



- 1. With many Nova Scotia small- and medium-sized businesses continuing to feel the negative effects of the pandemic, will your government commit to a “Do No Harm” principle for small businesses in Nova Scotia; to not introduce new legislation, or policies that will increase employer costs?**

The Liberal Party of Nova Scotia is committed to aiding businesses as we emerge from the COVID-19 Pandemic. To help get us there the Liberal Government created the Economic Growth Council as an advisory group to the Rankin government.

On July 7th, the Growth Council released the first set of recommendations focused on short-term, immediate actions aimed at supporting Nova Scotia’s post-pandemic economic recovery. In response to the council’s recommendations, the Liberal government will expand and deepen its regulatory burden reduction target and remove an additional \$30 million in unnecessary regulatory burden to ease business start-up and growth by the end of 2022. We will waive all regulatory fees for businesses in their first two years, create a one-stop shop for start-up permits, and enhance provincial and municipal collaboration to ensure adequate housing strategy for housing of all types.

A re-elected Liberal Government will continue to look for ways to reduce the regulatory burden of small and medium businesses where possible. We will continue to make Nova Scotia a province that is ready for investment and a business environment where start-ups thrive.

- 2. If elected, how will your government support Nova Scotia small- and medium-sized businesses that continue to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?**

The creation of the Economic Growth council was done to guide the province as we emerge from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. A re-elected Liberal government will continue to value and implement the recommendations of the council and ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have what they need to thrive in Nova Scotia.

In May, the Rankin Government committed an additional investment of \$17.2 million in the Small Business Impact Grant, Part 3, program to support small businesses affected by the ongoing provincial COVID-19 restrictions.

Over the past 17 months numerous supports for businesses in Nova Scotia have been introduced or expanded including the COVID-19 Agriculture Response Program, Digital Assistance Program for Small Business, Small Business Loan Guarantee Program, Small Business Real Property Tax Rebate Program, Small Tourism Operators Restart Program, and the Tourism Accommodations Real Property Tax Rebate Program.

3. If elected, how will your government address the challenges faced by businesses in finding skilled and unskilled labour?

To ensure that Nova Scotia can meet the demand for more skilled workers A re-elected Liberal government will invest \$69 million over the next four years in the Nova Scotia Community College and enroll more students from communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

This investment builds on the government's strategy for innovation, training, and job creation across the province through investments in the NSCC, and previous investments in digital skills training through computer science programs at Nova Scotia's universities.

The plan will also increase access and affordability for part-time students and people facing systemic barriers by adopting a part-time, per course, modernized tuition model. This investment will help ensure that our workers have the skills for the jobs of tomorrow and contribute to a more prosperous Nova Scotia.

We also see the massive investment that we have made in child care and early education as an investment in all Nova Scotians and in our workforce. The achievement of \$10 a day child care will see parents, especially women, join or re-join the workforce or pursue higher education without needing to worry about the affordability of care for their children.

We understand the necessity of the Temporary Foreign worker program for employers and the safety of workers and the communities that welcome them will continue to be our focus. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic we worked closely with Perennia and the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture to ensure that individuals travelling to Nova Scotia as part of the Temporary Foreign Workers program have the necessary supports in place.

4. If elected, what will be your government's plan to reduce claim durations and claim costs within the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia?

Workers compensation claims can be reduced through safer workplaces. Employers, workers and service providers must constantly work toward safety at work for everyone. Employers and workers alike, need to know the rights and responsibilities on any jobsite or workplace.

The Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia has increased the resources offered to small businesses through Work Safe For Life. Businesses are aided in the creation of a Workplace Safety Strategy based on their unique needed level of safety planning.

We will continue to look for new ways to improve workplace safety for all Nova Scotians, like offering free Occupational Health and Safety courses through the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

5. If elected, how will your government reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses and citizens?

As mentioned above the Liberal government will expand and deepen its regulatory burden reduction target and remove an additional \$30 million in unnecessary regulatory burden to ease business start-up and growth by the end of 2022. Waive all regulatory fees for businesses in their first two years, create a one-stop shop for start-up permits, and enhance provincial and municipal collaboration to ensure adequate housing strategy for housing of all types.

In the March 2021 budget, no new corporate or personal income taxes increases were announced. There are no plans to raise Corporate Income Tax or HST.

6. If elected, what is your government's plan to ensure Nova Scotia small- and medium-sized businesses are competitive?

The Nova Scotia Liberal Party wants to foster a level playing field for local businesses that need to compete with larger eCommerce-based sellers. The new Digital Service Tax implemented by the Federal government is an example of where this sector is moving. We will continue to examine trends and welcome feedback on developments in the realm of eCommerce and fairness for Nova Scotia-based retailers.

We are committed to fostering pride and value in Nova Scotia produce through support for the "Get Your Hands on Local" campaign in partnership with Taste of Nova Scotia and the Buy Local NS resource for consumers.

As part of our Tourism Restart we're investing \$18.2 million that will provide operators with new grant programs and marketing support to encourage Nova Scotians to spend time and money locally.

7. If elected, will your government align minimum wage increases with the consumer price index?

On January 4, the Minimum Wage Review Committee submitted its annual report to the Minister of Labour and Advanced Education. The report included two recommendations. The two recommendations were to increase the minimum wage rate to \$12.95 an hour and to conduct a

review of the current approach to setting the minimum wage rate. The new rate increase came into effect on April 1. The Committee will provide recommendations to the government. The Committee has representatives from both employees and employers. The recommendations are expected by the end of the year.

8. If elected, what will be your government's policy on paid sick days?

Nova Scotians who must take time off work due to COVID-19 may now qualify for up to four paid sick days under Nova Scotia's new COVID-19 Sick Leave Program. The \$16 million program is expected to help more than 100,000 Nova Scotians.

People who cannot work remotely and miss less than 50 per cent of their scheduled work time in a one-week period due to COVID-19 may be eligible. This includes those who need to take time off because they are awaiting a Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test appointment, and those who are getting tested, are self-isolating while awaiting test results, or are going to get vaccinated.

The sick days do not have to be taken consecutively. Any sick days taken between May 10, 2021, and July 31, 2021, may be eligible for the program.

The federal-provincial-territorial Safe Restart Agreement (negotiated in 2020) created a paid sick leave benefit through the federal government for employees who are unable to work due to circumstances related to COVID-19.

9. If elected, will your government legislate pay equity for the private sector?

The Nova Scotia Liberal Party believes that gender equality benefits not only women and girls, but the province as a whole. It is important to have frameworks in place that support gender equality in the workforce.

In March of this year, the provincial government passed amendments to the Labour Standards Code that help ensure that the salary of a woman or non-binary person who may be paid less than their male counterpart doing the same work, will not follow them throughout their career.

We know that greater transparency in wage information leads to a smaller gender pay gap. The amendments allow individuals to have greater access to pay information when accepting or discussing compensation for a new job. They also prohibit employers from inquiring about the wage history of a job applicant or employee and prohibit employers from barring employees from discussing or disclosing their own wages or those of other employees.

10. If elected, what is your government's plan to restore fiscal balance to the province?

The impact that the COVID-19 Pandemic had on our province led to prudent and necessary investments in small businesses that suffered as a result of Public Health restrictions. As outlined in our 2021-2022 provincial budget, a re-elected Liberal Government has a plan to bring the province back to fiscal balance within four years without cuts. We are confident that by the end of our next mandate fiscal balance will be restored and Nova Scotia will have emerged from the real challenges of COVID-19 stronger than ever.