in the TRACK program – both CMAP, NSM, and non-CMAP/NSM museums.

Group Members: 2025-26

- Barry Rodenhiser (Chair, Central), Atlantic Canada Aviation Museum
- Joanne Boudreau (ANSM Board), Fultz House
- Amy Coleman (ex-officio, NSM), Museum of Natural History
- Kellie McIvor (ex-officio, HRM), Halifax Regional Municipality
- Claire Roach (Cape Breton), Old Sydney Society (April - August 2025)
- Wendy Stevens (Cape Breton), Sydney & Louisburg Railway Museum (December 2025-April 2026)
- Karin Kierstead, ANSM
- Alyssa Giles, ANSM
- Emilie Surette, ANSM

Dr. Ligoure Project

ANSM partnered with Africville Museum, Black Cultural Centre for Nova Scotia, and Loyalist Connections Creative Society to create resources and share the story of Dr. Clement Courtenay Ligoure, hero of the 1917 Halifax Explosion and Halifax's first Black physician. This project was made possible with funding from The John Bragg Award. This award honours projects that highlight the stories of individuals who have shaped Atlantic Canadian history.

Beginning in the spring, partners conducted research on the doctor's life and identified key areas to begin digitization work; the 1917 Halifax Explosion, medical history from 1900-1920, No. 2 Construction Battalion, The Atlantic Advocate, and African Nova Scotian heritage. ANSM and partners visited over 22 museums and archives to digitize over 300 objects in these key areas. Our goal was to increase access to these objects and collect images that could be used in our educational resources. Additionally, more than 500 records on NovaMuse.ca were tagged with cultural affiliations, making it easier for community members to connect with their heritage.



This research also extended across larger distances digitally. Through social media, listservs and direct research requests, partners reached out to organizations in New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, New York, and Trinidad. From Museum Windsor and Amherstburg Freedom Museum in Ontario, we received some exciting newspaper clippings that shed light on Dr. Ligoure's personality and social life. We were able to identify another copy of The Atlantic Advocate housed at the New York Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

The ultimate goal of this project was to create lasting resources that strengthen understanding of African Nova Scotian heritage and ensure Dr. Ligoure's contributions are recognized on a provincial and national scale in perpetuity. These resources are all available for free and many are available in both English and French. On NovaMuse.ca, there are two bilingual "Story" resources, six bilingual curriculum-connected learning activities, and three 45 minute podcast episodes available through our [YouTube channel](#). There



is also a set of three pop-up banners available to borrow for free for ANSM members and project partners. These banners are bilingual and cover Ligoure's life story, immigration and finding community, as well as advocacy and contributions. They also have QR codes to access the learning resources developed.

The final aspect of the project was a virtual Cultural Competency Training Symposium hosted by the Black Cultural Centre. This session focused on recognizing the contributions of Black individuals, understanding diasporic identities, and working against anti-Black racism and systemic barriers.



2025 LAMNS Conference and Awards

The joint conference was co-chaired by Devin Casario, Sharon Murray (CNSA), Jeff Mercer (NSLA). The 2025 LAMNS Conference (October 2-4) was a resounding success. We had over 250 attendees, and revenues of approximately \$33,000 (split three ways between ANSM, CNSA and NSLA). ANSM issued two bursaries from the Dr. Peter Cullen Bursary fund.

The 2025 LAMNS Conference Program can be found [here](#).

2025 LAMNS Conference Committee

Conference Co-Chairs:

- Devin Casario, Executive Director, Association of Nova Scotia Museums
- Jeff Mercer, President, NSLA, and Colchester-East Hants Public Library
- Sharon Murray, Archives Advisor, Council of Nova Scotia Archives



Committee Members:

- Rosemary Barbour, Nova Scotia Archives
- Jocelyn Covert, Halifax Public Libraries
- Devon Fraser, St. Francis Xavier University Archives
- Alyssa Giles, Association of Nova Scotia Museums
- Laura Jones, Nova Scotia Public Library
- Tracey Stone, Halifax Public Libraries
- Joni Thomas, Nova Scotia Museum
- Sandra Toze, Dalhousie University, Department of Information Science
- Tegan Rowlings, Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Museum
- Kelli Woo Shue, Nova Scotia Public Library

Conference Staff:

- Alex Cherry, LAMNS Conference Coordinator
- Julia Million, LAMNS Conference Assistant
- Colleen Fraser, LAMNS Communications Assistant



Images by Support4Culture.

Awards

ANSM presented the Awards for Excellence in Museum Practices at the 2025 LAMNS Conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, for the 13th consecutive year. Awards are normally presented in two categories: Individual Contribution, and Programming by an Organization.



2024 Awards Committee:

1. Matthew Cook (Chair)
2. Devin Casario (Chair)
3. Samantha Crowell
4. Nicole Dalrymple
5. Barry Rodenhiser

This year, we gave out three awards in Excellence in Museum Practices, and Individual Contribution to the following people:

Nick Drane (Army Museum)

Paul Lalande (Museum of Industry)

Dan Conlin (Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21)

ANSM Awards are guided by the Awards committee. This group meets 2-3 times a year to review applications, and membership is comprised of ANSM Board of Directors and past-ANSM award recipients.



Prescribing Museums (Phase II)

ANSM worked with Nova Scotia Museum to explore social prescribing in conjunction with the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Phase II began in April 2025:

- Ellen McGarity-Shipley (Assistant Professor at Dalhousie University) is leading a two-year initiative to co-design a healthcare approach for Nova Scotia Primary Care that is centered on the social determinants of health (social prescribing). This initiative is being done with the support of Nova Scotia Health and the Maritime SPOR SUPPORT Unit.
- ANSM ED Devin Casario participated in monthly stakeholder meetings and advocated for the sector, positioning the museum sector as a prime candidate to serve as a pilot as the process unfolds over the next year. Recommendations from this group will be implemented by NSHA as an operational framework for social prescribing in the province. We also presented our Phase I work to the group in October 2025 and have prepared the groundwork for a sectoral pilot with six participating museums for 2026 (Phase III).
- A new Steering Committee was formed with ANSM ED Devin Casario, former ANSM ED and current NSM Manager of Rural Sites, Maggie MacIntyre, NSM Acting Director Rodney Chaisson, and ANSM Treasurer Joanne Boudreau.

NOVA SCOTIA
MUSEUM
THE FAMILY of PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS



Advocacy

Advocacy work on behalf of the sector continues to be a critical component in ANSM's mandate. Last year ANSM was actively engaged in advocacy work including but not limited to:

- Correspondence with the Minister(s) of the Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism, and Heritage, outlining our shared priorities and financial pressures faced by the sector
- Improved and streamlined communication with senior bureaucrats at CCTH
- Sustained, collaborative efforts with other Provincial and Territorial Museum Associations to lobby the federal government
- ANSM release of the [2025 Advocacy Package for Museums](#)
- 2025 LAMNS Conference Programming
- Prescribing Museums - promoting museums to representatives of the Nova Scotia Health Authority as unique spaces that enhance social wellbeing
- ANSM response to 2025-26 Provincial Budget:
- Cross-sectoral advocacy through our membership with the Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia (CFNS)

This was a critical year for the future sustainability of the sector, with the provincial government shuttering 12 provincial museum sites, along with operational and funding cuts to museums, including our organization. ANSM worked diligently on advocacy initiatives since the announcement (and subsequent passing) of 2026-2027 provincial budget, including frequent updates in the Beacon, social media channels, our official response letter, participation in rallies, and engaging in multiple media/interview requests.



2025 Advocacy Working Group Members:

Tegan Rowlings (Central, Chair), Musquodoboit Harbour Railway Museum
Samantha Crowell (Southwest), Barrington Museum Complex
Janice Kirkbright (Central), Cole Harbour Heritage Farm Museum
Angie MacIsaac (Cape Breton), Strait Area Museum
Hilda Russell (Southwest), Fisheries Museum of the Atlantic
Danielle Serratos (Northeast), Fundy Geological Museum
Heather Stevens (Northeast), Millbrook Cultural and Heritage Centre
Devin Casario, ANSM



Education, Workshops, and Training

BC Heritage Emergency Response Network Workshop

On April 29 - 30, 2025, ANSM was privileged to host the BC Heritage Emergency Response Network (HERN) who conducted a workshop on Emergency Response and Collections Salvage for Cultural Institutions. 28 members of ANSM and the Council of Nova Scotia Archives (CNSA) from 21 different organizations attended the workshop. Participants learned about the anatomy of an emergency, creating salvage kits and work spaces, documentation, health and safety, collections salvage, and more, through case studies and hands-on practice activities. They worked together in groups with other museum workers from their area to foster connections so workers know who they can turn to for help in the event of an emergency.

Saint Mary's University - Public Humanities and Heritage Capstone Course

In the winter of 2025-2026, Programs Manager Karin Kierstead delivered the Public Humanities and Heritage Capstone Course. By using museum theory and practical skills learned in the classroom, students contributed to the research and writing of the hidden stories of Nova Scotian makers, connecting them with objects in museum collections across the province through [NovaMuse.ca](https://novamuse.ca). Through this work, students advanced the goals of ANSM's Unlocking Collections Initiative.

A Look Ahead

ANSM will continue to deliver all core programs as outlined in the 2025-26 Year End Report. We also hope to deliver a successful 50th anniversary conference in Stellarton in October and implement Phase III of prescribing museums.

This is an incredibly challenging time for the sector. ANSM and its members will need to identify new revenue streams and continue to engage in advocacy efforts to withstand the financial and operational pressures brought forth by the budget cuts.

ANSM will continue its advocacy and EDIA awareness and implementation efforts.

Engagement Map 2025-2026

NovaMuse Co-op site visits



All items

Training Venues



All items

Dr. Liguere Project



All items

Staff Visits & Events



All items

Regional Meetings

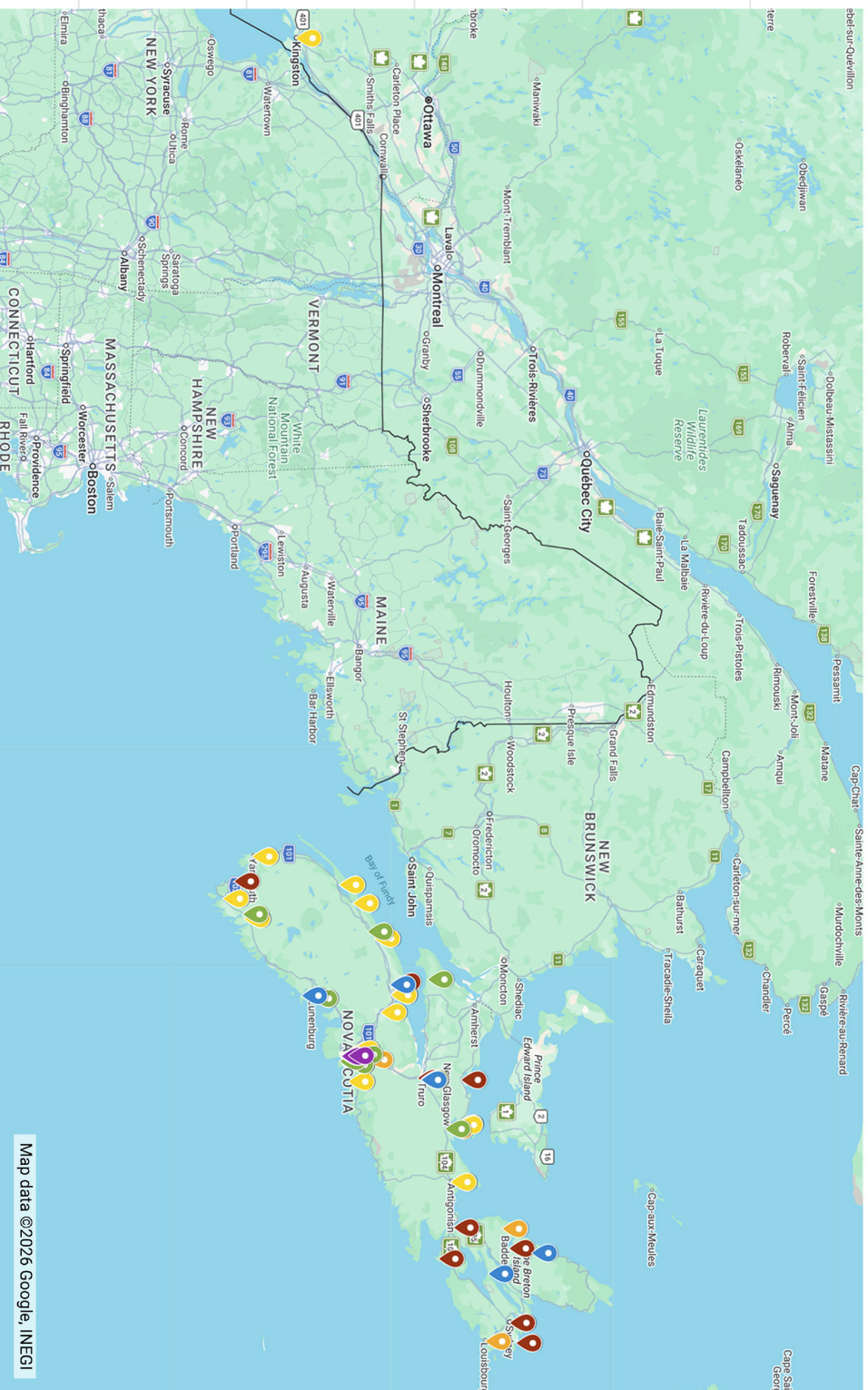


All items

Prescribing Museums



All items



Association of Nova Scotia Museums

Financial Statements

For the year ending March 31, 2026

Compilation Engagement

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- 2 *Balance Sheet*
- 3 *Statement of Income and Retained Earnings*
- 4 *Notes to Financial Statements*



Compilation Engagement Report

To: Management of Association of Nova Scotia Museums

On the basis of information provided by management, we have compiled the balance sheet and statement of income and retained earnings of Association of Nova Scotia Museums as at March 31, 2026.

In the preparation of the compiled financial statements, the basis of accounting used was cash accounting with select accruals and accounting estimates. Management is responsible for the accompanying financial information, including the accuracy and completeness of the underlying information used to compile it and the selection of the basis of accounting.

This compilation engagement is in accordance with the Canadian Standard on Related Services (CSRS 4200), which requires us to comply with relevant ethical requirements. Our responsibility is to assist management in the preparation of the financial information.

As we have prepared the financial information, we are not independent.

We have not performed an audit or a review engagement in respect of these financial statements and, accordingly, we express no assurance thereon. Readers are cautioned that these statements may not be appropriate for their purposes.

Halifax, Nova Scotia
10-Jun-26

RP Accounting & Bookkeeping Inc.

RP Accounting & Bookkeeping Inc.
Chartered Professional Accountants
100-2 Ralston Ave
Dartmouth, NS B3B 1H7
Telephone: 902-499-8718

Association of Nova Scotia Museums
Balance Sheet
As at March 31, 2026

	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Assets		
Current Assets		
Cash and deposits	344,449	280,686
Accounts Receivable	6,292	12,275
HST Receivable	(333)	4,271
Prepays and deposits	633	4,443
	\$ 351,042	\$ 301,675
Total Assets	\$ 351,042	\$ 301,675
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	55,390	14,337
Deferred revenue	56,009	81,676
	\$ 111,399	\$ 96,013
Total Liabilities	\$ 111,399	\$ 96,013
Shareholder's Equity		
Surplus		
Unrestricted	189,990	156,009
Restricted	49,653	49,653
	\$ 239,643	\$ 205,662
Total Shareholder's Equity	\$ 239,643	\$ 205,662
Total Liabilities & Shareholder's Equity	\$ 351,042	\$ 301,675

On Behalf of the Board

Tegan Rowlings

Shane Frailman

Director

Director

Association of Nova Scotia Museums
Statement of Income and Retained Earnings
For the year ending March 31, 2026

	YTD 2026	YTD 2025
Revenues		
Public funding		
Department of Communities, Culture & Heritage	115,000	115,000
Province of Nova Scotia - TRACK program	100,000	100,000
Projects Grants	221,689	69,292
MAP Training Grant	43,000	42,000
Conference Sponsorship	45,900	37,109
Lottery	6,250	6,250
	<u>531,839</u>	<u>369,651</u>
Earned Revenue		
Conference/Workshops	19,724	28,601
Memberships	18,930	17,421
NovaMuse Co-op Fee for Service	22,400	14,930
Donation and Sponsorship (incl. Conference Sponsorships)	11,945	10,468
Other Income	4,098	1,200
Interest Income	149	147
	<u>77,246</u>	<u>72,767</u>
Total Revenue	\$ 609,085	\$ 442,418
Expenditures		
Leadership & Support Services		
Salaries and benefits	273,417	239,953
Travel and meals	2,717	3,395
Strategic Planning Costs	669	-
Board Meetings	3,222	290
Professional fees	10,549	9,363
Professional development	1,513	6,062
Telephone and internet	2,206	2,802
Bank charges	1,712	1,986
Office supplies and expenses	1,463	1,797
Membership and fees	2,869	1,551
Directors and officers insurance	789	830
Other admin expenses	725	661
AGM	300	268
Postage and delivery	186	192
Program expenditures		
TRACK Program	14,525	15,050
Conference Expenses	86,054	74,777
NovaMuse Co-op	17,020	15,469
Dr. Ligoure Project	9,598	-
CHIN Project	143,358	-
Insurance	1,712	1,738
ANSM Conference Bursary	500	-
Total Expenditures:	\$ 575,104	\$ 376,184
Net Income	\$ 33,981	\$ 66,234
Retained Earnings, BEGINNING OF PERIOD	\$ 156,009	\$ 89,775
Retained Earnings, END OF PERIOD	\$ 189,990	\$ 156,009

Association of Nova Scotia Museums

Notes to Financial Statements

For the year ending March 31, 2026

1 Purpose of the Organization

The Association of Nova Scotia Museums ("ANSM") was incorporated under the Nova Scotia Societies Act and its mandate is working in partnership with museums, communities and supporters, to:

- ☐ Encourage the development of professional best practices in Nova Scotia's museums
- ☐ Educate Nova Scotians about the value of museums and Nova Scotian stories
- ☐ Act as a champion on behalf of museums in Nova Scotia

ANSM is a not-for-profit organization and is a registered charity under the Income Tax Act.

2 Basis of Accounting

The preparation of financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to use estimates and accruals that may impact the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and disclosure of contingencies at the date of the financial statements and the reported amount of revenue and expenses during the reporting period.

3 Significant Accounting Policies

ANSM has adopted the policy of expensing all capital assets in the year of acquisitions. ANSM owns various office furniture equipment and computer equipment which are not recorded as capital assets.

ANSM follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions. Contributions are recognized as revenue in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Contributions relating to future programs are shown as deferred contributions on the balance sheet and recognized as revenue when the related expenses are incurred.

Undesignated contributions, membership fees, workshop income, and donations are recognized as revenue when received.

4 Economic Dependence

ANSM is dependent on funds received from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage for continuation of its operations.

5 Deferred Revenue

The following contributions were received in the current fiscal year which relate to programs and activities continuing into the next fiscal year:

	2026	2025
Support4Culture Pro	14,600	-
Dr. Ligoure Project	11,388	-
Prescribing Museums	10,000	-
Support for Conference	15,520	-
Conference Bursary	4,500	-
Health Benefits Study	-	45,276
Support for LAMNS Conference	-	14,900
Colchester East Hants Public Library	-	10,000
Training Workshop	-	10,000
CDN Online giving Foundation	-	1,500
	56,009	81,676

6 Related Party Transactions

The Cultural Federations of Nova Scotia ("CFNS") provides premises to ANSM on a rent-free basis, subject to a charge for any operating deficit of the CFNS. In addition, ANSM purchases certain shared services from the CFNS on a cost recovery basis.