



Celebrating 15 years of Mentorship in Gaelic Nova Scotia

**Bun is Bàrr Request for Expressions of Interest for Apprentices & Hosts
Ceann-latha | Deadline for Applications: Tuesday, November 12, 2024**

“Agus bheir mi fhathast gur robh an céilidh math airson aonachadh nan daoine airson an cumail ann an toileachadh agus gu robh e ‘gan cumail dlùth dha chéile ann an càirdeas agus ‘nam feòil agus ‘nan spioraid.” - Eòs Nìll Bhig, Sgeul gu Latha

“And I still maintain that the house - visits were good for bringing people together and keeping them happy and they kept them close to each other and in harmony physically and spiritually.” - Joe Neil MacNeil, Tales Until Dawn

Geàrr-iomradh | Overview

Bun is Bàrr | Root and Branch is a mentoring program managed by the Office of Gaelic Affairs, which provides Gaelic-speakers in Nova Scotia with the opportunity to work with Gaelic mentors and elders as they develop their language and cultural skills. The goal of Bun is Bàrr is to help create a new generation of Gaelic tradition bearers: those who are knowledgeable of, and steeped in, Nova Scotia's Gaelic tradition. Bun is Bàrr seeks to achieve three objectives:

- Continued transmission of Gaelic language through culture
- Re-integration of Nova Scotia Gaelic expression, such as song, music, story, tradition, custom, and dance into the social life of Gaels
- Restore collective Gaelic memory and identity

Bun is Bàrr was established in 2009 by the late Seumas Watson, Highland Village, and Frances MacEachen, formerly with Gaelic Affairs. Inspired by social learning theory, Gàidhlig aig Baile, and Dr. Leanne Hinton's work on California Indigenous Language mentorship programs that began in the 1990s, *Bun is Bàrr* aimed to give adults the o ghlùn gu glùn | knee to knee experience that would be had in a Gaelic home – everyday activities, visiting, and seachas (stories, songs, genealogies, traditions, histories, etc).

Over the years, various spinoffs of Bun is Bàrr have been offered to target intermediate learners as well.

A' Bhliadhna Seo | This Year

Am Prògram 2024/25 | The Program 2024/25

There will be three opportunities for participation in Bun is Bàrr mentorship opportunities.

1. Bun is Bàrr: Muime/Oide 's Tàilleabhach | Mentor & Apprentice
2. Bun is Bàrr: An Drochaid Eadarainn | Gaelic Transcription Program
3. Caidreabh an t-Seanchais | Seanchas Fellowship

1. Bun is Bàrr: Muime/Oide 's Tàilleabhach | Mentor & Apprentice

We will continue to have one-on-one mentorship with Nova Scotian Gaelic speakers, aig a bheil Gàidhlig o 'n ghlùin | who grew up with Gaelic, in this component of the program. A small number of apprentices will be selected and paired with mentors who they will visit regularly throughout the winter/spring of 2025. Apprentices will spend 50 (or more) hours with their mentors over a three-month period.

Apprentices at this level of the program must be fluent Gaelic speakers and will have an oral Gaelic interview as part of the selection process. Due to the limited number of places available, not everyone who applies will be accepted into this part of the program.

Apprentices must have access to reliable transportation, have a strong commitment to the hours, and provide a criminal record check. Travel costs will be covered for apprentices as part of the program (up to a maximum of \$1000).

We are seeking Expressions of Interest from potential apprentices.

2. Bun is Bàrr: An Drochaid Eadarainn | Gaelic Transcription Program

This component of the program will be a moderated program where facilitators will work with participants bi-weekly on recordings of historic Gaelic Nova Scotia naidheachdan is sgeulachdan | stories. Recordings will be assigned and reviewed during online sessions (approximately 1-1.5 hour(s) in length) and then participants will work on transcriptions of the supplied recordings on their own before the following session. The sessions will offer opportunities for questions, learning about the sgeulaichean | storytellers, discussion, and fellowship with other participants.

Transcriptions produced by the group will be added to An Drochaid Eadarainn: An Drochaid Bheò and will be available to all with an interest – speakers, learners, educators, researchers, etc.

This program will run through the winter and spring for about 3 months and would be appropriate for fluent speakers and intermediate learners. Sessions will be conducted in Gaelic.

We are seeking Expressions of Interest from potential participants/transcribers. There will be no cost to participate.

3. Caidreabh an t-Seanchais | Seanchas Fellowship

Finally, we will be supporting in-person Gaelic seanchas sessions several times over the winter and spring in various Nova Scotia communities. The sessions will focus on stories, songs, and traditions from the Nova Scotia corpus. They will be delivered using Gàidhlig aig Baile (GAB) methodology and be conducted entirely in Gaelic. These sessions are appropriate for intermediate learners. Fluent learners will also be welcome.

The sessions will run for approximately six hours (9:30-3:30) on both a Saturday and Sunday.

We are seeking expressions of interest from mnathan/fir an taighe | hosts who would be interested in organizing, hosting, and facilitating these Caidreabh an t-Seanchais sessions. Hosts will receive \$1000/weekend to cover event costs and professional fees.

Carson? | Why?

While the goals of the program, as listed above, have remained consistent over the years, the actual structure of *Bun is Bàrr* has evolved over the decade and a half it has run.

Depending on which mentors and apprentices were in each cohort the program might look quite different from year to year.

There has also been a significant shift in demographics in Gaelic Nova Scotia during this time, and unfortunately, there are far fewer Nova Scotians whose first language (L1) is Gaelic still with us today. While we all feel the loss of each tradition bearer deeply, we also must acknowledge that there are no longer enough L1 Nova Scotian Gaelic speakers to run *Bun is Bàrr* the way it was run in 2009.

At the office we are very proud of this program and the hugely important work each mentor and apprentice has done in contributing to our community's linguistic and cultural renewal. We accept though that the program must continue to develop.

Beginning last year, *Daltachas / Fosterage*, a mentorship program for intermediate speakers that launched several years after Bun is Bàrr, was incorporated into Bun is Bàrr. The Daltachas branch of the program was run online, as it had been since the start of the pandemic, for a group of Gaelic learners with a single mentor, while the Bun is Bàrr branch ran like it had before with individual mentor/apprentice teams.

In assessing last year's program, including the valuable feedback we received from participants, we have decided to make some changes to this year's offerings.

The biggest factors in making these changes are the smaller number of L1 speakers available to be mentors at the Bun is Bàrr level, apprentices' time & capacity, and online fatigue for both mentors and apprentices at the Daltachas level.

We hope these challenges will be addressed by this plan for 2024/25.

Cinn-uidhe | Criteria for Apprentices

- Apprentices must be Nova Scotia residents;
- Apprentices must be 18 years of age;
- Apprentices must demonstrate previous commitment to Gaelic language and cultural acquisition;
- Apprentices must have the time to devote to language and cultural learning;
- Apprentices must demonstrate a high level of independence and motivation concerning their language learning;
- Apprentices must demonstrate a strong interest in Nova Scotia's Gaelic oral tradition and cultural expression;
- Preference will be given to candidates who will be active speakers of Gaelic in their family and community or those who plan to teach Gaelic in Nova Scotia;
- Apprentices should have a recording device for the purposes of taping Gaelic sessions for playback at home and Internet access; and
- Apprentices who have already participated in previous *Daltachas* or *Bun is Bàrr* programming are eligible to apply

Ciamar a ghabhas mi a' sàs? | How do I participate?

1. Bun is Bàrr: Muime/Oide 's Tàilleabhach | Mentor & Apprentice

If you are interested in apprenticing with an elder Gael in Nova Scotia, please complete this brief [pre-screening form](#). Applicants will be pre-screened based on their proximity to mentors and commitment to the required hours. Following this, selected candidates will need to complete a more in-depth application and participate in an oral interview.

<https://forms.office.com/r/YPh0T6gXnC>

2. Bun is Bàrr: An Drochaid Eadarainn | Gaelic Transcription Program

If you are interested in developing an ear for various dialects, strengthening your Gaelic writing skills, and internalizing vernacular Gaelic, please complete [this form](#) to express your interest in participating.

<https://forms.office.com/r/nkEWYSqB73>

3. Caidreabh an t-Seanchais | Seanchas Fellowship

If you are interested in hosting Caidreabh an t-Seanchais in your community, please fill out [this form](#). Hosts will be responsible for planning, advertising, hosting, and managing all the logistics related the sessions. Gaelic Affairs will support by offering guidance or resource materials, as required.

<https://forms.office.com/r/ESsL7pHP3p>

Eile | Other Program Details

All successful applicants will be **required to attend the appropriate online orientation sessions** (there will be a different orientation session for each of the three branches of the program). We will accommodate apprentices' schedules as much as possible but attendance at these sessions is mandatory.

If you would like a pdf copy of this document, or would like to discuss any of these opportunities further, or if you have any questions at all, please reach out to Shannon MacMullin at (902) 880-2665 or send a note to shannon.macmullin@novascotia.ca

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