



**NOVA SCOTIA TALENT TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN  
2014 to 2016**

Developed in the Fall of 2013, by the Board of Directors and Staff of the Nova Scotia Talent Trust, with the assistance of Barbara Richman.

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## Overview of Process

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust Board of Directors requested assistance in developing a strategic plan to guide the organization for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016. This is the third three-year plan created by the organization's Board and staff.

Strategic Arts Management provided the services of Barbara Richman to facilitate this work, which began in September of 2013 and was completed in January, 2014.

The process included:

- A start-up meeting with executive members of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director
- An initial research and discovery phase that included:
  - A review of previous plans and resource materials supplied by staff
  - Internal and external interviews to explore opportunities and challenges facing the Nova Scotia Talent Trust;
- A full day facilitated session with the Board of Directors and professional staff;
- Submission of an interim report that detailed the work of the session, including:
  - Environmental scan
  - Brief history and identification of current position
  - Revised Foundation Statements
  - Identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges
  - Identification of key issues organized thematically
  - A brief introduction to fundraising
- Submission of a draft strategic plan;
- Board and staff review of the draft strategic plan with the facilitator;
- Modifications and submission of the final plan for approval by the Board of Directors.

The goal of this process was to develop strategic directions and objectives with clear actions to support organizational growth.

## Brief History (adapted and revised from the 2011-2013 Strategic Plan)

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust (NSTT) is unique in Canada. It is the only funding organization dedicated to the support and recognition of emerging artists, at formative stages, who want to pursue a professional career in the arts. The NSTT invests today in the artists of the future.

Founded in May 1944, the Nova Scotia Talent Trust was registered under the Companies Act as “Limited By Guarantee” and was led by a group including the Mayor of Halifax, the president of the Halifax Ladies Musical Club, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, and Provincial government representatives.

The first recipient was the contralto Portia White. Between 1944 and 1947, Portia White received a generous annual scholarship of \$5,000 from the Halifax Ladies’ Musical Club. This crucial support allowed her to develop into an internationally acclaimed concert singer. From this community initiative, the NSTT evolved. Although it originally focused on Music recipients, by 1957 scholarships in Dance and Theatre were awarded, and additional disciplines have been added over time.

Scholarships are awarded twice a year. In addition, a number of special awards recognize exceptional talent and achievements. Since 1944, the NSTT has awarded over \$1.9 million dollars in scholarships to gifted Nova Scotians.

Today the Nova Scotia Talent Trust is a not-for-profit society with an independent Board of Directors. A selection committee of professional artists drawn from many disciplines volunteer their time, review applications and select scholarship recipients. The rigorous professional assessment process is a significant endorsement of a recipient’s potential and encourages emerging artists to develop lifelong careers in the arts.

Since the first scholarship to Portia White, seventy years ago, the financial support provided by the NSTT has not kept pace with inflation and increased tuition fees. Today the scholarships average between \$500 and \$1,500, yet access to professional training in the arts can cost more than \$40,000 per year. In the spirit of the original supporters of Portia White, the NSTT is committed to increasing its scholarships to our communities’ emerging artists.

## Foundation Statements

### Vision

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust ensures that gifted Nova Scotians, with potential for artistic excellence, are recognized, nurtured, celebrated and supported as they develop their talents in pursuit of professional careers in the arts.

### Mission

To enrich the future of Nova Scotia's vibrant cultural life by assisting tomorrow's artists today.

### Mandate

The Nova Scotia Talent Trust is mandated to:

- Provide scholarships to support education and training for Nova Scotians from all artistic disciplines who exhibit potential for excellence as they study for professional careers in the arts;
- To provide awards that recognize exceptional talent and potential in artists who are studying for professional careers in the arts;
- To promote recipients of Nova Scotia Talent Trust funding;
- To advocate and raise profile for support of Nova Scotians who are studying for professional careers in the arts;
- Through our application process to mentor emerging talent in the processes for accessing funding and support;
- To validate career potential and provide opportunities for professional networking;
- To raise the profile of our work and funds to achieve our goals.

Values

We value:

***Diversity*** - We cherish and respect personal, family and cultural differences;

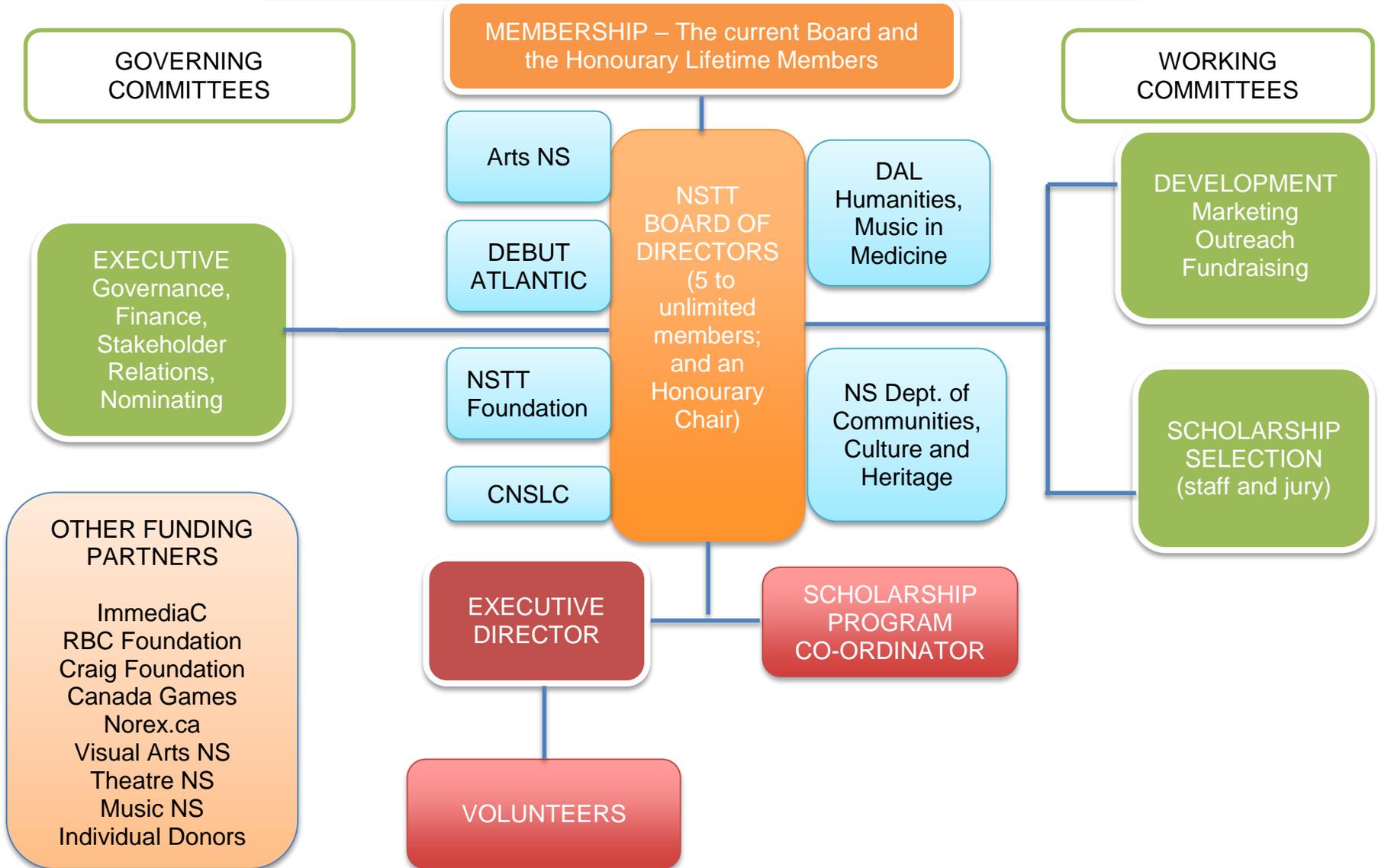
***Integrity*** - We aspire to the highest ethical standards in all that we do;

***Impartiality*** - We are committed to impartial and fair adjudication based in breadth of knowledge and careful process;

***Leadership*** - We strive to engage and involve others with our vision;

***Excellence*** - We aspire to excellence in all we do and celebrate the excellence of the artists we support.

Stakeholders include: Funders and donors; past, current and future artistic beneficiaries; past and current jurors; past, current and future award and scholarship recipients; parents of recipients; applicants; past and current Board



**1. Governance and Planning:  
Strengthen governance to support organizational stability.**

1. Strengthen Board membership
2. Strengthen Board leadership
3. Activate Board processes
4. Review and revise Foundation documents

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Add members to the Board from diverse communities; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>2. Recruit Board members with capacity to assist in fundraising initiatives; <i>(Executive and Development Committees)</i></li> <li>3. Consider the goals of the organization going forward and additionally recruit to support those initiatives; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>4. Review policy re Board terms of office and revise if necessary to ensure both continuity and rejuvenation; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>5. Identify internal potential for Board leadership and additionally recruit to ensure long term succession; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>6. Set process to define tasks, set timelines, and ensure reporting for work delegated to individuals and committees; <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> <li>7. Review the Policy Manual and update as required. <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to add members to the Board from diverse communities; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>2. Continue to recruit Board members with capacity to assist in fundraising initiatives; <i>(Executive and Development Committees)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to consider the goals of the organization going forward and additionally recruit to support those initiatives; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>4. Review and revise foundation statements; <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> <li>5. Review the definition of Honourary Directors and any policies that relate to their powers and activity. Revise as appropriate; <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> <li>6. Continue to identify potential for Board leadership and additionally recruit to ensure long-term succession. <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to add members to the Board from diverse communities; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>2. Continue to recruit Board members with capacity to assist in fundraising initiatives; <i>(Executive and Development Committees)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to consider the goals of the organization going forward and additionally recruit to support those initiatives; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>4. Continue to identify potential for Board leadership and additionally recruit to ensure long term succession; <i>(Executive Committee)</i></li> <li>5. Review the policy manual and update as required. <i>(Executive Committee and Board)</i></li> <li>6. Develop a new Strategic Plan for 2017-2019. <i>(Executive Committee, Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>

**2. Finance:  
Improve financial management to strengthen allocation of resources.**

1. Ensure balanced revenue and expense
2. Improve ratio of administrative to program expenditure
3. Anticipate and plan for risk factors
4. Double the average scholarship amount

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commit to balanced budgeting; <i>(Board)</i></li> <li>2. Work towards doubling the annual scholarship amount through fundraising and other revenue generation; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>3. Research and explore opportunities for reducing operating expenditures; <i>(Executive Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>4. Research risk around facility expense and develop a risk management plan. <i>(Executive Committee and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain the commitment to balanced budgeting; <i>(Board)</i></li> <li>2. Implement saving strategies; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to work towards doubling the annual scholarship amount. <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Maintain the commitment to balanced budgeting. <i>(Board)</i></li> <li>2. Continue to implement saving strategies. <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to work towards doubling the annual scholarship amount. <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> </ol>

**3. Community Engagement, Advocacy and Communications:  
Build relationships to support mission and vision**

1. Develop an advocacy, communication and outreach plan
2. Make brand, materials and messaging more contemporary
3. Increase awareness in the general public
4. Advocate with government(s) and Arts Nova Scotia

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Recruit volunteer(s) to help develop outreach, communications, and advocacy plans; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Research new website options and make a plan for implementation; <i>(Development Committee and Executive Director)</i></li> <li>3. Explore ways to contemporize messaging and materials; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>4. Implement the Goodwill Ambassador program; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>5. Staff and Board to advocate and encourage recognition of NSTT. <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the outreach, communications and advocacy plans; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Implement new website build and content; <i>(Development Committee and Executive Director)</i></li> <li>3. Implement more contemporary materials, messaging and use of media; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>4. Develop and implement a plan for parent ambassadors; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>5. Staff and Board to continue to advocate and encourage recognition of NSTT. <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the outreach, communications and advocacy plans; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Continue to implement more contemporary materials, messaging and use of media; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Maintain and update the website; <i>Executive Director)</i></li> <li>4. Staff and Board to continue to advocate and encourage recognition of NSTT. <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>

**4. Operations and Human Resources:  
Improve efficiency of operations to reduce demands on staff, juries and Board**

1. Streamline processes for efficiency, savings and improved information management
2. Review jury policies and processes
3. Review and address human resource needs

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Source funding to develop an online application system; <i>(Board and Executive Director)</i></li> <li>2. Annually review application processes and content; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee and Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>3. Implement and fine tune the on-line application system and processes; <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>4. Train jury members in assessment processes and the use of the on-line system; ; <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>5. Discuss requirements for the jury to read files in advance of the jury process and set clear guidelines; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee, Scholarship Program Coordinator and Board)</i></li> <li>6. Explore ways to use Board members and volunteers effectively to support operations; recruit volunteers for discreet projects; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>7. Plan succession for staff. <i>(Executive Committee and staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research jury composition, size, process, training and meeting frequency issues; consider some electronic meeting; propose revisions for discussion; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee, Scholarship Program Coordinator and Board)</i></li> <li>2. Annually review application processes and content; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee and Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>3. Maintain and fine tune the on-line application system and processes. <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>4. Train jury members in assessment processes and the use of the on-line system; <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>5. Implement succession planning for staff if required; <i>(Executive Committee and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement changes to jury policy and process if required; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee and Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>2. Annually review application processes and content; <i>(Scholarship Selection Committee and Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>3. Maintain and fine tune the on-line application system and processes; <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>4. Train jury members in assessment processes and the use of the on-line system. <i>(Scholarship Program Coordinator)</i></li> <li>5. Implement succession planning for staff if required; <i>(Executive Committee and Staff)</i></li> </ol>

**5 Programming:  
Advance equity in programming and improve jury process**

1. Explore better discipline balance in scholarship distribution
2. Clarify program parameters and guidelines for the jury
3. Plan to strengthen awards programming

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explore and discuss the concept of proportional discipline representation for funding and set guidelines for the juries; <i>(Executive Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee Representative and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Analyze statistics and explore the concept of scholarship minimums as applied differentially to Fall and Spring juries; <i>(Executive Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee Representative and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Move toward doubling the value of scholarship amounts; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>4. Clarify guidelines and parameters for jury process and decision-making. <i>(Executive Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee Representative, Scholarship Selection Committee and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Refine the plan for the development of the award system including discipline balance and development of other forms of award such as mentorship or workshop training opportunities; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Annually review statistical analysis of scholarships and awards and revise guidelines for juries as required. <i>(Executive Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee Representative and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to move toward doubling the value of scholarship amounts; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Research options for mentorship and workshop training for award and scholarship recipients and begin to implement as appropriate; <i>(Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Annually review statistical analysis of scholarships and awards and revise guidelines for juries as required. <i>(Executive Committee, Scholarship Selection Committee Representative and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to move toward doubling the value of scholarship amounts; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> </ol>

**6. Generate Revenue to support programming and reduce risk**

1. Develop revenue generation capacity and skills in Board and staff;
2. Plan for effective revenue generation;
3. Work with the NSTT Foundation to develop a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary campaign and campaign team;
4. Ensure recognition, thanking, and cultivation of existing and new donors and funders;
5. Explore the possibility of new provincial arts foundation matching opportunities;

2014	2015	2016
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish fundraising training for staff and for NSTT and Foundation Boards; <i>(NSTT Board, NSTT Foundation Board and Staff)</i></li> <li>2. Develop a recognition and thanking event; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Develop a fundraising plan and begin its implementation; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>4. Start recruiting the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign team; <i>(Development Committee and Board)</i></li> <li>5. Research Dept. of Canadian Heritage anniversary funding opportunities. <i>(Development Committee, Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Implement the fundraising plan; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>2. Research potential for new provincial arts foundation matching grants. <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>3. Continue to hold a recognition and thanking event; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>4. 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary campaign team begins its work. <i>(Development Committee, Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue implementation of the fundraising plan; <i>(Development Committee)</i></li> <li>2. Continue to hold a recognition and thanking event; <i>(Development Committee and Staff)</i></li> <li>3. Continue work on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Campaign. <i>(Development Committee, Board and Staff)</i></li> </ol>