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2025 Annual Report

Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
Nova Scotia Office



Land acknowledgement

The CCPA-NS office is located in Kijipuktuk in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded, unsurrendered ancestral land of the Mi'kmaq people. We recognize that we are all treaty people and have responsibilities to each other and this land.

We also recognize the 400+ years of history of communities of African descent and the 50 African Nova Scotian communities throughout the region today. We commit to actions that will move the work of truth, reconciliation, justice and equity forward.

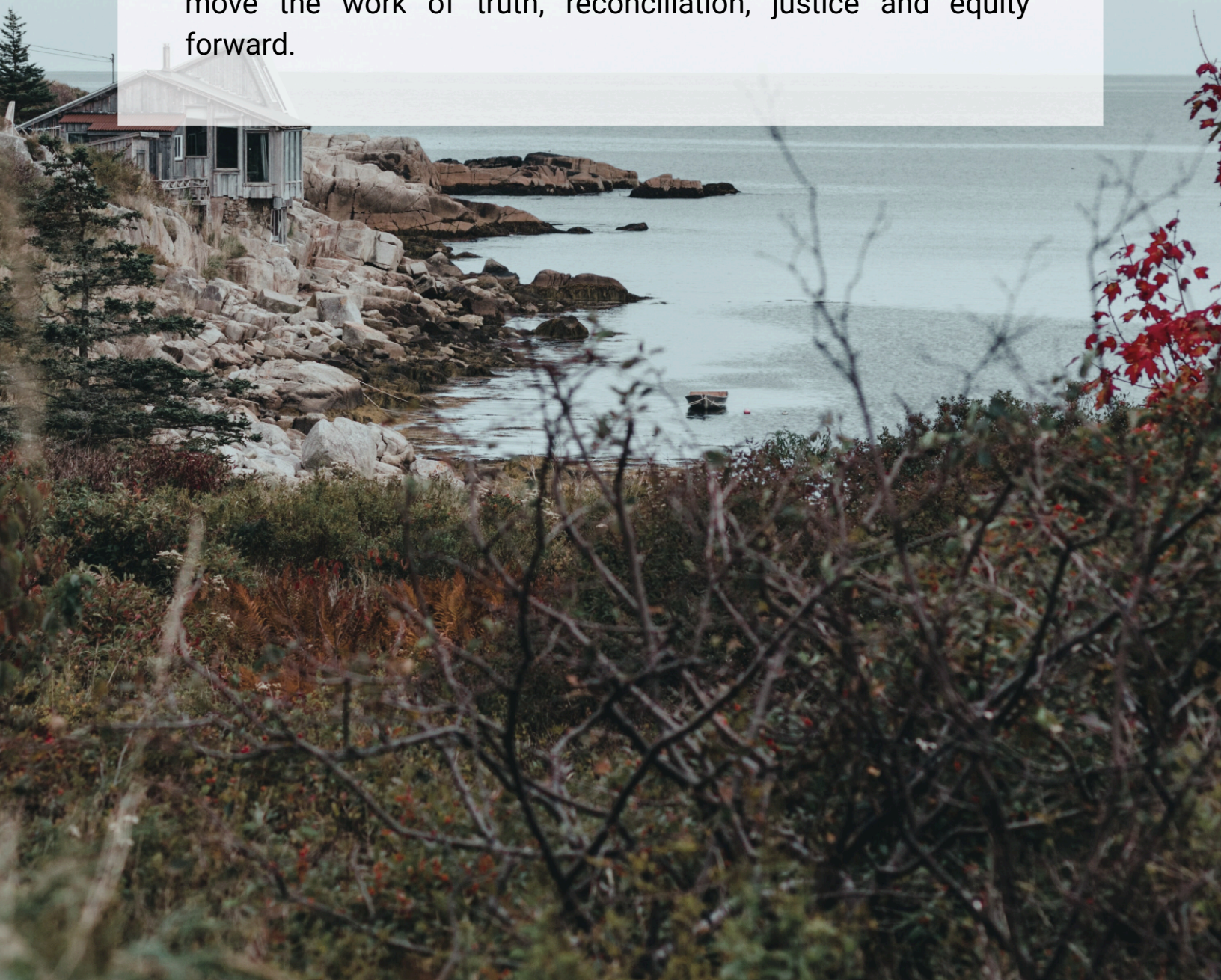


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Foreword

It is no small task to summarize the year that was 2025. At CCPA–Nova Scotia, it was a year marked by both challenge and momentum, by barriers to democratic participation, and by the growing power of collaboration. I hope you read this annual report for what it truly is: a celebration of what we have accomplished together, and a record of how evidence, solidarity, and organizing continue to move the needle for justice in this province.



We began the year stunned to learn that the Nova Scotia government would not allow our organization’s representatives to attend the provincial budget lock-up for stakeholders. While this did not stop us from producing [a thorough and timely analysis of the 2025–26 budget](#), it raised deeper concerns about the erosion of transparency and democratic engagement under the current government. At CCPA-NS, we take a different approach. Our work is grounded in collaboration with experts, frontline service providers, activists, advocates, unions, and communities. We know that good public policy is built collectively, not behind closed doors.

Throughout 2025, that commitment shaped everything we did. We co-hosted and spoke at multiple events on tariffs and the escalating trade war with the United States, and brought a workers-first lens [directly to the Nova Scotia Legislature](#). We partnered with community organizations to host a town hall on “*The Many versus the Money*,” a theme that would guide the development of the 2026 Alternative Budget. We collaborated with the Alexa McDonough Institute to celebrate the work of *Informed Perspectives*, amplifying the voices and influence of women and gender-diverse people in public debate. We also convened a media training and research mobilization workshop with the Canadian Association of Labour Media (with CCPA’s Central Board Chair Nora Loreto) and the Dalhousie Faculty Association.

When Dalhousie Faculty Association members were locked out and then forced onto the picket line, we responded not only with solidarity but with analysis—[publishing on the crisis in postsecondary education](#) and standing alongside DFA and CUPE 3912 members as they confronted [growing precarity in academic work](#). At the same time, we continued to build the evidence base for fair pay across the province, demonstrating again how far the minimum wage lags behind [the 2025 living wage](#).

This year also marked the launch of our new *Decent Work in Nova Scotia* series, beginning with a major [report on labour standards](#) and with additional research underway. Across university classrooms, at a climate retreat, in community halls, at union conventions, at workshops and webinars, and on the streets themselves, we shared evidence that challenges inequality and insists on possibility. We spoke clearly about the value of living wages, strong public services including [child care](#), and workers’ rights—so that it can never be said there are no alternatives to the status quo.

At a time when power is increasingly concentrated and democratic space is narrowing, CCPA-NS remains committed to expanding both. The work in these pages reflects not only what we researched, but also who we stood with and what we believe is possible for Nova Scotia. Thank you for being part of that work.

Overview of 2025

The NS Office released:

- 3 Reports
- 9 Articles
- 1 Government Submission

2025 CCPA-NS Gala Dinner Fundraiser

This year's gala completely sold out, raising over \$30,000! The evening featured an insightful and engaging discussion between Leilani Farha and Emcee Maggie Rahr about insights and lessons learned during Farha's fight for the right to adequate housing and an inspiring musical performance by The Women Next Door choir.

Hosted, cohosted, or spoke at 21 events, including:

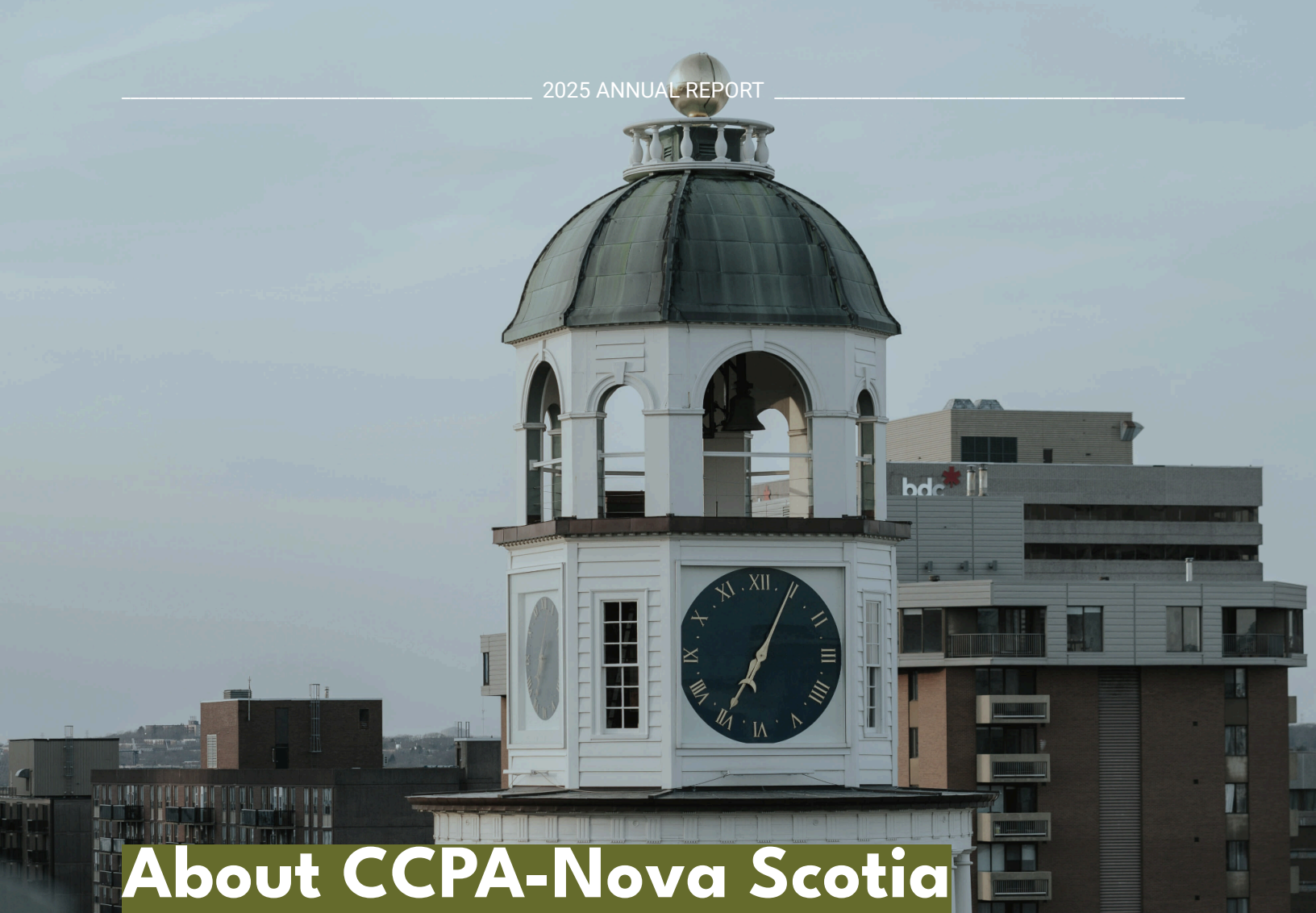
- 6 Panels
- 7 Community Events
- 7 Presentations

3 new research associates

With backgrounds in public policy, labour and employment, gender, environmental politics, and international political economy.



The Women Next Door choir performing at the 2025 CCPA-NS Gala Dinner Fundraiser.



About CCPA-Nova Scotia

The CCPA-Nova Scotia opened its doors in 1999, committing to:

- Propose policy alternatives to achieve an environmentally sustainable, economically and socially just province.
- Publish progressive economic and social policy research of specific interest to Nova Scotians;
- Act as an alternative source of policy positions for media, the general public, and governments;
- Offer public commentary and opinion on alternative policy positions;
- Serve as an educational resource for our supporters and supporting partners, and encourage debate, education, and communication among our supporters and supporting partners.

2025 publications

Reports

2025 Living wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island: Too many workers struggle to make ends meet

August 25 | Daniel Cerdas Sandí, Christine Saulnier and Russell Williams

VIEW REPORT ONLINE >

Too many households in Atlantic Canada struggle to make ends meet – real earnings do not match the minimum living wage needed to pay the rising costs of basic expenses like housing and goods. This report provides the latest regional and provincial living wage calculations across Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island and offers governments and employers feasible solutions to alleviate the affordability crisis.

The Foundations of Decent Work: An Evaluation of Nova Scotia Labour Standards

October 6 | Rebecca Casey and Christine Saulnier

VIEW REPORT ONLINE >

This report assesses Nova Scotia's labour standards and finds the province lagging behind other Canadian jurisdictions. As outlined by the report, Nova Scotia's current system relies on individual workers to report violations and leaves many of these workers vulnerable to unjust and unfair working conditions. Nova Scotia needs immediate improvements to strengthen existing provisions and a system that relies on proactive enforcement and fines for those who violate labour standards.

The series will continue in 2026 with the release of additional reports that examine precarious work and the barriers to unionization.

The Roadmap is Clear, Detours are Risky: Nova Scotia's Child Care System at a Crossroads

December 9 | Kenya Thompson, Tammy Findlay, Christine Saulnier and Meghan Richard

VIEW REPORT ONLINE >

Despite significant federal investment, Nova Scotia child care faces challenges such as insufficient funding, affordability challenges, lack of spaces, workforce challenges, and weak accountability. This report outlines the successes and shortcomings of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement in Nova Scotia and provides policy solutions to ensure high-quality care for children, fair compensation for educators, and reliable access for families in all regions.

Articles

Nova Scotia minimum wage increase: Still not enough

January 29 | Christine Saulnier and Jenna MacNeily

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

While the 2025 minimum wage increases are welcome, they don't adequately bridge the gap between the cost of living and low-wage. Addressing the affordability crisis requires government action on both sides of the equation, raising minimum wage to \$20 per hour and also investment in public services to lower people's out-of-pocket costs for essentials.

2024 Living wage rates for Newfoundland and Labrador: Understanding costs in Labrador

February 9 | Christine Saulnier and Russell Williams

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

This article explains how the living wage is calculated for Newfoundland and Labrador and provides additional context as to why Newfoundland and Labrador has such a high living wage.

The Nova Scotia Budget 2025-26: Time to raise our expectations and unlock potential for everyone

February 18 | Christine Saulnier

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

The Nova Scotia 2025-26 Budget claims to be "unlocking our potential", but doesn't do enough to address the social determinants of health, reduce high poverty rates and high regional unemployment rates, and ensure everyone has access to housing and food security.



In this Canadian election, young voters are an afterthought

April 10 | Jenna MacNeily

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

Young voters face barriers to voting in Canada's elections. This article describes the barriers young voters faced in participating in the last federal election and highlights the need to dismantle these barriers and engage young people in issues that impact them.

Beyond the count: Homelessness in Western Nova Scotia

August 19 | Mary Sweatman

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

Homelessness is increasing, and needs are becoming more complex. This article summarizes the first homelessness count in the western region of Nova Scotia and shows the depth of the housing crisis.



What the 2025 living wage rates reveal

September 2 | Daniel Cerdas Sandí, Christine Saulnier and Russell Williams

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

The gap between the minimum wage and living wage is growing. This article details the implications of 2025 living wage rates and describes the detrimental effect of low wages on workers' lives.

Fighting for the right to a public university

September 8 | Nancy Ross and Luc S. Cousineau

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

Public post-secondary education is increasingly under threat of funding cuts. This article provides insight into Bill 12 and what it means for public universities going forward.

Tenants are suffering: An urgent call to strengthen Nova Scotia's rent subsidy program

November 26 | Catherine Leviten-Reid

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

This article outlines how the Canada-Nova Scotia Targeted Housing Benefit program fails to adequately support those who are most vulnerable to living in unaffordable, unsafe housing and becoming homeless.

Lifting the Bottom, Building a Fair Economy for All Workers in Nova Scotia

December 2 | Daniel Cerdas Sandí and Christine Saulnier

VIEW ARTICLE ONLINE >

This article details why raising Nova Scotia's minimum wage by only 50 cents per hour doesn't sufficiently close the gap between minimum and living wage. While any increases are welcome, a 50-cent increase still leaves workers struggling to make ends meet.

Submissions

Submission to the Industrial Inquiry Commission on the dispute between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives-Nova Scotia

February 14 | Jenna MacNeily and Christine Saulnier

VIEW SUBMISSION ONLINE >

This submission outlines the social and economic factors the Industrial Inquiry Commission should consider as it developed recommendations concerning the Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) labour dispute.



Media impact

In 2025, our audience and engagement on social media grew significantly, while we continued to be referenced in traditional media. CCPA-NS research associates were interviewed about a range of topics impacting Nova Scotians, including minimum wage increases, access to child care, affordable housing, food insecurity, and the living wage.

27,431 COMBINED VIEWS ON
TOP 10 CCPA-NS
PUBLICATIONS

↑575%
INCREASE IN ENGAGEMENT
ON FACEBOOK

414
MEDIA
MENTIONS

Publication media performance

Throughout the year, CCPA-NS Research Associates were interviewed about their publications, and publications were mentioned by a number of prominent and local media outlets, including CBC News and Radio Canada, the Halifax Examiner, Global News, and the Signal. Three of our publications stood out this year in terms of media performance.

PUBLICATION	MEDIA MENTIONS	AGGREGATE READERSHIP
Nova Scotia minimum wage increase: Still not enough	105	140 million
2025 Living Wages for Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island: Too Many Workers Struggle to Make Ends Meet	90	20 million
The Roadmap is Clear, Detours are Risky: Nova Scotia's Child Care System at a Crossroads	130	139 million

Media mentions

Minimum wage

The Canadian Press | January 29

"These minimum wage increases hardly begin to bridge the gap between the minimum wage and the living wages calculated by CCPA Nova Scotia," the centre said in a statement released Wednesday. "One solution is to increase the minimum wage to \$20."

Minimum wage

CBC News | January 29

"It really does mean that we need to see a more significant increase and plan to do something about the gap between the minimum wage and the living wage," [Christine] Saulnier said."

Nova Scotia Budget

Cape Breton Post | February 24

"I absolutely think that our tax system needs to be fairer and that we need to consider the fact that the HST is a regressive tax," [Christine Saulnier] said.

"You go to the grocery store, it's not based on your income. You're paying the same amount as somebody down the street who may earn way more than you. It is unfair in terms of proportion of income."

Housing

CBC Nova Scotia | March 3

CCPA-NS Research Associate Dr. Catherine Leviten-Reid was interviewed by CBC Nova Scotia.

"This erosion of the volume of affordable rental housing in the private market is a trend researchers have observed across Canada, said Cape Breton University associate professor Catherine Leviten-Reid.

'We're losing that more affordable housing stock faster than we are building new units,' she said."

Minimum Wage

Halifax Examiner | March 31

"[Christine] Saulnier said while the province is increasing the minimum wage to \$16.50, that still won't be enough, particularly with the continuing tariff war with the U.S. and how that will affect businesses.

Homelessness

CBC Nova Scotia | July 10

CCPA-NS Research Associate Dr. Mary Sweatman was interviewed by CBC Nova Scotia: "I think what this count is telling us is that there's an acute issue that needs a collaborative cross-sector response to house our community members in more dignified ways," said Mary Sweatman, an associate professor in Acadia University's department of community development.

Living wage

Guysborough Journal | September 3

“[Christine Saulnier] also pointed out that it’s a mistake to think rural Nova Scotia, overall, is broadly more affordable than urban areas. “People seem to now understand that Halifax is not affordable, but it’s not just Halifax,” she said, noting that in places like Guysborough and Antigonish, the same box of cereal costs what it does in the city, but it eats up a bigger share of a smaller paycheque.

Food insecurity

CBC Thunderbay | November 14

Dr. Lesley Frank, Acadia University professor and CCPA-NS Research Associate was interviewed by CBC Thunderbay: “[Lesley] Frank said increasing the Canada child benefit amount could help ease the struggle to buy formula, as could enacting food entitlements for breastfeeding women and all children under four years old.”

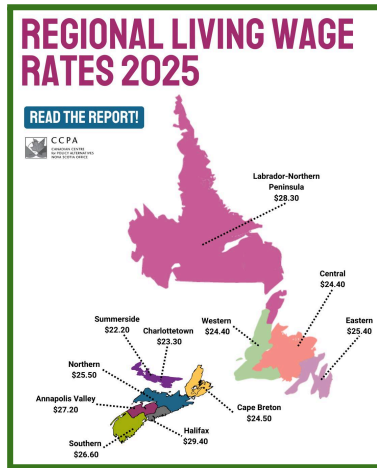
Child care

CBC Nova Scotia | December 9

CCPA-NS Research Associate and report co-author Kenya Thompson was interviewed by CBC Nova Scotia: “We just don’t have enough spaces across the province, so it’s easier to superficially meet the [\$10/day] target, but unless families are actually able to access that space for their child, they’re not actually reaping those benefits. Nova Scotia definitely has a long way to go to build the system that was promised in 2021.”



Top performing social media posts

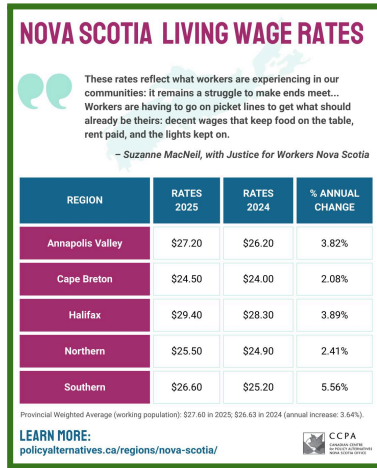


1

Regional Living Wage Rates 2025

Posted August 25

FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM
233,419 Views	36,431 Views
890 Interactions	863 Interactions



2

Nova Scotia Living Wage Rates

Posted August 25

FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM
61,914 Views	6,388 Views
243 Interactions	121 Interactions



3

Newfoundland and Labrador Living Wage Rates

Posted August 25

FACEBOOK	INSTAGRAM
48,781 Views	3,056 Views
106 Interactions	36 Interactions

Events

In 2025, CCPA-NS supported research, education, training, and advocacy through our involvement in numerous community events. Overall, we hosted, cohosted, or spoke at 21 events this year, including:

- 6 Panels
- 7 Community Events
- 7 Presentations

Notable events

Media Training and Research Mobilization Workshop

May 1st | 82 registrants

We celebrated May Day in style this year by offering a Media Training and Research Mobilization Workshop in partnership with the Canadian Association of Labour Media and the Dalhousie Faculty Association. Targeted at academic and community-based researchers, this workshop provided tips and tricks to increase the media uptake of progressive research. Topics included writing and pitching op-eds, what to keep in mind for media interviews, and how to write media advisories and press releases. This event attracted tremendous interest with 82 people registering.

Workers, Tariffs, and Interprovincial Trade in Atlantic Canada Webinar

May 8th | 153 registrants

We, in partnership with Nova Scotia Federation of Labour, brought together Atlantic Canadian and national labour leaders for a panel discussion on the impacts of the trade war and how worker-centred solutions can improve our economy. This webinar gave attendees the chance to ask panelists questions about the tariff crisis and what government and employers should be doing to protect workers. More than 150 people registered for this webinar, which is [now available online](#).

The Many Vs The Money Town Hall

May 13th | 150 registrants

In association with the South Shore chapter of Council of Canadians and Sierra Club Canada, we helped to host a town hall in Antigonish, focusing on the state of healthcare, housing, and the climate crisis that is impossible to ignore in Nova Scotia.

Informed Perspectives: Celebrate Feminist Advocacy and Impact

September 10th | 42 registrants

In collaboration with the Alexa McDonough Institute for Women, Gender, and Social Justice, Christine Saulnier spoke on the importance of ensuring that the voices of women and gender diverse people are heard, and exert influence.

A Future Without Poverty: National Dialogue 2025

October 17th | 385 registrants

On the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, we co-sponsored this webinar with Campaign 2000, in partnership with over 40 other organizations! This webinar brought organizations advocating for poverty reduction across the country together to talk about poverty and inequality, and how we can work toward poverty eradication in Canada. The webinar is available to watch [here](#).

2025 Annual Gala Dinner Fundraiser

November 6th | 160 registrants

Our annual gala fundraiser dinner brought together CCPA-NS supporters, labour, and community members to celebrate another year of progressive research. With tickets completely selling out, we raised just over \$30,000! Mi'kmaq land protector Michelle Paul opened the evening with a land acknowledgement before guests dug into a delicious dinner. We also had the benefit of listening to an insightful and engaging discussion. The evening finished with an inspiring musical performance by The Women Next Door choir.



Pictured from left to right: Fazeela Jiwa from Fernwood Publishing; Michelle Paul Mi'kmaq land defender; CCPA-NS Director Christine Saulnier; and Ajay Parasram, Dalhousie Professor, current member of the CCPA-NS Steering Committee and a Research Associate.

Statement of Revenue & Expenditures

REVENUE

Organizational donations	\$60,070.00
Individual donations	\$38,726.00
Foundations/other charities	\$75,000.00
Fundraising events	\$33,445.30
Other revenue	\$23,200.00
Project revenue	\$77,500.00
TOTAL	\$307,941.30

EXPENDITURES

Office admin.	\$2,475.21
Outreach	\$754.47
Publications	\$18,904.46
Fundraising	\$8,647.03
Personnel	\$266,085.67
TOTAL	\$296,866.84

BUDGET BALANCE	\$11,074.46
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Governance & Staff

STEERING COMMITTEE

- Sarah MacDonald (Chair)
- Alec Stratford
- Jim Houston
- Catherine Bryan
- Eric Leviten-Reid
- Sarah Sanford
- Jason Edwards
- Molly Hurd
- Tammy Findlay
- Ajay Parasram
- Grant MacNeil

RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Catherine Bryan (Chair)
- Alexandra Dobrowolsky
- Catherine Leviten-Reid
- Rachel Brickner
- Andrew Biro
- Rebecca Casey

NEW RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

- Joanne Hussey of the Public Service Alliance of Canada (Atlantic) is an experienced researcher and housing advocate.
- Dr. Jean Philippe Sapinski is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Université de Moncton.
- Dr. **Monika Dutt** lives and works in Nova Scotia as a public health and family physician, and is completing her PhD in Health Policy at McMaster University, with research interest in paid sick leave.

CCPA-NS STAFF 2025

- Christine Saulnier
NS Office Director | November 2017 - present
- Cherise Carlaw
Fund Development & Communications Officer | August 2024 - present
- Daniel Cerdas Sandí
Research Assistant | April 2025 - present

Thank you to our gala organizational sponsors.



LEGAL AID
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FERNWOOD
PUBLISHING



New Dawn
Enterprises



NSGEU
NOVA SCOTIA GOVERNMENT & GENERAL EMPLOYEES UNION



Nova Scotia
Teachers Union

NSUPE
Nova Scotia Union
of Public & Private Employees

pink larkin
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Atlantic
Atlantique

A special thank you to our ongoing organizational donors.



Thank you to all Nova Scotians who support our work by donating.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who support the realization of our strategic goals.



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Charitable registration #124146473RR0001



CCPA

CANADIAN CENTRE
for POLICY ALTERNATIVES
NOVA SCOTIA OFFICE