Nova Scotia Government – Pre-budget Consultation

How to take part and have your voice heard!

Background. Earlier in September, the Government of Nova Scotia announced, “Building Our Budget Together,” their pre-budget consultation process. The Federation of Labour is encouraging working people to take part in this consultation, so the views of workers will help inform the 2027 provincial budget.

How to engage? The purpose of this consultation is to share your thoughts on what matters most when the government decides how to spend money. There are a few ways to engage in the pre-budget consultation. You can share your thoughts in writing, by either emailing **budget@novascotia.ca** or sending a letter addressed to Department of Finance and Treasury Board, Attention: Budget Engagement, P.O. Box 187, Halifax, N.S., B3J 2N3.

You can take part in an in-person or online session. The currently announced sessions run from Monday, September 21, to Thursday, October 8. See the full list of consultation times, locations, and sign up **here**.

There is also an online tool to build you own budget, which can be accessed **here**. This tool severely restrains the feedback that participants are allowed to give and falls well short of it’s promise to make you Nova Scotia's Finance Minister for the day.

What should I expect at an online or in person session? While the government hasn’t announced the format for their in-person or online sessions, past consultations have included a mix of presentations from government and opportunities for participants to share their views, either with the front of the room or in break out groups. When attending one of these sessions, be ready to share your views in a cordial and honest manner.

We will update this document when we have a clearer picture of that these sessions will look like.

What should I talk about? First and foremost, you should talk about the public services you and your family depend on, and what the consequences of cuts would be. In the last provincial budget, the government made sweeping cuts, seemingly without understanding the on-the-ground impact of the programs they were gutting. We encourage participants to give a human dimension to the consequences of the government’s cuts.

If you're looking for pointers, here are some areas the Federation is particularly concerned about with the 2027 budget:

- **Defending public services and good jobs –** The government plans to eliminate upwards of 4000 public and civil service jobs in Nova Scotia over the next four years. These cuts are being made with no analysis about the impact to local economies or the services that families depend on.

  We know the loss of good jobs with fair wages will have consequences. These incomes pay mortgages, buy cups of coffee, purchase tickets to local cultural festivals, donate to local sports teams, and so much more.

  Since 2018, the unionized civil service has grown by approximately 4 per cent, while Nova Scotia's population has grown by 14 per cent. This shows investments have not kept pace with population growth, and public services are already under strain.

- **Investing in classroom supports –** 2026 budget cuts led to the elimination of more than 80 teaching positions across Nova Scotia. Teachers have sounded the alarm that this will mean less support for Nova Scotia students, larger classrooms, and increased pressure on an already strained public education system. These are front-line workers who help students with literacy, math, and learning support every single day,

  As well as our P-12 education coming under attack, major funding cuts to the Nova Scotia Community College and Universities are leading these institutions to layoff faculty and staff, increase fees, and reduce the quality of education provided.

- **Improving accountability –** The current government has a poor record on accountability when it comes to public spending. It has spent billions of dollars as "extra-budget" spending, with no accountability to the legislature. Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada where this is permitted, and the Auditor General has repeatedly called for this practice to be banned.

  The Auditor General has also called on the government to adhere to public tendering rules. These are the rules that allow companies to fairly bid on government contracts through a fair and open process. While there are some instances where non-traditional tenders make sense, the government has been caught using them with no clear rational for why.

Part of defending public services is making sure the government acting as a sound steward of the public purse and awarding contracts based on value and quality of service. The Conservatives disregard for accountability with public spending not only means higher costs for services, but it also puts the long-term sustainability of these services at risk (see notes on privatization below).

Fighting back against privatization – After years of unaccountable spending, Tim Houston and the Progressive Conservatives are in full-blown panic mode, putting our public services in grave danger. The government needs to know that privatization is not an option.

The push toward privatization within our essential public services represents a failed experiment that has consistently undermined service quality, accountability, transparency, and economic stability. Decades of evidence from across Canada and around the world demonstrate that privatization is a false economy that delivers short-term political relief while creating long-term fiscal and social costs.

Research from multiple jurisdictions provides compelling evidence that privatized services consistently result in higher costs for taxpayers while delivering inferior outcomes.

Private operators, driven by profit motives, systematically cut costs through reduced staffing levels, lower wages, deferred maintenance, and minimal investment in infrastructure and training. This directly impacts service quality and accessibility, particularly for vulnerable populations who depend most heavily on public services. The race to maximize shareholder returns inevitably comes at the expense of service recipients.

Let the government know, privatization is off the table!