

# ANNUAL IDEA IMPACT REPORT

*Our Commitment to Inclusion,  
Diversity, Equity & Accessibility  
(IDEA)*



## Land and Community Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we live and work in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded and ancestral territory of the Mi'kmaq People, who have lived on this land for over 11,000 years.

We also honour the enduring presence, traditions, and contributions of African Nova Scotians—one of the oldest Black communities in Canada, with more than 400 years of history rooted in this region.

This acknowledgement is offered in the spirit of respect, reconciliation, and recognition of the ongoing work needed to address colonial and systemic injustices.



**Fiona Valverde (she/her)**  
**AFP Nova Scotia President**

Fiona is a first-generation immigrant of Spanish and German ancestry. She recognizes her place as a settler in Mi'kma'ki and is committed to the ongoing work of truth and reconciliation. As President of AFP Nova Scotia, Fiona brings both personal and professional dedication to advancing equity and justice in the philanthropic sector.

For Fiona, this is an ongoing journey of listening, learning, and meaningful action. She continues to reflect on how Indigenous histories and present-day realities intersect with broader systems of racism and oppression, and how leadership can be grounded in humility, relationship, and responsibility.

# PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

As I reflect on our chapter's journey over the past year, I'm struck by the collective momentum building across our community. There is a growing, genuine willingness—from our board, members, non-members, and partners — to create a sector where everyone feels a true sense of belonging.

This path hasn't always been straightforward. Alongside the high points worth celebrating, there have also been moments of challenge and uncertainty. Rebuilding trust and making meaningful, systemic change takes time — and it's often complex and uncomfortable. What I've been learning is that discomfort is a signal we're doing real work, not just checking boxes. If you're reading this and feeling a little weary, please know you're not alone. We're in this together.

This year's report reflects the progress we've made: new programming, stronger partnerships, and growing spaces for dialogue and learning. These efforts are all part of our broader commitment to supporting fundraisers across our chapter — and to doing so with humility, respect, and intention.

To our dedicated board, committee members, sponsors, and volunteers — thank you. Your service, energy, and belief in this work make all of this possible. I'm deeply grateful for your time, your leadership, and your unwavering commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive sector.

There's much to be hopeful about. The plans we've set in motion and the engagement we continue to receive from members and non-members alike show that we're moving in the right direction. Your voices matter, and your participation helps shape our collective future. Together, we are stronger — and I can't wait to see what we'll achieve next.

With gratitude,

**FIONA VALVERDE**

**PRESIDENT, AFP NOVA SCOTIA**



# OUR COMMITMENT, IN CONTEXT

At AFP Nova Scotia, our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA) is not just a guiding principle—it is an active practice, embedded in how we lead, listen, learn, and show up for one another.

Over the past year, our board, members, and partners have been engaged in advancing these efforts. We are learning, unlearning, and continually reflecting on what it means to live our values in action—not only in our sector, but in our communities.

We are proud to share our 2025 update on the IDEA journey we've been walking together.

## WE REMAIN GROUNDED IN OUR GUIDING STATEMENT:

*AFP Nova Scotia is grounded in the core principles of inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility. We are committed to listen with humility, speak with respect, and engage with intention—in our work, across our sector, and for our communities.*



# OUR PLAN:

## *Embedding IDEA with Intention*

We are shifting from planning to active implementation, building IDEA into the fabric of our chapter's work across all portfolios. This plan is grounded in our three-pillar framework: Learn. Lead. Leverage.

And through this plan, we have set out to:

	LEARN	LEAD	LEVERAGE
Read more: <a href="#">IDEA Pathway</a>	Building awareness, expanding knowledge, and deepening understanding of IDEA.	Modelling inclusive governance, accountable leadership, and authentic commitment to IDEA.	Engaging communities, building partnerships, and advancing systemic change.
GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver accessible, relevant, and ongoing IDEA education for members and sector partners.</li> <li>• Create reflective spaces for learning, unlearning, and critical dialogue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embed IDEA values into governance structures and leadership practices.</li> <li>• Ensure the board reflects and serves the diversity of our membership and communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actively engage equity-seeking organizations and individuals in shaping AFP NS.</li> <li>• Partner across regions and nationally to elevate IDEA as a shared sector priority.</li> </ul>
KEY ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and implement an AFP IDEA Learning Strategy, aligning with member and sector needs.</li> <li>• Deliver IDEA education opportunities: webinars, workshops (e.g., reconciliation, unconscious bias, psychological safety), peer-learning groups.</li> <li>• Promote and socialize existing AFP learning offerings (Global, Canada, NS) through accessible channels and consistent messaging.</li> <li>• Facilitate dialogues and discussion spaces for members (e.g., IDEA Coffee Chats, Member Forums, Story Circles).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finalize and promote the AFP NS Statement of Commitment to IDEA.</li> <li>• Conduct and analyze the IDEA Sentiment &amp; Demographic Survey to better understand dimensions of representation.</li> <li>• Develop and execute a Representation Plan to address gaps on the board and leadership teams.</li> <li>• Review all policies and procedures with an equity lens, identify gaps, and revise accordingly.</li> <li>• Develop IDEA messaging and communications strategy to consistently reinforce AFP's position and progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a Community Connection Strategy to build authentic relationships with equity-seeking organizations and leaders.</li> <li>• Explore partnerships with AFP Atlantic and AFP Canada/Global to align and amplify IDEA Pathway goals.</li> <li>• Share the Atlantic IDEA Pathway across chapters and contribute to national IDEA leadership efforts.</li> <li>• Use data and feedback to inform outreach, remove barriers to participation, and diversify programming and board pipelines.</li> </ul>



# THE PAST YEAR:

## *Doing the Work, Together*

### STARTING FROM WITHIN

As a board, we began by turning inward—acknowledging that each of us came to this work from different lived experiences, stages of understanding, and perspectives. With guidance from an IDEA consultant **April Howe**, founder and CEO of Crayon Strategies, we prioritized alignment, relationship-building, and honest reflection.

We recognized that meaningful change requires us to first understand our own biases and systemic barriers within our structures, even in a volunteer-led organization.



**April Howe**, founder and CEO of Crayon Strategies

### LISTENING TO OUR MEMBERS

Informed by the findings of our 2024 Membership Survey (guided by April), we heard:

- A desire for greater relationship-building and engagement
- A call for accessibility, particularly around financial barriers to membership and participation
- A need for continued trust-building, particularly from those who stepped away from AFP due to past harms or systemic issues

We received a strong response from current and former members, and we took those messages to heart. Thank you for trusting us with your experiences.

#### EDUCATION

Education was overwhelmingly identified as a priority (86% of respondents), with members requesting IDEA-aligned workshops to support both organizational goals and personal growth.

#### ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility remains a top priority, with members asking for greater clarity and integration into all programming.

#### CULTURE OF AFP NOVA SCOTIA

Organizational culture is viewed positively in terms of respect and authenticity, but there are still barriers including resistance to change and decision-making practices that need to become more collaborative and inclusive.

#### COMMUNICATION & ENGAGEMENT

Communication and engagement must evolve — members prefer shorter, more frequent digital communication and seek more spaces for connection and feedback.

# TIMELINE

## Our IDEA Journey (2023–2025)

*We believe that change is a process, not an event.*

*Here's how our chapter has moved from commitment to action—and continues to evolve.*

Opening **board nominations** with a focus on diversity and inclusion needed to be more than words or a checkbox — it was about removing barriers and inviting new voices to the table. This intentional change aimed to:

- Increase representation of underrepresented groups on our board
- Make the nomination process more accessible and transparent
- Challenge the board stereotype by actively seeking diverse perspectives
- Build a board that reflects the diversity of our membership and sector

## Spring 2023

### Public Statement of Solidarity & Commitment

- Issued a formal statement in response to publicized racism within AFP Greater Toronto Chapter
- Reaffirmed our commitment to IDEA and called for accountability
- Withdrew support from AFP GTC until reparative action is taken

## Summer 2023

### Maritime Fundraising Conference: A Turning Point

- At the Maritime Fundraising Conference (MFC), we hosted a candid, sector-wide conversation on racism and harm in our profession, led by April Howe. This moment marked the beginning of our IDEA Pathway work.
- Committed to doing our own work as a board
- Redirected funding to purchase copies of *Collecting Courage* for members
- Initiated a policy review and committed to adequately resourcing this work

## Fall 2023

### Laying the Groundwork

- Prioritized funding from the chapter and AFP Foundation grant-back to support this work
- We formed a working group of board members and volunteers to co-create our IDEA Pathway with April's guidance. Our focus: reflect, align, and activate meaningful change across the chapter.
- Internal reflection: board members assessed personal perspectives on IDEA

## Spring 2024

### Investing in and Resourcing our IDEA Pathway

- Drafted AFP Nova Scotia's guiding IDEA commitment statement
- Secured \$10,000 AFP Global grant to advance IDEA Pathway Phase 2
- Opened board nominations with a renewed focus on diversity and inclusion
- Planned public launch of IDEA Pathway and commitment statement
- Prepared to present our IDEA journey at AFP Canada's Leadership Conference

## Summer 2024

### Launching our IDEA Pathway

- Shared IDEA Pathway with members at AGM
- Embed IDEA principles in Maritime Fundraising Conference planning
- Curated diverse speakers and sessions aligned with IDEA values
- Continued to integrate IDEA across all chapter portfolios and activities

## Fall 2024

### Surveying Our Membership

- Conducted our first IDEA-focused membership survey
- Captured feedback from both current and former members
- Key themes emerged: trust, accessibility, representation, and the need for relationship-based engagement

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**Birgit Smith Burton**, CEO of AADO (African American Development Officers Network) and first African American woman to serve as Chair of the AFP Global Board

### Why Birgit

We were honoured to welcome Birgit Smith Burton as our MFC 2024 keynote speaker during her final year as Chair of the AFP Global Board — a historic role in which she became the first Black woman to lead AFP at the global level.

Birgit has long been a champion for IDEA, not just in words, but in action. Her leadership has reshaped how our sector understands equity and belonging, and her keynote offered both personal insight and sector-wide perspective at a pivotal moment in our own journey.

As we deepen our commitment to embedding IDEA across everything we do, Birgit's presence grounded our conference in the values we're working to uphold — authenticity, accountability, and transformative change.

## Fall 2024 Continued...

### MFC 2024 – Building Better Practices

Held at the Canadian Museum of Immigration at Pier 21, MFC 2024 marked continued efforts to evolve in how we plan, host, and reflect on our flagship event

#### Highlights included:

- “What’s the Big IDEA?” keynote by Birgit Smith Burton, AFP Global Board Chair and the first Black woman to hold this position, who shared stories from her leadership journey and called attention to the systemic barriers that many fundraisers still face
- A speaker lineup and session content shaped through an equity lens, highlighting lived experience and sector transformation
- Continued commitment to accessibility through venue design, registration options, and support
- Visible and practical actions that made IDEA principles felt—not just stated
- Participant feedback gathered and reviewed to inform future programming and guide planning for MFC 2025.
- Collaborated intentionally with sponsors and partners to align values and model IDEA in every aspect of delivery
- Created space for connection and reflection throughout the day, helping participants build relationships and integrate learning into their day-to-day work

We're reimagining how our board operates—not just what we do, but how we show up:

- Making space for land acknowledgements beyond a script, personal reflection, and deeper connection at meetings
- Reviewed and updated travel and bursary policies to reduce regional access barriers and support broader participation

These small shifts reflect a bigger goal: building governance practices rooted in respect, equity, and belonging.



Bernadette Hamilton Reid & H. Art Taylor, AFP ICON 2025

Thanks to funding from AFP Global, we launched Phase 2 of our IDEA Pathway — focused on embedding IDEA principles across every aspect of our chapter, from operations and governance, to education and events.

We know change takes time, and no single action solves deep-rooted barriers. Meaningful progress requires ongoing investment and resources. But these steps are critical to shifting culture and power, so fresh ideas and authentic leadership can evolve in our changing landscape.

## Winter 2025

### Embedding IDEA in Everything We Do

- Strategic Plan 2025 reinforces our commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility across all portfolios: from education and mentorship, to governance and sponsorship, and beyond.
- Shifted focus to implementation: advancing policy change, deepening relationships, and expanding access
- Celebrated our first African Nova Scotian Chamberlain Scholar, Bernadette Hamilton Reid
- Introduced an accessibility lead, Krista O'Connor, for MFC 2025—mobilizing our commitment to action, not just intention. The conference includes an IDEA ticket rate, intentional sponsor engagement, and an equity-centered speaker selection process
- Mentorship is assessing how best to meet mentors and mentees where they are — through flexible, accessible, and relationship-centered opportunities, and providing this as an entry point for those new to or exploring the fundraising sector: You do not need to be an AFP member to access mentorship. Offering Mentorship Mixers and informal connections, open to all, and designed to foster meaningful relationships, whether or not you are in a formal mentor/mentee pairing
- Education portfolio began planning a year-round calendar of learning opportunities — grounded in member feedback and guided by IDEA principles We recognize that inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility should not be confined to standalone topics; they must be woven through every session we host — felt in the format, facilitation, voices, and values

## Spring-Summer 2025

### Expanding Connections and Collaborative Learning

- Strengthened outreach by partnering with the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre to promote Indigenous-led fundraising roles
- Initiated cross-chapter collaboration with AFP New Brunswick to build a shared IDEA approach—leveraging chapter relationships to reimagine how we resource and advance our efforts, together
- Delivered in-person engagements, as well as multiple hybrid learning experiences, including our first Cape Breton-based workshop on practical stewardship, as part of our commitment to active, inclusive, and engaging education offerings

## Coming: Fall 2025

### Looking Ahead, Together

- Preparing to host BCFC Fundraising Academy, Fall 2025 - Fundamentals of Fundraising: For the first time ever, the [Black Canadian Fundraisers Collective](#) (BCFC) is delivering its B3 Fundraising Academy curriculum in person, where they will be hosting their newly developed fundraising fundamentals course from the [Delmore Buddy Daye Learning Institute](#) (DBDLI) in Halifax, Nova Scotia, on September 15, 2025



# What's Next?

We're continuing the work to:

- Make AFP Nova Scotia more inclusive, accessible, and responsive
- Center relationships in everything we do
- To learn, lead, and identify leverage points

## Learn, Lead, and Leverage:

To guide this journey, we embrace three pillars that shape how we embed IDEA in all we do. These pillars—Learn, Lead, and Leverage—are more than words; they are commitments to action, reflection, and collective impact. Together, they form the foundation of our IDEA Pathway:



### 01 — LEARN

***To foster a culture of respect and appreciation for every perspective, background, and identity.***

We acknowledge that creating a more equitable and diverse sector requires ongoing education and unlearning. Learning invites us to challenge assumptions, examine power, and stay open to new ways of thinking and doing.



### 02 — LEAD

***To be a role model for a new era of IDEA and make a felt impact on the fundraising sector.***

Leadership in IDEA is about how we show up, not just what we say. We believe leadership is collective, not top-down. By leading together, we share responsibility and power, honour diverse strengths, and co-create solutions that benefit everyone.



### 03 — LEVERAGE

***To multiply the reach and expand the impact of our IDEA initiatives.***

We know this work cannot — and should not — be done alone.

When we say *leverage*, we mean identifying the points where small (and sometimes big) shifts create meaningful change. It's about recognizing where, within our structures, relationships, and assumptions, intentional action can spark ripple effects — expanding the reach, depth, and impact of IDEA across our sector.

## Building the Future, Together

Our IDEA journey is far from over — it's a living, evolving commitment. As we continue to learn, lead, and leverage our collective strength, we invite you to join us in shaping the path ahead.

Your voice, your ideas, and your passion matter. Together, we can build a more inclusive, accessible, and vibrant fundraising community — one that reflects the diversity and values of everyone we serve.

Whether you're a longtime member, a new participant, or simply curious about how to get involved, there's a place for you here. Let's listen deeply, engage openly, and lead boldly — side by side.

Join us as we write the next chapter in AFP Nova Scotia's story.

# MEASURING IMPACT

## *Progress in Practice*

We believe accountability means making our actions visible—not just our intentions. This snapshot highlights how we’re putting IDEA into practice.

Pillar	Key Activities	Intended Outcome	Observed Results / Progress
<b>LEARN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delivered hybrid workshops, including our first in Cape Breton</li> <li>Embedded IDEA into full-year education planning</li> <li>Invited member feedback to shape learning priorities</li> <li>Integrated IDEA principles into every session—not as a topic, but a throughline</li> </ul>	Build shared understanding, challenge assumptions, and foster inclusive learning environments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased regional access to learning</li> <li>Received member input that informed 2025 programming</li> <li>Broadened reach to new participants (e.g. non-members at Cape Breton event)</li> <li>Sessions reflect IDEA through content, speakers, format</li> </ul>
<b>LEAD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reimagined board nominations: open self-nominations, community-suggested candidates</li> <li>Prioritized representation in recruitment</li> <li>Introduced accessibility lead for MFC 2025</li> <li>Redefined mentorship to be open, flexible, and member-agnostic</li> </ul>	Model values-aligned leadership and create more inclusive, transparent governance and programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chamberlain Scholar: first African Nova Scotian recipient</li> <li>Board reflects greater diversity (e.g. lived experience, regionality)</li> <li>Accessibility review and IDEA ticket pricing embedded in MFC planning</li> <li>Mentorship open to all; new informal mixers and supports launched</li> </ul>
<b>LEVERAGE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Secured \$10,000 AFP Global funding for IDEA Pathway Phase 2</li> <li>Presented AFP NS IDEA work nationally at AFP Canada Leadership Conference</li> <li>Partnered with Mi’kmawey Debert Cultural Centre to amplify Indigenous-led fundraising</li> <li>Began cross-chapter collaboration with AFP New Brunswick</li> </ul>	Multiply impact, share learnings, and build sector-wide momentum for IDEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared toolkit, strategy, and story with other chapters</li> <li>Supported recruitment for MDCC roles</li> <li>Laid groundwork for joint IDEA sessions (e.g. MFC, macroaggressions ed session)</li> <li>Expanded influence beyond chapter borders</li> </ul>



# WHAT WE'RE LEARNING:

## *Changing from the Inside Out*

Our commitment to IDEA has required more than forming a committee or offering external programming — it has asked us to turn inward. We've examined our assumptions, our structures, and the culture we shape as a chapter. This inner work — done both individually and collectively—has been reflective, sometimes uncomfortable, but always necessary.

Transformation takes time, trust, and care. It doesn't happen all at once, but through intentional, sustained practice.

Here are some of the lessons we've learned along the way:

### **We all enter this work from different starting points. We all experience IDEA differently.**

IDEA impacts each of us differently—shaped by our lived experiences, identities, and realities. We see it, feel it, and carry it in unique ways. Real progress happens when we make space for those differences—through listening, learning, and reflection, not judgment or self-protection.

### **Internal alignment matters. Internal alignment takes time.**

As we work to shift how we lead, we've prioritized shared learning to build a common understanding of what IDEA means, why it matters, and how it shows up in practice. This work isn't always easy, but it's essential. Alignment doesn't mean full agreement—it means shared responsibility.

### **This is ongoing work, not a checklist.**

We've let go of the idea that equity work can be “completed.” Instead, we've embraced iteration, feedback, and imperfection. Progress means being willing to change course when something isn't working—or when voices from our community point out what we've missed.

### **We won't always get it right—and that's part of the process.**

We are prepared to make mistakes. What matters most is how we respond: by listening, acknowledging, and adjusting. When we get it wrong, we grow.

### **IDEA touches everything.**

It's not just a workshop or a working group — it's a lens we're applying to our sponsorship models, educational programming, governance practices, board recruitment, and community partnerships. This holistic view is helping us become more intentional, inclusive, and impactful.

### **Belonging is built in relationship.**

From regional engagement to mentorship mixers, we've seen how small gestures of connection make a big impact. People want to feel seen, heard, and valued. Equity lives in the invitations we extend, the trust we nurture, and accountability we extend to one another.

### **Leadership is Temporary. Systems Are Ongoing.**

As a volunteer-led board, we acknowledge that our individual terms are temporary, but the structures we serve and shape endure. This work must outlast any one board, term, or leader.

That's why we're focused on building sustainable systems, not just delivering programming. We're creating pathways, policies, and partnerships that future boards can build on—so that the commitment to IDEA is embedded, not dependent.

### **This is long-term, iterative work.**

There is no finish line—only cycles of commitment, feedback, repair, and renewal. As one member shared: “This work isn't just about what we do. It's about who we are becoming.”

AFP NOVA SCOTIA

JUNE 2025

# With Gratitude

This report, and the progress it reflects, was made possible thanks to the generous support of AFP Global.

Their funding enabled AFP Nova Scotia to launch Phase 2 of our IDEA Pathway, deepening our work to embed inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility across all areas of our chapter: governance, education, operations, events, and beyond.

IDEA is not a separate initiative. It is the thread that connects everything we do. With AFP Global's recent support, we are moving beyond intention toward sustained action, working to ensure IDEA continues as a culture shift reflected in how we lead, learn, and grow as a community.

Thank you, AFP Global, for helping us lead with purpose — and to our members, for walking this path with heart, courage, and commitment. Together, we're building a chapter rooted in inclusion, driven by values, and guided by community.

