

SPOTLIGHT



On Social Work Regulation

The Spotlight on Social Work Regulation series is designed to promote an understanding of social work regulation and the role of the NL College of Social Workers (NLCSW). Access the full series at <https://nlcsw.ca/Spotlight on Social Work Regulation>.

What is the difference between a regulatory body, such as NLCSW, and a union?

As detailed in the first edition of the Spotlight series, the Social Workers Act is the provincial legislation which delegates authority to the NLCSW to regulate the social work profession in NL. As the regulatory body, NLCSW is expected to operate in the public interest, to ensure members of the public are receiving the services of qualified practitioners, whether those services are offered in direct or indirect practice. Maintaining a live registry of social workers who are licensed to practice social work in NL, setting practice standards, supporting continuing competency, and developing practice resources are concrete examples of NLCSW activities that are designed to advance NLCSW's public protection mandate.

The Labour Relations Act defines a union as "a local or provincial organization or association of employees, or a local or provincial branch of a national or international organization or association of employees within the province that has as one of its purposes, the regulation in the province of relations between employers and employees through collective bargaining". Unions may organize a particular section of workers (e.g. Registered Nurses Union of NL) or a cross-section of workers (e.g. Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Public and Private Employees (NAPE), Association of Allied Health Professionals (AAHP)). Some examples of union activities include negotiating conditions of employment such as wages and benefits, assisting employees with labour issues, and promoting and protecting the health and safety of employees.