

*Look what we can do*



2023 annual report



Nova Scotia government won't fast-track \$15 minimum wage increase  
 Halifax homelessness crisis: What governments are doing and why advocates say more is needed  
 Soaring food prices could have major impact on Canadians' health  
 "It never used to be like this," street navigator says of spike in Halifax homelessness  
 More Nova Scotians turn to food banks as cost of living continues to rise  
 "When are we going to say enough is enough?": Food banks urge longer-term solution: Inflation forcing N.S. seniors to make difficult budget decisions  
 N.S. budget doesn't raise income assistance rates, shocks anti-poverty advocates  
 As people struggle with inflation in N.S., still no plans from premier for further relief  
 "The worst is yet to come": Rising food costs devouring Maritime household budgets  
 High food prices amid easing inflation has consumers questioning pricing power at big grocery chains  
 Federal benefits reduced child poverty in Nova Scotia, but 'province did very little', report finds  
 They're in crisis: Number of Nova Scotians waiting for rent supplement skyrockets  
 Cape Breton University food bank cannot keep up with demand; student union president  
 Homelessness crisis is "brutal" says outreach worker  
 Wait list for family doctors nears 130,000 in Nova Scotia  
 Racialized Communities Worst Affected by Rising Food Insecurity  
 Food bank use soars across the Maritimes  
 Soaring gas prices have N.S. government contemplating targeted relief  
 Feed Nova Scotia seeing major demand amid rising food and inflation costs  
 "We're going to run out": Low-income Nova Scotians bearing brunt of food crisis  
 Advocates say Nova Scotia budget neglects affordable housing crisis  
 Utility board defies Nova Scotia government, allows 14 per cent power rate hike  
 "We're scared to death": low-income Nova Scotians struggling to restock food after Fiona  
 Some Nova Scotia students facing 'desperate' situation amid housing crisis  
 Feed Nova Scotia sees spike in people accessing services as cost of living rises  
 Visits to food banks up, schools struggling with food program costs, public accounts committee hears  
 Some Nova Scotia students facing 'desperate' situation amid housing crisis

## *Under the weight of it all*

we continued to provide a basic need, and advocate for sustainable solutions to food insecurity—because of you.

In 2022-23, we distributed

**2,714,589 kg**

of food across our network. Perishable items like fruit, vegetables, dairy, and meat made up half of that.

**At least 46,434**

people received food support from Feed Nova Scotia member food banks in 2022.

This represents a

**25% increase**

in the number of people accessing support compared to 2021.

**14,721 people**

accessed support for the first time in 2022.

These numbers reflect the growing food insecurity crisis in our province and the critical need for policy-based solutions.







## Responding to a disaster on top of a crisis

When Hurricane Fiona tore through our province, cutting connections to vital resources, and making thousands of food-insecure Nova Scotians even more vulnerable, we knew we needed to act fast. With your support, here's how we responded:



### **800 food boxes**

distributed to folks in HRM, Antigonish, and Cape Breton



### **\$100,000 of non-perishables**

purchased with funding from the provincial government



### **\$400,000 in cheques**

sent directly to member agencies from provincial government funding



### **\$100,000 of frozen foods**

distributed to member agencies to help replenish what was lost during the hurricane



### **\$20,000 in grocery gift cards**

for United Way Cape Breton to distribute to people affected

## Collective care lives here

We rely on the huge hearts of donors to raise food, funds, and awareness, and Nova Scotians always show up. The countless ways people rally for their neighbours is incredible!



**More than 300 events**  
held on our behalf



**\$1.3 million**  
collectively raised



**65,000 kilograms**  
of food collected



Photo by Will Yang



## ***Network members: Breaking down barriers***

### ***Adapting to provide support***

Volunteers at the Christ Church Food Bank heard from some of their clients—especially those who worked full time and single parents—that only offering pick-up hours on a weekday morning was a barrier to access. So Christ Church added an evening pick-up time one day a week to their schedule. The response from clients has been overwhelmingly positive, with the number of evening pick-ups quickly outpacing the morning. The volunteers are now considering another evening to better serve the needs of their community.

### ***COVID-19 food box program***

For 21,000 Nova Scotians, our COVID-19 food box program bridged a critical gap to food access during the pandemic, and discontinuing it last summer felt tough. After the program ended, we provided financial support to 11 member food banks in areas where food box requests were highest to reach folks who experienced barriers to accessing support. Through this pilot project, some food banks were able to continue offering home delivery or taxi services.

We know people's challenges aren't limited to transportation. The top two reasons Nova Scotians requested food box deliveries were a lack of income and the high cost of food. Tackling systemic problems with charitable responses won't create food security. We need policy-based solutions that provide all Nova Scotians with adequate income.



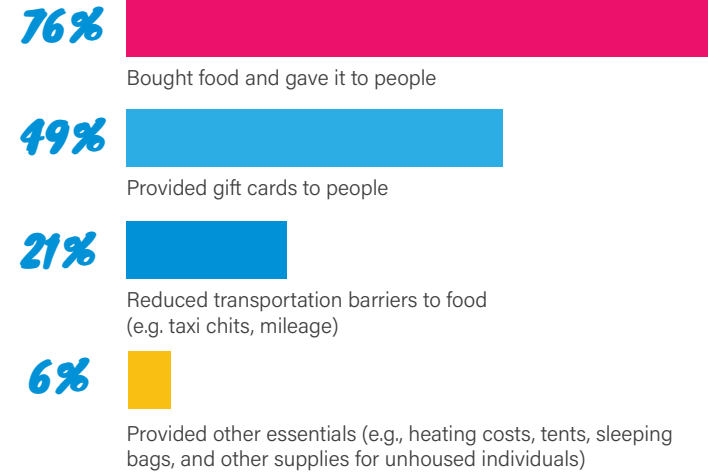
***“A lot of clients were asking for a different pick up time for the food bank, especially single moms, so we started opening one evening a week.”***

***—Christine Hoehne, Christ Church Food Bank***



## Network members: Meeting critical needs

Staff and volunteers at member network food banks, meal programs, and shelters are much closer to their communities than we are, and sometimes it makes the most sense to provide money and get out of the way. Here's how they responded to the need when we distributed financial support:



*These funds are so very important to our clients. I have been in my role as director for 24 years and I have never seen so many desperately hungry people since this past year.*

*-Christine Porter, Ally Centre of Cape Breton*



## Encouraging collaboration, taking action

When high school student Kai Hollett put out a call to action to his peers, people rose to the occasion—in a big way—raising over \$3,500 and 1,400 kilograms of food for Feed Nova Scotia, through a friendly competition among nine schools. We're proud to celebrate Kai and all the top community-led fundraisers and food drives.

### ***\$100,000+ worth of food or funds***

Loblaws - Spring and holiday food drives  
NSLC - For the Good of Our Communities campaigns  
Q104 Thanksgiv'er presented by Cherubini  
Sobeys Inc. - Holiday Food Drive  
Stuff-A-Bus presented by ATU Local 508, Move 100, and Scotiabank  
Tim Hortons Smile Cookie  
The Coast's Halifax Burger Bash  
Walmart - Fight Hunger Spark Change

### ***\$5,000+ worth of food or funds***

AVR and Magic 94.9 - Give What You Can  
BLT Jr. Elementary - Halloween for Hunger  
CAPREIT - Holiday Food Drive  
CBC Make the Season Kind  
CBRE - Atlantic Market Outlook Breakfast  
CFB Halifax Firefighters - food drive  
Citco - We Feed Nova Scotia

Compass Commercial Realty LP - food drive  
Dawson's Birthday food drive  
EastPoint Engineering Ltd. - food drive  
FX101.9 Fights Hunger  
Gateway Business Brokers - online campaign  
Herring Cove Fire Station 60 - food drive  
HRM Schools food drive  
Light Up Bedford Parade  
Novacorp Properties Limited - food drive  
Paramount Management - food drive  
Park West School - food drive  
Propeller Brewing Company - 25K IPA  
Purolator - Tackle Hunger Holiday Boxes  
Sackville High School - Fright Against Hunger  
SaltWire Holiday Parade of Lights  
The AndyVent Calendar  
Tom Jackson - Stories, Songs & Santa Causes  
Ultimate Online Nova Scotia Kitchen Party and NS Buzz



***“We saw how rising food costs were impacting the people in our communities, and wanted to do what we could to help support our neighbours.”***

***-Kai Hollett***





## *Championing change where we live*

Sometimes, the passion to help runs so deep among our supporters they look for multiple ways to connect people with our cause. Joanne Lawen-Mratic is a perfect example. We're thrilled with the way she engaged family, friends, and the community in supporting our work. Thanks, too, to the Lebanese Festival, Paramount Management, Lawen Dentistry, and Beads by Zoya, for responding to her enthusiasm!

## *The power of yes*

When NSLC staff come together for the good of our community, they make big things happen. And they highlight the most critical part of fundraising—the ask! And they're not alone. Through donations at the till, staff and customers at Atlantic Superstore, Foodland and participating Co-ops, Lawtons, No Frills, NSLC, Sobeys, Walmart, and Your Independent Grocer collectively contributed \$361,000 for Feed Nova Scotia—and that doesn't include the support we received beyond the till! Our heartfelt thanks to staff who asked and every person who said yes.





## *Increasing access to local foods*

This year we purchased more food from local producers to provide staple items for Nova Scotians accessing support. We've budgeted an extra \$1 million for food purchases next year, and we've set a target to source 50% of all food purchases locally, with a particular focus on buying direct from farmers. Here's what we bought and distributed this year, because of you:



***\$156,000 of eggs***



***\$154,000 of milk***



***\$87,000 of produce***



***\$136,000 of poultry and beef***





*“I cried very happy tears. It’s been a rough several years and this food carried me through.”*

During the holiday season, Feed Nova Scotia alongside 21 member agencies and 24 community organizations supported 20,737 individuals in 7,195 households in HRM with Christmas support. Here are a few facts unique to this year:



1,200 additional households registered for support compared to 2021.



To support the additional number of unhoused or precariously housed people who applied for support, we provided \$50 grocery cards through the Navigator Street Outreach team.



We recruited additional volunteer groups to help meet the request for home-delivery service.



*“Giving back to the community over the holidays was an incredibly rewarding team-building experience for everyone.”*

*-Ambassadors*

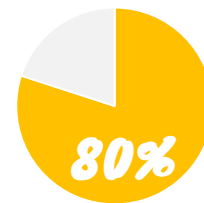
# Advocating for real, meaningful change

***Our message is clear: Nova Scotians need adequate income to live a dignified life.***

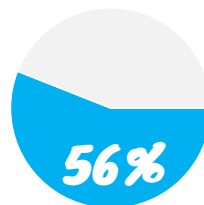
This year we surveyed individuals receiving food support and their voices were a chorus, highlighting the urgent need for policy intervention.

We were pleased to see our public opinion survey echo that sentiment.

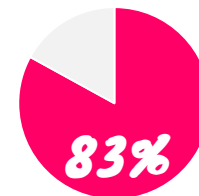
Bottom line, charitable band-aid solutions aren't going to cut it. A dignified life for all Nova Scotians is possible. It's time to make it so.



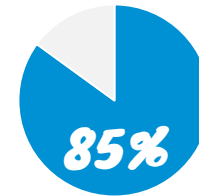
of food bank clients surveyed cited insufficient income and rising cost of living as the top reasons for food insecurity.



of food bank clients surveyed sacrificed food to pay for medication.



of Nova Scotians surveyed believed provincial income support should be increased.



of food bank clients surveyed spent more than 30% of their income on housing, the threshold for what's considered affordable.



We delivered an urgent call for policy-based solutions to MLAs at a Public Accounts Committee meeting in June and a Standing Committee on Community Services meeting in January. A few months later, in the provincial budget, we'd see our politicians' blatant choice to leave thousands of Nova Scotians in crisis.



We were encouraged to see that at the 64th General Assembly, our recommendation resulted in Bill 209, which proposes to reduce out-of-pocket expenses on pharmaceuticals for families and seniors.

## Four ways we can create food-secure communities:

(our policy recommendations)

- 1 Raise Income Assistance rates substantially to match the poverty line and index the rates to inflation.
- 2 Provide a minimum income floor for Nova Scotians, often referred to as a basic income guarantee.
- 3 Support and invest in non-market, non-profit, co-op, affordable housing.
- 4 Reduce out-of-pocket expenses for prescription medication by waiving or reducing the deductible in the Family Pharmacare Program.

## Member network: Working to provide homes

Thousands of Nova Scotians are at the intersection of the housing and food insecurity crises. We were thrilled to cheer member agencies on as they continued to dig in and provide long-term, sustainable solutions.

When Adsum for Women & Children opened The Sunflower, they showed everyone that when resources, leadership, and vision align, we can create dignified, affordable housing. They could've filled the 25 units several times over, once again highlighting the need is urgent, and has been for years.

In Cape Breton, the North Sydney Community Food Bank began major upgrades to their building, with accessibility and sustainability at the forefront. Future work will include 20 new affordable housing units for seniors in the community.

The Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre will also redevelop an existing building to include 21 long-term housing units to support Indigenous clients experiencing chronic homelessness. They will also provide cultural support and programming to encourage clients to engage with their community and traditions.






Photo: The Sunflower

# *Supporting community to lead the way*

The best solutions to food insecurity will come from those with lived experience and local community leaders who know what people want and need.

In this spirit, our Innovation and Learning Lab aims to explore, test, and develop new ways of meeting the needs of food-insecure Nova Scotians.

-  We formed a committee of 16 Nova Scotians who have lived experience with food insecurity to ground and inform our work. They're compensated at a living wage rate for the time they spend contributing their expertise—providing meaningful insight into where we're getting things right, and more importantly, where we're getting things wrong. We're extraordinarily thankful for their participation, openness, and honesty.
-  We launched a grant stream and supported 14 community-led projects that are trying new ways to increase access, availability, or choice of food; increase community-led production of food; support service coordination and/or build awareness and advocacy around the root causes of food insecurity. We'll take the learnings from this year's soft launch to refine the process before opening the grant publicly in 2024.
-  The Halifax Food Policy Alliance spent a year and a half engaging in extensive community consultation and from this, identified 56 action items—known as the JustFOOD Action Plan. We'll be working closely with community partners to advance two items from the plan: a social supermarket and a rural food access program.





# Shifting our culture

## *Change starts within*

Many staff expressed that accessing mental health support can present a challenge; commuting, scheduling, and other commitments at home and in the community are obstacles, and the cost of private mental health services can be prohibitive. Understanding that it's critical for staff to be able to connect with support in whatever way they are most comfortable, and recognizing these barriers, we established on site mental health support with counsellor Stacy Darku of Esinam Counselling, and doubled the allowance through our benefits provider.

In a continued effort to be a fair and equitable employer, and help create social change, we partnered with the Diversity Employment Network to host the first BIPOC Atlantic Job Fair. There were 250 participants and 46 exhibitors. From first-hand feedback, we know of 16 people who received job offers through connections they made.

We are also grateful for support from several community partners like Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS), Black Business Initiative (BBI), and the Diversity Employment Network (DEN). Through these critical connections, we continue to diversify our pool of candidates and strengthen our recruitment efforts to have a staff team that is reflective of the community we support.



## 23,769 hours

contributed by volunteers to help in every aspect of our organization. And they did it with big heart!

## 472 people

chose or continued to choose Feed Nova Scotia as an organization they want to volunteer with. How amazing is that?

## 3 volunteers

hit a very big milestone this year, contributing over 3,000 hours. Hats off to Mary McNab, Nancy Fullerton, and Delores Smith!

## 1,382 hours

spent by volunteers out connecting with the community at fundraisers and food drives.

*"I've been in the Pride parade before with businesses, but this felt different, and so very special. We danced the whole way. The crew was SO fun, the crowd was screaming with joy, and I was so proud to be a part of the magic!"*

*-Tanya Colbo*





## Sharing a legacy of support

For more than 20 years, Charles Belliveau has been quietly supporting our work, sending a cheque in the mail almost every single month, to help support folks experiencing food insecurity. For Charles, growing up with mobility and speech impairments had its challenges, but one thing he's grateful for is that he's never had to worry about food. This year, when Charles wanted to deepen his impact in the community, a gift of shares made it possible. We're honoured to recognize Charles for a lifetime of showing up for his neighbours—allowing us to provide enough food for 350,000 meals. But that's not all; in true Charles fashion, he's already planning for his next gift.

Donating securities is a tax-smart and impactful way to give. Together with Charles, 35 of our incredible donors contributed \$570,000 this year through gifts of shares.

## Celebrating excellence

How do you honour someone who gave over 10,000 hours and a whole lot of heart in their 14-year volunteer post? Well, we decided to make it an annual celebration, by creating the Norma Searle Award for Volunteer Excellence. Congratulations, Norma! We can't wait to recognize some amazing people who, like you, have done so much to help us work toward our mission.



## Building a framework for the future

How do we start working toward social justice when we're all deeply entrenched in a system that holds up charity as an acceptable response to human rights violations? There's no easy answer, but as a staff and board of directors, we started to dig in this year. Led by DLM Consulting, the board and staff team are looking critically at our mission, vision, and values and developing new strategic pillars to ground our future direction.

We know there's much work to be done in the days ahead and the only true measure of success will be how our efforts are felt by the communities we support.

- We acknowledged it's time to move away from a Eurocentric governance model to one that is intentional and respectful of African Nova Scotian and Indigenous heritage. We're working with Paul Taylor of Evenings & Weekends Consulting to make this change.
- We've created a justice, equity, diversity, decolonization, and inclusion standing committee and a workplan to hold these principles at the forefront of our work.
- We now use a five-P equity lens (people, process, place, power, possibilities) at every board meeting with an in-camera evaluation at the end of the meeting. The board looks critically at our own work with 27 guiding questions for discussion.

Care and the  
with social-justice focused  
donors, private sectors, etc.? How  
will we work with and in service to  
equity-deserving groups who have been  
historically marginalized and who  
continue to be today?

## Board of Directors

Duma Bernard  
Patricia Bradshaw  
Kim Burns  
Cynthia Dorrington  
Joe Fraser  
Mark Fullerton  
Mary Ellen Greenough

Ahmad Hussein  
Maxime Lessard  
Roddy Macdonald  
Miranda Mavhunga  
Sylvia Parris-Drummond  
Mohammad Ali Raza  
Robert Strang

Thank you to outgoing members Lisa Haydon, Jeff Hillyard, and Kristen Hollery.



## Outstanding contributions (\$10,000+)

Brad Abernethy



John Himmelman



LiFT Family Fund

Marian Fund



F.M. McCulloch



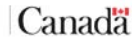
Stella and Scott Balfour



Charles Belliveau



Michael Robert Merchant



Black Family Foundation



THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



The Edwards Family Charitable Foundation



The River Philip Foundation



The Sidney Crosby Foundation

The Elia Corporation



Flemming Charitable Foundation



St. Augustine's Church, Purcell Cove Road

Holly Murphy-Stenton and Ted Stenton



Helga Guderley



Heather Jean McInnes



The Windsor Foundation

Thanks, also, to those who prefer anonymity or haven't consented to recognition.



## *Outstanding food donors*

### *100,000+ kilograms*

Atlantic Superstore  
Food Banks Canada  
Sobeys  
Walmart

### *25,000 - 99,999 kilograms*

Charles Keddy Farms Ltd  
Costco Wholesalers  
GlobalMedic  
Sable Warehousing & Distribution Ltd  
Saputo Dairy Products Canada  
Sawler Gardens  
Spa Springs Mineral Water Company  
Stokdijk Greenhouses  
Sysco Atlantic  
Vermeulen Farms Ltd

### *5,000 - 24,999 kilograms*

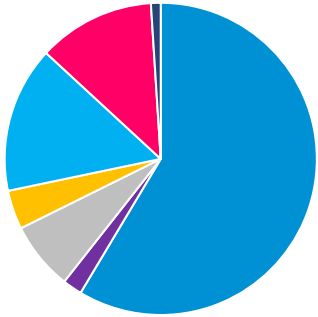
Apex Sales Group Inc  
Apple Valley Foods Inc  
Canada Bread  
Catelli Foods Corp  
den Haan Enterprises Ltd  
Egg Farmers of Canada  
Elmridge Farm Ltd  
Ferme Benoit Vernier  
High Liner Foods Inc  
Maple Leaf Foods Inc  
McCain Foods (Canada)  
Nova Agri Inc  
Ocean Crisp Apple Company Inc  
Scotian Meat Market  
Spurr Brothers Farms Ltd  
TDL Group Corporation  
Van Meekeren Farms Ltd



## Financials

### Revenue

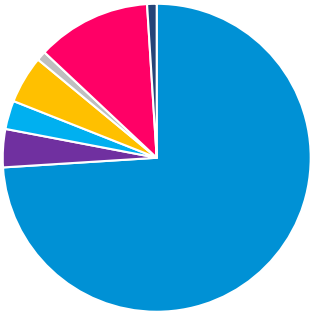
\$24,563,830 (Includes \$89,720 from Innovation and Learning Lab)



- In kind food donations (58%)
- In kind other donations (2%)
- Individual donations (7%)
- Corporate donations (4%)
- Donations by and through other charities (15%)
- Government grants (12%)
- Other income (1%)
- Investment income (less than 1%)
- Innovation and Learning Lab (less than 1%)

### Expenses

\$24,003,648 (Includes \$187,900 from Innovation and Learning Lab)



- Food procurement and logistics (74%)
- Community connections (4%)
- Fundraising and donor relations (3%)
- People, culture, and administration (5%)
- Occupancy (1%)
- Member-designated donations (12%)
- Innovation and Learning Lab (1%)

Find our audited financial statements at [feednovascotia.ca](http://feednovascotia.ca)



## *A different Nova Scotia is possible.*

Through the generous donations of food and funds by our donors, and the incredible work of our volunteers, we move into the next year hopeful about the future despite the notable absence of government leadership in poverty reduction.

We're thankful for, and humbled by, the continued outpouring of support.

We all agree better is possible for Nova Scotians struggling with food insecurity. With your steadfast contributions of time, money, and vocal support for change, we can make it so. We can build a province where everyone has adequate income to access the food they want and need to live a dignified life.

We will get there. Together.



**feed**  
nova scotia



Food Banks  
Canada



Banques alimentaires  
Canada