Feed Nova Scotia Reaction to *Budget 2026: Masters of Our Destiny*

On the 5th of November 2026, the Government of Canada released *Budget 2026: Masters of Our Destiny* outlining their plan for spending in the year ahead. A few months earlier, Feed Nova Scotia sent our pre-budget submission to the federal government to make budget recommendations that could make a difference in food insecurity across the country.

We joined Food Banks Canada and Right to Food in their calls for a reform of income supports, a resourced target to reduce food insecurity, and resources to advance Indigenous food sovereignty.

A breakdown of what we called for and how Budget 2026 responded is outlined below.

Our Recommendations vs Budget 2026:

1. **Reform and improve Employment Insurance (EI), the Canada Workers Benefit (CWB), and the Disability Tax Credit.**

How Budget 2026 responded:

- No substantive reform to Employment Insurance. Recipients will receive up to a maximum of $20 extra per week. Workers will contribute an extra $38 per year. Temporary workers, seasonal workers, and gig workers will continue to have no access to the support program.
- No substantive changes to the Disability Tax Credit. Recipients will receive an extra $4 per month.
- The Canada's Workers Benefit will be replaced by the Build Canada Workers Benefit, with expanded eligibility and increases of $150 per annum for single person households and $200 per annum for families.

2. **Make permanent and strengthen the Canada Groceries and Essentials Benefit (GEB) to provide adequate financial support to adults 18 to 64 with low and modest incomes.**

How Budget 2026 responded:

- The GEB will include a 50% top-up supplement in 2027, with a single person receiving an additional $339 and a family of four receiving up to an additional $679.
- The GEB will continue to be a temporary benefit with no announcement to transition it to a permanent support for lower income households.

3. Amend the National Food Security Strategy to set national targets to cut household food insecurity in half and end severe food insecurity by 2030 and ensure the strategy is effectively resourced.

How Budget 2026 responded:

- The National Food Security Strategy was not amended to set a target for the reduction of food insecurity.

4. Strengthen the National Food Security Strategy by convening a cross-departmental roundtable on food security including civil society organizations, researchers, Indigenous partners, and people with lived experience of food insecurity, to explore opportunities to strengthen the strategy's implementation and ensure that food security is addressed through a whole-of-government approach with income-based solutions.

How Budget 2026 responded:

- A roundtable focused on food security and the strengthening of the National Food Security Strategy was not included in Budget 2026.

5. Advance Indigenous food sovereignty by funding salaried, land-based roles and providing multi-year, flexible core funding for Indigenous-led food systems, as called for by Right to Food's Indigenous partners across the country.

How Budget 2026 responded:

- Indigenous food sovereignty was not a focus of Budget 2026.

Our Reaction

When Food Bank Canada's Hunger Count was released in October 2026, it highlighted what we already know: food insecurity is trending in the wrong direction across the country. With more than 10 million Canadians experiencing food insecurity, and more than 2.35 million monthly visits to food banks across the country, it's clear that Canada is in a growing affordability crisis. Our hope was for a bold response in Budget 2026, one that prioritized income-based solutions and a clear pathway to a food secure future.

When we look at any budget announced by government, our lens for assessment is the extent to which investment decisions positively impact people struggling to put food on the table. Budget 2026 outlines a spending plan for over $602 billion with priorities to advance corporate and industry development, national defence, security, and trade. But what about investments to make life more affordable for everyday people, strengthen household income, and lift households out of food insecurity?

Budget 2026 includes some positive investments that will make a modest difference to food insecure households in the year ahead. Data shows that most food bank clients indicate cost of living as the reason for accessing food support, including housing, cost of groceries, and other bills, such as childcare, utilities, and medication. We are pleased to see housing-specific commitments in this budget, including continued funding for the Canada Housing Benefit, along with further investments in childcare.

Changes to the Canada Caregiver Credit and expanded support through the Canada Workers Benefit are also welcome additions. The Groceries and Essential Benefit top-up supplement will help offset the soaring costs of everyday basics for low-income households, but with no surety it will continue after next year. In total, these combined income transfers will move roughly 185,000 people who are just below the poverty line to just above it. While this is good news, it is not nearly enough.

We are disappointed to see a lack of attention to Employment Insurance reform, which will continue to leave temporary, seasonal, and gig workers behind in the year ahead.

We are concerned to see no change to the Disability Tax Credit, despite the recommended introduction of practical and low-cost budget measures from disability rights groups across the country. People living with disabilities are nearly 50% more likely to experience poverty and twice as likely to experience food insecurity.

The commitment made to end homelessness in 10 years is evidence that the government can choose targets to effect systemic change. We are disappointed to see no commitment or target to reduce food insecurity, despite a call for action on this front from more than 180 food-based organizations across the country.

Budget announcements to advance the National Food Security Strategy are focused on strengthening Canada's food system, but with no attention on building a more affordable and accessible food system for households living in food insecurity. We are disappointed to see no resources committed to engage communities affected by food insecurity to strengthen the strategy's implementation and impact.

A significant gap in Budget 2026 is the absence of resources to advance Indigenous-led food systems and food sovereignty. Indigenous communities continue to experience one of the highest rates of food insecurity in the country. The federal government has responsibilities to recognize and support the sovereign rights of Indigenous peoples as guaranteed under constitutional law, treaties, and international law. We are concerned to not see Indigenous food sovereignty featured in their plan for the year ahead.

Overall, Budget 2026 includes measures that will provide some financial relief for people facing affordability challenges across Canada in the year to come. We welcome any changes that strengthen support for struggling households, but continue to be concerned about the temporary, partial, and piecemeal approaches being relied on when it comes to poverty and food insecurity. Earlier this month the National Advisory Council on Poverty released a report confirming that Canada is on track to miss its goal of reducing poverty by 50% by 2030. This budget, although featuring some positive investments, is not focused enough on the change everyday people across this country need to see.

With food insecurity at record-breaking levels and on the rise, Feed Nova Scotia will continue to work with elected officials across all parties, our network and community partners, staff, donors, and volunteers to advocate for government policy and spending priorities to build a society where no one needs to rely on charity to eat.