

Feed Nova Scotia reaction to *Defending Nova Scotia Budget 2026-2027*

Nova Scotia is falling deeper into an affordability crisis, with nearly one-in-three people in the province experiencing food insecurity. Almost 40% of children in Nova Scotia live in food insecure households. Food bank visits across the province have increased 50% since 2022. More Nova Scotians than ever are buckling under the weight of cost of living in this province, with devastating effects. Every year, we see these numbers rise and every year we say this cannot continue.

Poverty is not an inevitability; it is a political choice. Budget 2026-2027 makes this government's choices clear: they will choose poverty for hundreds of thousands of Nova Scotians in the year ahead. This budget names speed and economic growth as a form of resilience building and protection, yet it leaves the people that need protection the most behind. Nova Scotians can't afford to eat, and nothing in this budget will provide any meaningful relief.

While the budget does include continued investment to index Income Assistance to inflation, there is no funding to bring government supports anywhere near the poverty line. Nearly 60% of all food bank clients in Nova Scotia rely primarily on government income support programs to make ends meet. Our data shows that 2025 brought an increase in the number of food bank clients who reported Income Assistance as their primary source of income. With this budget release, these numbers will continue to rise in the year ahead.

The escalating cost of utilities is crushing household affordability across the province, and this budget includes reduced funding for the Heating Assistance Rebate from \$600 to \$400 per household. Over 46,000 struggling households who were eligible for the rebate in 2025 will no longer receive it in 2026. We expect to see more families access food banks in the year ahead as a result.

The budget claims to save families more than \$1,400 per year in tax relief. While highest earning households will save more than \$1,400, lowest income households will save under \$500 per year. The personal income tax cuts will cost the government \$122 million in revenue this year, without meaningfully benefitting those who need relief the most.

At the same time, this budget outlines almost \$135 million in funding cuts to community grants, which will heavily impact community services to vulnerable communities, and will amount to more job losses for people supporting their communities with critical services, including food support.

We partner to create systemic changes, while responding to the immediate need for dignified, secure, and just access to food.

67 Wright Avenue, Dartmouth NS B3B 1H2 | T 902.457.1900 | F 902.457.4500 | feednovascotia.ca

Registered charity number 11903 9337 RR0001 | Provincial association of Food Banks Canada



Since last year, the government has taken Nova Scotia's budget from an \$82 million surplus to a \$1.24 billion deficit, with \$500 million in spending outside of Budget 2025-2026 and outside of decisions in legislature. Community voices and needs have been removed from spending decisions and the results have done nothing to move the needle on affordability or cost of living. Nova Scotians need more accountability on how their tax dollars are being spent and how spending priorities will positively impact their lives.

The government won't build resilience for communities without accountability measures in place. That's why Feed Nova Scotia is calling on the Government of Nova Scotia to identify a food insecurity reduction target immediately, combined with income support programs that will meaningfully reduce food insecurity. Leaving 300,000 Nova Scotians to survive in food insecure households is a political choice: the Government of Nova Scotia has the policy and funding levers to make a different one.

At Feed Nova Scotia, we'll continue to advocate for bold government policy and action that will reduce poverty and build healthy and resilient communities. We encourage all Nova Scotians to do the same.