

POVERTY REPORT CARD SNAPSHOT FOR ACTION



Food Banks
Canada

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NOVA SCOTIA



OVERALL GRADE

REPORT CARD HIGHLIGHTS

Social assistance as a
percentage of the poverty line:



Food insecurity:



Legislative progress:



PROVINCIAL
OVERVIEW

CONTEXT

Nova Scotia continues to face significant poverty and affordability challenges despite some modest improvements. Food insecurity affects more than 1 in 4 people, and social assistance rates remain the lowest in Canada relative to need. While the province has invested in housing, school meals, and affordability measures, many supports still fall short. Proposed cuts to social and employment programs in Budget 2026 also highlighted tensions between fiscal decisions and the province's poverty-reduction goals.

KEY FINDINGS

Social assistance is leaving people deep in poverty: In Nova Scotia, social assistance provides just 30.9% of the income needed to reach the poverty line.

Too many households still cannot afford food: Food insecurity affects 26.2% of people in Nova Scotia, reflecting ongoing pressure on household budgets.

Budget decisions exposed gaps in the province's approach: Planned cuts to social programs and limited increases to income supports raised concerns about the province's poverty-reduction priorities.

SELECT POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Raise social-assistance rates to cover basic needs:** Nova Scotia should increase social-assistance rates to at least the deep-poverty threshold while maintaining indexation. Current rates are far too low.
- **Restore and expand employment and skills training programs:** Nova Scotia should reinstate funding for employment, apprenticeship, and skills training programs that were reduced in Budget 2026. With unemployment remaining high, stronger pathways into stable work are needed.
- **Release a new poverty reduction strategy with clear targets:** Nova Scotia's poverty reduction strategy is more than 15 years old and no longer reflects today's affordability pressures. The province should release a new strategy with measurable targets and regular reporting on progress.