



March 06<sup>th</sup>, 2026

### **NSCLO statement on the Province's proposed 2026-2027 provincial budget**

The past few weeks have been incredibly challenging for service providers across the sector. Our focus remains on the impact this proposed budget will have on people with disabilities in Nova Scotia - people who have endured cuts time and time again that negatively impact their quality of life. Funding decisions in this sector can have direct implications for safety, dignity, and autonomy and our concern in this current budget is that these cuts will create instability in a sector already undergoing a transformation.

NSCLO members across the province are facing budget cuts ranging from about 2.7% - 12%. Even the smallest cuts can have devastating impacts. Service providers, many of whom were already working with extremely tight budgets, must find new ways to make them stretch even further without impacting the quality of life of the people they support and while continuing to champion and implement a human rights and system transformation. Any budget reduction right now puts this vital work in jeopardy - "Essential to the success of the Human Rights Remedy will be strengthening system capacity and identifying "enablers" or "disruptors" that will alter the status quo quickly and effectively in ways that are coherent, aligned with broader systems change and sustainable over the long term." (Human Rights Review & Remedy Report; Bartnik & Stainton). NSCLO members believe these, and many of the other cuts, threaten to weaken system capacity, not build long-term sustainability.

We want to recognize that there was a \$59.1 million budget increase related to the work of the Human Rights Remedy, most of which is allocated to the Department of Opportunities and Social Development. While this budget increase is certainly welcomed, it alone does not mitigate the impact other cuts have on the lives of people with disabilities.

Accessibility is foundational to living inclusive lives in community, yet we know that many accessibility programs and grants have taken significant budget reductions:

- 20% budget reduction to the Accessibility Directorate's grant program for accessibility renovations
- Significant cuts to municipal budgets, including to programs that fund accessibility projects

There are also significant budget cuts to programs that directly and indirectly impact people's health and well-being:

- A 40% reduction in the hearing aid assistance program
- A 20% reduction in a program that provides things like bus passes and dental cost support

Other budget cuts that impact community partners who support the sector and our workforce:

- 70% - 100% budget reductions for community partners/sector councils who provide low cost training and resources to service providers (ex: Aware NS, Health & Community Sector Council, The Disability Partnership)

We do not yet fully understand the impact of these funding cuts, but we do know that disability does not exist in a silo. We know that cuts to Indigenous resources, African Nova Scotian resources, mental health and addictions resources, and many others also impact people with disabilities. We know that people with disabilities disproportionately live in poverty, so any reduction to the programs and infrastructure they rely on to access their communities have compounding impacts.

We also know that the Province of Nova Scotia has a court mandated responsibility to end the systemic discrimination against people with disabilities. Reducing the funding to service providers, the partners who support their workforce, accessibility grants, and programs that directly impact quality of life do not seem like a good strategy to "strengthen system capacity."

We call on the Province to answer questions from self-advocates, their families, and service providers about how they intend to prioritize the work of the Human Rights Remedy while also making these deep budget cuts in the community and with the service providers dedicated to this transformational process.

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