

Budget 2023-24

MORE HEALTHCARE, *FASTER*

Highlights

Budget 2023–24 was built with all Nova Scotians in mind. It reflects where we are today and where we are headed. It moves our Province forward, investing in healthcare and many of the things that are most important to Nova Scotians.

Fixing healthcare is our top priority because it's the number one concern for Nova Scotians. This budget invests in Action for Health, our strategic plan to grow the healthcare workforce and get faster access to care for Nova Scotians. Real results that people are looking for.

Budget 2023–24 is also about meeting this moment in time, offering solutions to help navigate through the labour, climate and social challenges we are facing, while also seizing opportunities for future growth.

We're doing more. We're going faster. And, we're making progress. Budget 2023–24 will fuel the momentum of the work we've started, investing in even more solutions that will help build a healthier, thriving Province.

Revenues & Expenses

With revenues of \$14.2 billion and expenses of \$14.4 billion (after consolidation), Budget 2023–24 is estimating a deficit of \$278.9 million.

\$
Deficit
278.9 (\$ million)

14.2 (\$ billion)
Revenue
2023–24



14.4 (\$ billion)
Expenses
2023–24



More Healthcare, Faster builds on 2022–23 investments, including:

- \$354 million for retention incentives for nurses and other eligible healthcare and support workers in the publicly-funded system
- \$58.9 million to Cape Breton University to advance a new medical campus, a new collaborative care clinic at the NSCC Marconi campus site and an expansion of CBU's health and counselling centre
- \$37.4 million toward a new Institute for Innovation in Health at St. Francis Xavier University to help improve health in rural communities
- \$28.9 million for programs and initiatives across the continuing care system, including wound care, workplace safety, emergency preparedness and facility improvements
- \$25 million for the Research Opportunities Fund to invest in more research linked to health innovation, mental health and economic growth
- \$20.6 million more for increased use of the Home First program to support seniors in staying in their homes longer
- \$20 million for modular housing to support the recruitment of healthcare workers and skilled tradespeople in communities where housing is limited
- \$1.3 million for an orientation program for doctors trained outside Canada
- \$140 million in additional funding to Efficiency Nova Scotia for off-oil programming, particularly for low-income homeowners
- \$123.5 million more to expand the Heating Assistance Rebate Program
- \$117.4 million in Fiona-related costs across various departments
- \$19.1 million for Child and Family Wellbeing support programs
- \$8 million more for transition houses and women's centres
- \$9.6 million for grants to community groups providing mental health programs, such as mentorship, peer support and art
- \$3.4 million more for the Autism Nova Scotia QuickStart program and adult autism programming
- \$3.2 million for various addiction and mental health initiatives
- \$3.5 million for ongoing repair, maintenance and operation of 50 community-based housing units in four African Nova Scotian communities
- \$63 million for community grants and initiatives

Action for Healthcare

We are making real progress on Action for Health, the government's plan to transform how healthcare is delivered. Our plan focuses on solutions informed by those who know the system best – front-line healthcare professionals and the people and communities who depend on these services.

Budget 2023–24 invests a total of \$6.5 billion into healthcare. That's \$1.2 billion, or 21.8%, more than two years ago. With targeted investments this year, we will continue our work to help patients receive faster access to services, improve care for our seniors, build the healthcare workforce needed to deliver quality care and advance our plan to build modern healthcare facilities faster. These solutions will deliver real results and build a better healthcare system that Nova Scotians need and deserve.

More Healthcare Workers

- More Opportunity for Skilled Trades program will expand to include eligible nurses - those under the age of 30 will receive a refund of the provincial income tax paid on the first \$50,000 of income. The program will open to applications in 2024 based on 2023 tax filings.
- \$110 million for the second year of retention incentives for nurses who commit to staying in the publicly-funded system and sign a two-year return of service agreement
- \$1.7 million to add 10 physician assistants to collaborative primary care sites across the province
- \$1.4 million for more mentors to support new nurses
- \$2.8 million to accelerate and enhance clinical placements for nurses, nurse practitioners and other healthcare workers
- \$600,000 to pilot a new pathway for Continuing Care Assistants (CCAs) to become Licensed Practical Nurses, covering tuition and books
- \$22.2 million for new healthcare workforce strategy initiatives under Action for Health
- \$2.8 million, as part of a \$22.7 million four-year commitment announced in Budget 2022–23, to increase nursing training seats by 200 at Cape Breton University, Dalhousie University, St. Francis Xavier University and NSCC
- a 30-seat practical nursing cohort at the NSCC Pictou campus customized for Mi'kmaw learners, beginning this academic year

- \$2.1 million to continue supporting additional specialty medical residency positions, now up to 71 specialty residents and 10 family medicine residents
- \$900,000 more to continue supporting the 16 additional medical school seats at Dalhousie University, for a total of 80
- \$66.3 million in ongoing funding for increased wages for CCAs announced in 2022–23
- \$11.6 million to continue workforce initiatives within the continuing care sector, such as free tuition for those who are training to become a CCA

Faster Access to Care

- \$46.6 million more to perform more surgeries and continue to address the backlog, including:
 - increasing hours for operating rooms
 - reducing wait times for gynecology care to improve care for urgent cases, early pregnancy complications, endometriosis and chronic pelvic pain
- \$34 million for patient movement initiatives to help improve access to care for more people, including:
 - real-time data on bed use through the care coordination centre
 - more staff to help discharge patients faster
 - more healthcare workers to help patients get moving more quickly and prepare to go home sooner (e.g., occupational therapists, dieticians, recreational therapy assistants)
- \$15 million for initiatives to improve emergency care, including:
 - patient advocates and waiting room care providers in emergency departments
 - tuition rebates for paramedic training
 - virtual care offered to more patients waiting in emergency departments
- \$22.6 million for Emergency Health Services initiatives such as adding more emergency transport units and a new fixed-wing service for the LifeFlight program
- \$7.3 million more for Emergency Health Services to help with growing volume
- \$11.3 million for a range of improvements to cancer care services, including:
 - introducing a new program for early screening for lung cancer
 - expanding services at community-based cancer care sites

- A range of initiatives to help improve people’s access to primary care:
 - \$1.7 million more to expand Dalhousie Family Medicine clinics, which support new family practice doctors who will offer care to more patients
 - expanded team-based care at new locations and strengthen existing locations
 - provide more support to interprofessional primary care teams to optimize scope of practice and reduce administrative burden and time away from patients
 - increased access to same-day/next-day primary care appointments
 - expand other access options, including mobile primary care, community pharmacy locations, pharmacist walk-in clinics and virtual care
- \$2 million more to expand virtual mental health care at Nova Scotia Health and IWK Health
- \$6.7 million more to help with the growing demand for radiology, pathology and internal medicine services
- \$3.7 million more for dialysis services at the Halifax Infirmity and expanding access to these services in Liverpool and Pictou areas
- \$1.9 million for initiatives to help improve equity in our healthcare system, including:
 - expanding prideHealth across the province
 - launching an Indigenous patient navigation program
 - starting a summer internship program for high school students to get more diverse young people considering careers in healthcare
- \$5 million more for the Seniors Pharmacare program and new cancer drugs
- \$1.7 million more to help meet the increased demand in gender assignment surgeries
- \$845,000 for the continued expansion of the IWK pediatric intensive care unit
- \$796,000 more to ramp-up the Human Organ and Tissue Donation program
- \$17.7 million for a range of mental health initiatives, working toward universal access to mental health, including:
 - opening a second mental health acute day hospital at the Cape Breton Regional Hospital
 - offering culturally appropriate mental health and addictions care for African Nova Scotians, through a new pilot project

- piloting using clinical psychology students to deliver care as they finish their studies
- creating a new advanced certificate for mental health and addictions at the Dalhousie University School of Nursing
- opening more new Recovery Support Centres this year (Strait-Richmond area, Sydney, Yarmouth, Truro, North Sydney and Halifax)
- Support to cultivate excellence on the frontlines of healthcare through various innovation projects, including:
 - \$2.8 million to test mobile simulation training
 - \$3.9 million for digital healthcare projects
 - \$426,000 to launch the Artificial Intelligence Centre of Excellence
 - \$48.5 million for operational project costs this year associated with One Person One Record

Seniors and Long-Term Care

- \$25.9 million more for home care and direct funding programs to provide flexible supports for seniors, tailored to their individual needs
- \$10.7 million more to help long-term care homes move toward the 4.1 hours of care standard
- \$4.7 million more to provide high-dose flu vaccine for all seniors aged 65+ for free
- \$1.1 million to plan for a new Wound Care Centre of Excellence
- \$25 million more in one-time capital funding for equipment, upgrades and repairs to help extend the life of current long-term care homes
- \$13.5 million to open 240 spaces this year at Mahone Bay Nursing Home, Villa Acadienne in Meteghan and Kiknu in Eskasoni (93 new and 147 replacement spaces), as part of government's plan to add 1,200 new long-term care spaces by 2027
- \$44 million to fund permanent and temporary long-term care spaces for people waiting to move from acute care to long-term care
- \$1.1 million more for dementia services programming to help meet the needs of more people with dementia and their caregivers
- \$29.1 million in continued funding for the Seniors Care Grant to provide support to older Nova Scotians in their homes and communities

Building More, Faster

- \$538 million under Capital Plan 2023–24 for the Province’s More, Faster: The Action for Health Build plan and other healthcare capital projects:
 - \$275.1 million for Halifax Infirmery expansion and Cape Breton Regional Municipality healthcare redevelopment projects
 - \$91 million for construction and renewal of other hospitals and medical facilities including projects in Bridgewater, Pugwash, Yarmouth, Amherst and at IWK Health
 - \$57.7 million for electronic health records (One Person One Record)
 - \$33.2 million for Bayers Lake Community Outpatient Facility construction
 - \$32 million to repair and replace medical equipment
 - \$22 million to repair and replace medical facilities
 - \$21.3 million for various Health Action Plan capital initiatives

A Healthy Economy

Nova Scotia is on the move. Our population is growing and we are building a modern, skilled workforce and promoting innovation and competitiveness in our business sectors so they can grow and create more higher-paying jobs.

This planned approach to growth will build a healthy economy, which will help pay for the healthcare system Nova Scotians deserve and lays the foundation for a thriving province.

Skilled Workers & Immigration

- \$20.9 million to deliver the More Opportunity for Skilled Trades program, which provides workers in eligible skilled trades and film and video occupations under the age of 30 a refund on the provincial income tax paid on the first \$50,000 of income
- \$13.2 million to provide funding to small- and medium-sized employers to hire first-year apprentices in Red Seal trades
- \$943,000 more as part of a multi-year plan to modernize Nova Scotia's Apprenticeship system
- \$3.4 million for year two of a four-year \$13-million commitment with Mitacs to create up to 3,200 more paid internship opportunities for post-secondary students
- \$6.2 million more to expand life and job skills programs, as part of Community Services' efforts to reduce child poverty and prepare youth at risk for education and employment success, including:
 - expanding Career Rising, EDGE and Digital Skills to Succeed programs
 - enhancing the Youth Development Initiative
- \$1 million more to expand the team that supports immigration and population growth
- \$200,000 more, for a total of \$1.6 million, for community-based settlement service organizations to support a growing number of newcomers
- \$138,000 to create a new immigration specialist position dedicated to supporting healthcare workers from international markets

Business & Innovation

- \$14 million more, for a total of \$39 million in 2023–24, for the Film and Television Production Incentive Fund
- \$1.5 million to continue developing the new Nova Scotia Loyal program
- \$3.7 million more for silviculture and archeological work
- \$3 million for energy and resources development initiatives
- \$760,000 for offshore wind/hydrogen production studies
- \$1.8 million to support high-growth business and entrepreneurship development
- \$1.1 million for the Nova Scotia Quality Wine Strategy
- \$200,000 more for sportfishing programs and stocking and maintenance of hatcheries
- New tools to promote tourism, including:
 - a tourism sector strategic plan
 - a year-round tourism marketing strategy
 - an integrated airport marketing plan
 - an African Nova Scotian cultural tourism strategy
 - additional support for Mi'kmaw cultural tourism initiatives

Healthy Communities

Making our communities healthier and more sustainable is part of our plan to fix healthcare. By addressing the factors affecting health and well-being, supporting families and youth and investing in our communities, we can help improve the quality of life for all Nova Scotians.

Budget 2023–24 makes important investments in safe and affordable housing, community programs and infrastructure, targeted supports for our most vulnerable citizens, quality education and a clean environment.

- \$498.5 million for Nova Scotia’s roads, highways and bridges, including \$60 million more for secondary highways and \$15 million more for gravel roads
- \$14 million more for the Rural Impact Mitigation program (RIM) for the maintenance and repair of rural roads, for a total of \$36 million this year
- \$2 million more to help community centres buy and install generators to provide a gathering place for their community members when needed
- \$5.1 million more in operating grants for arts and culture organizations and community-owned museums
- \$2.6 million more for provincial museums and the operation of the iconic Bluenose II
- A new Let’s Get Moving strategy to promote physical activity, wellness and healthy living
- \$160,000 to support the Mi’kmaw Language Committee to develop a multi-year strategy to reclaim and revitalize the Mi’kmaw language
- Ongoing work to increase awareness of African Nova Scotian culture, heritage and community issues and to implement anti-racism initiatives and actions outlined in Count Us In: Nova Scotia’s Action Plan in Response to the International Decade for People of African Descent
- Continuing work on the province’s first African Nova Scotian Justice Action Plan, following extensive community engagement last year and starting work to develop an Indigenous Justice Action Strategy
- \$6.2 million more to continue redesigning the foster care system, including recruiting and retaining diverse foster families, expanding foster care placement types and improving peer support and respite for foster families

- \$7.8 million more for prevention and early intervention programs such as parenting education and family support, home-based visitation, youth programs and services and sexual violence prevention
- \$23.3 million more for Disability Support Programs, a range of programs that support people with intellectual disabilities, long-term mental illness and physical disabilities
- \$2.5 million more to continue to expand eligibility and increase funding for families involved in the Disability Support Children and Youth program
- \$2.6 million more for Flex in Home Support programming to help those living at home with their families or who live independently with support from their families or personal support networks
- \$4.4 million more to support more people transitioning from adult residential centres and regional rehabilitation centres into community-based settings
- \$875,000 more for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women for the Creating Communities of Care initiative and actions under the Standing Together plan to prevent domestic violence
- Continuing work on the province’s strategy to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation, with a specific focus on supporting African Nova Scotian and Indigenous women and girls
- \$201,000 more to hire additional Maintenance Enforcement Program enforcement officers

Housing, Homelessness & Affordability

- New housing and student housing strategies
- \$21.6 million more to create 1,000 new rent supplements, for a total of 8,000 rent supplements
- \$15.3 million more for public housing repairs, for a total of \$21 million
- \$13.1 million more to address the waitlist for home repair and adaptation programs, helping over 800 additional homeowners
- \$2.5 million for initiatives to accelerate housing developments of all types and at all income levels in the Halifax Regional Municipality
- \$8.2 million more for homelessness and supportive housing initiatives

- \$8 million to increase the Nova Scotia Child Benefit for families with incomes below \$34,000 in support of reducing childhood poverty
- \$3.9 million more for new programs and supports for young people leaving care, in support of reducing child poverty
- No fee increases for Seniors Pharmacare and Family Pharmacare programs
- \$1.3 million to make student loan repayment more manageable for people starting their careers by increasing eligibility and reducing the maximum affordable payment

Education

- \$42.1 million increase in child care funding to lower fees for families, create more spaces and enhance after-school care (fully recoverable from the Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement)
- \$40 million to pay early childhood educators more, help stabilize and grow the workforce and help licensed centers offer more care
- \$47.1 million more for our public schools to address growing enrolment, hire more teachers and address inflationary pressures
- \$6 million more to refresh classroom technology, including Chromebooks for students
- \$2.7 million for the pre-primary program to increase classroom supports
- Updating the School Food and Nutrition Policy and implementing a provincial Physical Activity Framework
- \$240.8 million to build and renovate schools across the province, including \$24 million more for capital repairs and \$40 million for new modular learning spaces
- \$97.2 million for NSCC's Sydney Waterfront Campus and three student housing projects
- \$3.8 million more in grants to universities to reflect the 1% increase under the current Memorandum of Understanding

Environment

- \$41.4 million to move forward on actions under Nova Scotia's Climate Change Plan for Growth, including:
 - more energy efficiency and clean energy projects with a focus on energy poverty and equity
 - further efforts to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and move from coal to renewable energy and green hydrogen
 - community-based climate change projects
 - support for farmers and fishers who adopt solar energy and develop adaptation plans
 - consumer rebates for zero-emission vehicles and e-bikes
 - mitigation efforts like flood line mapping and coastal wetland restoration
 - more research in battery technology
- \$2 million in ongoing funding to grow the electric vehicle charging network, offer rebates to install charging infrastructure and increase the adoption of electric vehicles
- Continuing work to develop active transportation networks and promote active transportation as a safe, accessible option to move within communities
- \$15 million more as the provincial share of Investment in Canada Infrastructure Program green, transit and rural/northern projects
- \$7.6 million as part of year five of the nine-year, almost \$50 million Flood Mitigation Measures envelope to upgrade the dykeland system

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS 2023–24

	2022-23 Estimate	2022-23 Forecast	2023-24 Estimate
Total Revenues	12,661,910	14,318,363	14,168,888
Total Expenses	13,292,456	14,712,914	14,820,301
Consolidation and Accounting Adjustments	124,362	135,118	372,488
Provincial Surplus (Deficit)	(506,184)	(259,433)	(278,925)
Provincial Revenue Sources			
Personal Income Tax	3,282,916	3,584,844	3,731,163
Corporate Income Tax	535,713	751,895	740,408
Harmonized Sales Tax	2,176,660	2,339,154	2,438,318
Cannabis Tax	13,442	13,758	14,666
Vaping Tax	3,416	3,450	3,450
Non-resident Deed Transfer Tax	15,497	12,720	12,515
Non-resident Property Tax	65,544	---	---
Motive Fuel Tax	255,100	262,356	263,497
Tobacco Tax	170,631	157,886	139,681
Other Tax Revenue	200,633	241,887	240,827
Prior Years' Adjustments - Provincial Taxes	---	903,396	---
Registry of Motor Vehicles	135,816	140,511	143,412
Other Provincial Sources	150,129	152,565	148,832
TCA Cost Shared Revenue	12,871	934	9,545
Other Fees and Charges	58,692	61,983	59,574
Prior Years' Adjustments - Other Provincial Revenue	---	---	---
Interest Revenues	93,610	118,389	118,235
Sinking Fund Earnings	18,454	22,220	19,099
Ordinary Recoveries	358,348	378,249	436,398
Net Income from Government Business Enterprises	419,818	395,507	285,422
Total - Provincial Sources	7,967,290	9,541,704	8,805,042
Federal Revenue Sources			
Equalization Payments	2,458,356	2,458,356	2,802,849
Canada Health Transfer	1,175,357	1,234,122	1,357,760
Canada Social Transfer	414,378	416,833	433,640
Offshore Accord	47,772	47,772	---
Crown Share	---	---	---
Other Federal Sources	45,314	72,264	142,681
TCA Cost Shared Revenue	110,156	81,475	77,104
Prior Years' Adjustments	---	(421)	---
Ordinary Recoveries	443,287	466,258	549,812
Total - Federal Sources	4,694,620	4,776,659	5,363,846
Expenses			
Advanced Education	676,617	838,068	707,234
Agriculture	40,499	83,983	45,350
Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage	141,951	251,698	170,492
Community Services	1,217,652	1,263,902	1,299,913
Economic Development	96,529	97,398	95,126
Education and Early Childhood Development	1,751,280	1,769,892	1,873,505
Environment and Climate Change	37,901	197,164	40,445
Finance and Treasury Board	28,877	28,485	35,736
Fisheries and Aquaculture	17,698	17,540	16,633
Health and Wellness	4,266,326	4,541,988	4,854,073
Justice	415,750	434,715	450,288
Labour, Skills and Immigration	207,493	221,073	206,236
Municipal Affairs and Housing	400,479	507,358	554,398
Natural Resources and Renewables	134,886	191,238	142,579
Public Service	415,909	430,831	457,984
Public Works	606,960	685,647	672,290
Seniors and Long-term Care	1,204,270	1,421,209	1,331,978
Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services	359,570	514,370	382,518
Restructuring Costs	402,099	336,768	513,874
Refundable Tax Credits	121,828	136,209	136,099
Pension Valuation Adjustment	71,480	62,886	66,639
Debt Servicing Costs	676,402	680,492	766,911
Total - Expenses	13,292,456	14,712,914	14,820,301