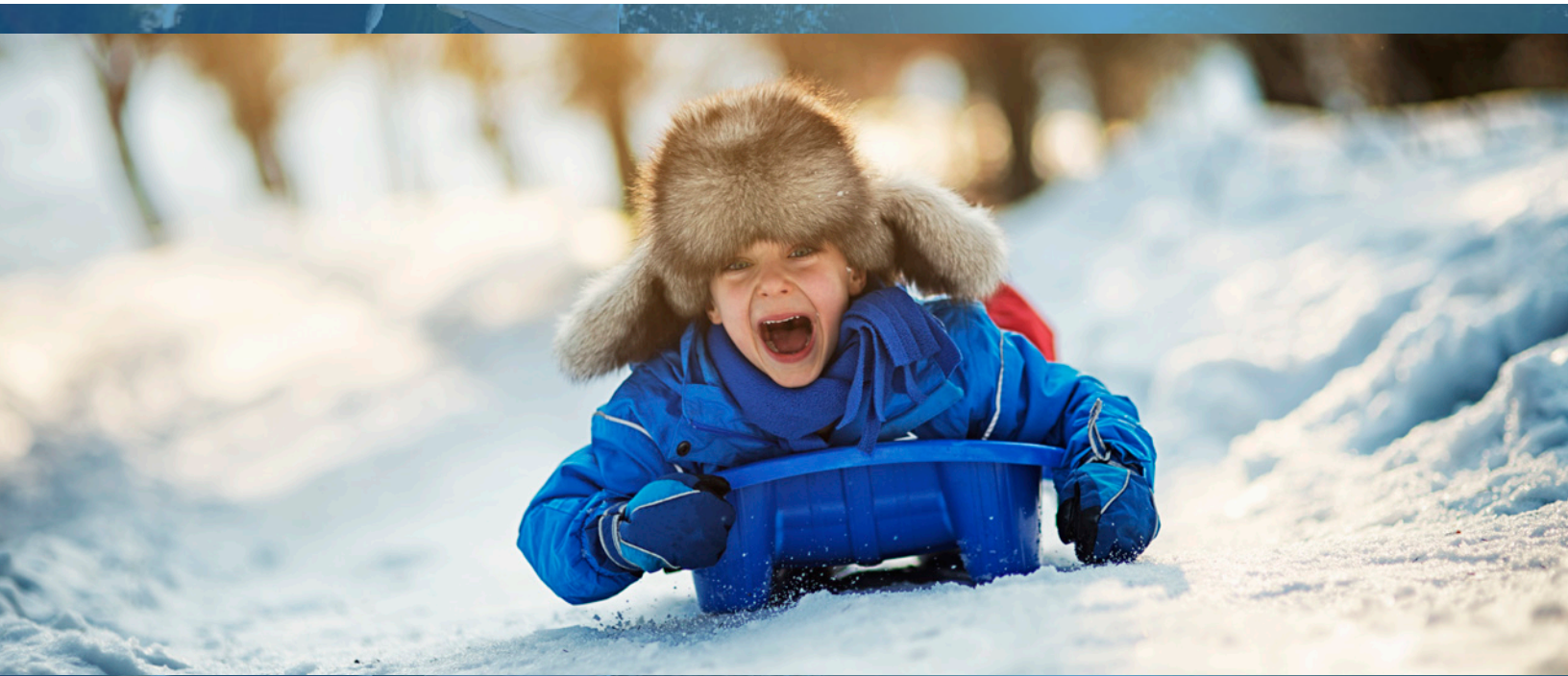


NOVA  
SCOTIA



# QUALITY OF LIFE INDEX

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# FOREWORD

For many of us in Nova Scotia, quality of life is a point of pride. We are surrounded by beauty, we take time to have fun and we care about how our neighbours are doing.

Those are the things that matter, we say. Success is about more than just dollars and cents.

But not everyone has access to those good things. Some Nova Scotians are more worried about putting food on the table than planning a picnic at the beach.

So what if – as a complement to economic indicators – we measured what we treasure across a broader range of areas: like time with family and friends, and feeling supported in our communities? Would we make better decisions? Might we find new ways to work with each other? Would fewer people get left behind?

We think those are questions worth asking.

That's why we are working with a range of partners, in conjunction with the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW), to coordinate a multi-year Quality of Life Initiative – one that will see us examine a wide range of topics that matter to Nova Scotians, so they can be measured, tracked and improved.

Traditionally, much of the information we use to make decisions that affect our daily lives is based on economic data. Those data are not wrong - they are just incomplete. With this Initiative, we are working to advance a comprehensive framework for measuring and improving the daily lives of all Nova Scotians.

Perhaps we will find, in some areas, that we are richer than we think. Undoubtedly, we will find room for improvement.

This report does not provide the definitive word on how to assess progress in any of the eight domains studied. It is intended as a starting point for important conversations about what we value. As such, we will let the data speak for itself, and encourage others to learn from it.



Many groups and individuals are working tirelessly with and on behalf of people whose quality of life has been short-changed – often because of systemic barriers. We hope this Initiative strengthens their efforts and encourages new people to get involved.

It's important to emphasize that we are not the sole holders of this Initiative. We are actively partnering with governments, educators, businesses, community organizations and inspired individuals who care about the future of this province, and who understand the degree to which our aspirations are interdependent.

Our approach builds on the pioneering work of the GPI Atlantic in Nova Scotia, who was amongst the first to recognize the need for a more comprehensive measure of success. That imperative is one that is now echoed by global organizations like the United Nations, OECD and the International Monetary Fund. We think that the time is right for us to reinvigorate our commitment to research and to bring together a wider coalition of partners to ensure those efforts are sustained.

This report is just the first step. It is intended to spark your imagination, foster serious conversations and prompt new collaborations that help us become a more vibrant, inclusive and resilient province.

The next step – scheduled for Spring 2019 – will be to survey Nova Scotians on their actual experiences and perceptions in each of the eight domain areas. This will give us an unprecedented wealth of up-to-date data that can guide our decision-making for years to come.

We invite you to share this report broadly, and encourage you to use it as a starting point for taking stock of where we are now, and imagining where we can be in the future.

For more information, to offer feedback or to make suggestions, please contact us at [qol@engagenovascotia.ca](mailto:qol@engagenovascotia.ca)

- The Engage Nova Scotia Team





Overwhelmingly, workshop participants agreed that:

- Improving quality of life in Nova Scotia is a common goal;
- It is important – and now possible – to consider wellbeing alongside economic growth when tracking progress into the future;
- Inter-related challenges need inter-related solutions;
- Exciting opportunities exist to enhance quality of life in Nova Scotia, especially through new partnerships and collaborations; and
- Extra efforts need to be made to track under-represented communities.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

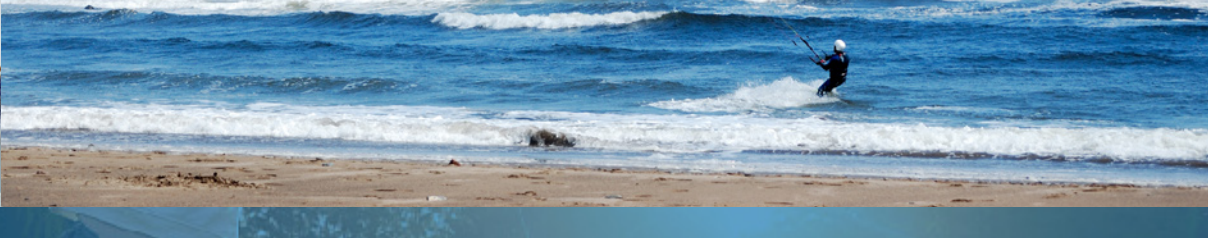
### MEASURING WHAT MATTERS

The Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index – modelled on the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) – assembles 21 years of data for 60 of the 64 original indicators in eight domains of quality of life to offer a high-level view of how Nova Scotians are really doing. It identifies trends and compares them to results for Canada overall. It explores strengths and challenges within each domain.

In September 2017, Engage Nova Scotia and the CIW consulted with more than 60 Nova Scotians during workshops at Saint Mary's University in Halifax and the Membertou Convention Centre in Sydney. Spanning the fields of academia, business, not-for-profits, community development, social enterprise, health care, municipal and provincial government, economics and the media, participants explored the CIW framework and scrutinized trends in Nova Scotia over the 20 year period between 1994 and 2014. They provided local context, identified themes, described important relationships between domains and discussed what adopting the CIW's Quality of Life framework for the province could mean for the future.

**“We can have a more comprehensive conversation about what is success and prosperity in a community ...”**

**– Workshop participant**



“Nova Scotia’s quality of life – and the attention we pay to improving it – can be an important point of pride.”

## STARTING A NEW CONVERSATION

There is an appetite to start a new conversation: one based on evidence and one in which all Nova Scotians can participate.

This Initiative offers a fresh lens to help Nova Scotians understand past trends and current circumstances. It is a starting point to help imagine the province’s future, to plan how to get there and to track progress going forward.

The CIW framework shows how indicators influence one another, so that improvements in one area generate improvements across other domains. It offers individuals, organizations and governments points of entry to improve the results. It also inspires interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral teams to work collectively to address common challenges.

## BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

This data shows that Nova Scotians have a great many strengths. They are committed to one another and to their communities. They help and trust one another. They have a sense of community belonging. They register, turn out to vote and volunteer for political organizations more than elsewhere.

For the period covered by this report, Nova Scotia can point to strengths in each quality of life domain. In particular, findings related to Environment, Time Use, Community Vitality, and Leisure and Culture reveal advantages that present opportunities to set the province apart. What’s more, solid results in Living Standards and a strong Education domain position the province well for the future.





## Great gains in the environment

Between 1994 and 2014, Nova Scotia's Environment domain grew by 8.5%, well ahead of Canada's negligible progress. If good quality of life means breathing clean air, conserving energy and accessing safe local food, then Nova Scotia has environmental advantages. Much lower greenhouse gas emissions, a significant drop in residential energy use, resurgence in local farming and easy access to green spaces make the province an attractive place to live.

People are excited about opportunities in the food system for institutions to buy local; for food hubs to contribute to food security; and for active transportation in urban areas to contribute to belonging, health and sense of place. There is recognition of opportunities for the province to be a leader in low carbon living, eco-tourism and sustainable energy. At a policy and a personal level, it appears, Nova Scotians are increasingly committed to living green.

## Time balance that is 3.5 times better than for most Canadians

What impact do a short commute, flexible work hours and less daily stress have on quality of life? On the finite resource of time, Nova Scotia outperforms the Canadian average with domain growth of 10.6% compared to 3.0% nationally.

Nova Scotia's balanced lifestyle could well be a competitive advantage in attracting investment and retaining workers who value work-life balance. The benefits cut across many domains. Shorter commutes are better for people's health and the environment. Regular weekday work hours and added flexibility make it easier for people to participate in family and community life, education, and leisure and culture activities. Less stress is important for physical and mental health. And time with friends provides important social connection and community resiliency.







## Safe, caring communities where people feel they belong

In six out of eight Community Vitality indicators, Nova Scotia outperforms national averages, and is on par in the other two. Generally, we are safer in Nova Scotia and across Canada than we were two decades ago. Nova Scotians are caring, trusting and have a strong sense of belonging to their communities. If these qualities are extended to all newcomers and to people of all backgrounds, they can be important attributes in attracting new residents and helping them flourish.

Why is it that fewer people report experiencing discrimination since 2009? What will help sustain that trend? And, more importantly, how can we address the serious and persistent issues of racism that exist for too many Indigenous peoples, African Nova Scotians and new immigrants?

Community Vitality is important for everyone. Strong social connections provide valuable benefits for physical and mental health, and are critical to community resiliency in an emergency. They have positive impacts across most domains including Healthy Populations, Democratic Engagement, Education, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards and Time Use.

That's why it's important to ensure that long-time Nova Scotians and newcomers in all communities feel welcomed and valued, regardless of their background or birthplace.







## A commitment to leisure and culture

Since 2001, Nova Scotia's Leisure and Culture domain has shown more resilience than Canada's overall. Although performance in this area is down nearly 7%, there is evidence to suggest that Nova Scotians protected their leisure pursuits and time as much as they could. Attendance at live arts performances is much higher than in 1998. Time spent in social leisure activities started increasing in 2006 after dropping for a decade. Participation in physical activity has steadily increased. And time spent in arts and culture activities has remained steady. The number of hours spent volunteering for culture and recreation organizations was higher than elsewhere in Canada for more than 15 years, but took a steep dive in 2010. The recession, rather than the will of Nova Scotians, might be to blame for fewer nights away on vacation and lower household spending on culture and recreation.

Nova Scotians clearly value leisure and culture. Access to these opportunities encourage the full expression of a person's humanity. They foster community belonging. They are linked to educational attainment, and they contribute to better health. They also foster pride of place.



## Living Standards point to a positive future

Between 1994 and 2008, Nova Scotia's Living Standards improved more than Canada's overall (25.4% to 22.8% respectively). Then, the 2008 recession coincides with a dramatic drop. By 2014, growth in Living Standards in Nova Scotia stood at 13.0%, still edging ahead of Canada's 11.9% increase. Despite the setback, median family incomes continued to rise, and both overall poverty (as measured by the Low Income Cut Off) and income inequality levels are better than the national average. A positive overall trend in employment quality since 2002 is also encouraging.

The individual experience of Living Standards varies across the province and amongst different groups. Some aspects of Living Standards – especially housing and food security – require urgent attention. Overall strength in this domain has an important relationship with virtually all domains of the Index. A solid, predictable income makes it easier to access education, leisure and cultural opportunities, good food and housing. Income and secure employment are important determinants of physical and mental health, and financial freedom allows people to participate more fully in democratic and social life of the community.

## A well-educated workforce stands ready to tackle challenges

With 15% growth between 1994 and 2014, Education is Nova Scotia's highest performing domain. More people than ever are completing high school and obtaining university degrees, and twice as many adults are pursuing education-related activities since 2005. Sometimes called the "education destination" Nova Scotia is home to 10 universities and an extensive community college system. Not only is education a core personal resource and a reflection of our ability to function and adapt in society, it is also an important predictor of health, economic security, democratic participation and education for future generations. Maintaining strength in this domain enables us to keep pace with gains in the rest of Canada, and is critical for a prosperous future.

How can a curriculum inspire kids to be great citizens and to adopt healthy lifestyles? What roles do schools play as community and cultural hubs? Is our education system preparing us for the future? What is the secret to attracting and retaining students, teachers and researchers? How can international students feel at home so they decide to build their lives here? How do we maintain the positive trend of adults pursuing continuing education to help meet the challenges of a changing workforce?

A clean and beautiful environment, a reasonable pace of life, welcoming communities and a vibrant cultural scene are all important elements contributing to higher quality of life, and lead to greater attachment and pride of place. These strengths can be important differentiators for the province. Good living standards and access to life-long education are basic requirements in today's world. Building on these advantages – while simultaneously working hard to address inequalities – will make the province a more attractive place to live, work and do business.





## STEPPING UP TO OUR CHALLENGES

Preparing Nova Scotia for the future also requires a clear-eyed look at the challenges it faces. Related to the challenges identified *within* the domains are regional disparities and inequality – issues that cut across all domains. Workshop participants recognized these challenges and provided insights into opportunities for improvement as well as current gaps in knowledge.

### Regional disparities and inequality

As in all provinces, significant regional disparities and serious inequalities exist in Nova Scotia. Wealth, opportunities and services are generally concentrated in the larger urban centres. Seasonal industries and a resource-based economy magnify issues of precarious work. Similarly, distinct segments of the population have not benefited from overall positive trends. For example, while the percentage of people living in poverty in Nova Scotia declined by 5% between 1994 and 2014, Nova Scotia's child poverty rate – 1 in 5 children – remains a critical and persistent problem. It is much higher in Cape Breton and in rural communities than HRM and affects to a greater extent children of aboriginal identity, racialized children, children with disabilities and immigrant children.<sup>1</sup> Finally, the experiences and perspectives of Indigenous communities are rarely captured in population-level data. As a result, they are left out of discussions about solutions. This is a serious omission from the conversation about quality of life in Nova Scotia. Steps need to be taken in the design and implementation of future research projects to include these perspectives and values.

It is important to note that while the Quality of Life Index provides high-level data for the province overall, it does not provide regional and demographic breakdowns.

Its intention is to prompt questions, help identify areas requiring additional research and provide a framework for conversations about how the individual components of a high quality life work together as a whole. Tackling the issues of inequality of access to a high quality of life, in particular, can benefit from this sort of comprehensive approach to measuring success. It helps ensure that all relevant issues and communities are at the same table and receive the same level of attention.

1. Frank, L. (2016). 2016 Report card on child and family poverty in Nova Scotia: Another year, no improvement. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Available at: <https://www.policyalternatives.ca/publications/reports/2016-report-card-child-and-family-poverty-nova-scotia>





## Youth engagement and retention

According to the Halifax Partnership, we are just now seeing a reversal of the trend that saw an average of 1,300 more youth leave Nova Scotia than arrive each year.<sup>2</sup> Engaging youth before they reach post-secondary school and creating opportunities for them before they choose a career are important priorities. Higher tuition fees may be a deterrent to staying in the province to study. Youth may seek higher salaries outside the province and housing affordability may also be a deterrent to starting their lives here.

The importance of retaining youth extends beyond economics and family relationships. Young people provide a new pool of volunteers, participate in leisure and culture and engage in the democratic process. They are an innovation pool, a workforce, a market and taxpayers. Millennials in particular, are united in placing a high priority on quality of life. If Nova Scotia can demonstrate that it is organized around a comprehensive approach to building on its strengths in this area, it stands a better chance of retaining and attracting the young people who will make up the future.

2. Jacob, P.A. (2015). A generation of change: Youth as Nova Scotia's defining moment. Halifax, NS: The Halifax Partnership. (p. 4). Available at: <http://www.halifaxpartnership.com/site/media/Parent/A%20Generation%20of%20Change%20-%20Youth%20as%20Nova%20Scotia%27s%20Defining%20Moment%20-%20Halifax%20Partnership%20Report%20-%20October%202015.pdf>



## Declining physical and mental health

When you feel unwell, you cannot be at your best at school, at work, or in the community. So it is troubling that the percentage of people who rate their overall health as “very good” or “excellent” dropped by almost 10% from 1998 to 2014. Moreover, 1 in 4 Nova Scotians have health or activity-based limitations that mean they cannot get around as easily or participate as fully as they would like to be active members of society.

### Diabetes

Nova Scotia’s rate of diabetes is particularly concerning. At 8.2%, it is higher<sup>4</sup> than Canada’s average (6.7%) and more than double what it was in 1994. For Mi’kmaq between the ages of 20 and 39, the rate is five times higher. A chronic condition like diabetes can greatly affect participation across all domains, including placing a great burden of time on patients and their families.

### Mental Health

The 30% of Nova Scotians who do not rate their mental health as “very good” or “excellent” are also struggling. Nova Scotia’s First Nations identify mental health and addictions as “the biggest health issue our communities face.”<sup>5</sup> Communities in Cape Breton also struggle with mental health issues, high rates of addictions and long wait times for community services.<sup>6</sup> Beyond the challenges for the individual – not only with overall health, but also with education, employment and full community participation – mental health issues deeply affect families and entire communities.

Faced with these and other health concerns, Nova Scotians are concerned about declining access to family doctors. While access to physicians between 1994 and 2014 was higher in Nova Scotia than in Canada overall, this is little comfort to people without a family doctor who are in need.

## Food security

Shelter costs are one of the biggest challenges facing Nova Scotians. Perhaps surprisingly, Nova Scotians spend a higher proportion of their available incomes on rent, utilities, transportation, taxes and other shelter costs than anywhere else in the country. Not only is the Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio higher in Nova Scotia than anywhere else in Canada<sup>3</sup>, it is also worsening at a rate faster than any other province. This puts constraints on household budgets, is a source of stress and leaves less income for other quality of life essentials.

Thousands of families also struggle to access and afford healthy food. When families have difficulty putting good food on the table, their chances of having money left over for sports, leisure, culture or continuing education are minimal. The impacts of these struggles are not limited to the individuals experiencing them. Secure food and housing are basic building blocks of health, educational success, community vitality and full democratic participation.

3. Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis. (2016). Shelter affordability across Canada's provinces. CANCEA Bulletin #5. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancea.ca/?q=node/102>

4. Nova Scotia First Nations Client Linkage Registry. (2016). Diabetes Bulletin. Tui'kn Partnership, Strength in Numbers Project. Membertou, NS. Available at: <http://www.tuikn.ca/health-information/strength-in-numbers-project/>

5. Nova Scotia First Nations Client Linkage Registry. (2016). Mental Health and Addictions Bulletin. Tui'kn Partnership, Strength in Numbers Project. Membertou, NS. Available at: <http://www.tuikn.ca/health-information/strength-in-numbers-project/>

6. Government of Nova Scotia. (2017). Mental health adult community-based services: Health care wait times. Halifax, NS. Available at: <https://waittimes.novascotia.ca/procedure/mental-health-adult-community-based-services>

## Lack of progress on childcare spaces

The lack of progress in creating regulated day-care spaces between 1994 and 2014, and a sharp drop in talk-time with children, are troubling results for Nova Scotia families. These trends have implications across domains. Not only does regulated child care allow women to participate more fully in the workplace – which enhances the family's Living Standards – it is also linked to greater educational achievement and important social development for the child.<sup>7</sup>

It will be important to monitor the implications of recent announcements. Starting in the fall of 2017, pre-primary education for 4-year olds is now an option for families and could facilitate early development. Additionally, the recently announced (January 2018) bilateral agreement on Early Learning and Child Care (ELCC) Nova Scotia commits to expanding regulated child care for children from birth to age 5 with targets of an additional 1000 spaces.



## Weakening relationships

In 1996, 70.9% of Nova Scotians said they had five or more close friends. By 2014, that dropped to 52.3%. During those years, the average amount of time spent with friends daily dropped by 27 minutes. The decline in friendships and time with friends is troubling on a personal level; but it also erodes community resiliency. Is technology the culprit or a source of connection? Are we busier? Are we living farther apart?

We also are spending dramatically less time talking with kids and young teens. What has contributed to the decline in engaging with 0 to 14 year olds for an average of 21 minutes per day? What was different in the years from 1998 to 2005 when talk time increased from 36 minutes to 47 minutes? Whether the declining trend is due to technology, poverty, maternal education, parents holding down multiple jobs or feeling ill-equipped, meaningful adult connections with kids – at school, at home, or in the community – are an important social connector. They help kids with education, mental health and their sense of belonging.



## Fewer volunteers

It is little consolation for community organizations struggling to find help to know that historically Nova Scotians have volunteered in greater proportions and given more hours than their fellow Canadians. Volunteering is important because it helps people learn new skills and make new friends. It boosts their individual sense of belonging, their physical and mental health, and sometimes their living standards. Volunteers make it possible for communities to benefit from a wide range of opportunities that enhance quality of life at little or no cost. From sports to arts to social supports – things that make us move, think, create, and connect – volunteers make it happen. As volunteering declines, the concerns about the loss of these benefits, as well as the potential loss of cherished programs, are magnified. Volunteer fatigue is equally a concern and a likely factor in lower rates of volunteering.

7. Friendly, M. (2016). Early childhood education and care as a social determinant of health. In D. Raphael (Ed.), *Social determinants of health: Canadian perspectives* (3rd ed., pp. 192-217). Toronto, ON: Canadian Scholars' Press.





## MUCH MORE NEEDS TO HAPPEN

With a clear picture of our strengths and challenges, a new course can be charted based on a deeper understanding of what contributes most to our quality of life.

The Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index is a high-level perspective that offers a dashboard of information about the broad areas influencing quality of life. It highlights trends over time, provides benchmarks and draws attention to Nova Scotia's strengths and challenges. It is a conversation starter and points to the need to look more deeply at local data. It is an invitation to Nova Scotians to engage in serious dialogue about the future they want for their province. It is also the basis for deeper research, community engagement and change.

Armed with a better understanding of quality of life as described by this report, new questions emerge. The next step is to take a deeper dive into those aspects the Index has highlighted. What can we learn about the attitudes and behaviours that influence quality of life across the province? How do demographics like income, age, region and background influence the opportunities people have to access the services and supports they need to live high quality lives?

Good data are especially lacking concerning Canada's Indigenous peoples, including those living in Nova Scotia. Most national surveys exclude people living on reserves and in designated settlements within the provinces, so their voices are rarely included in national profiles of Canadians. Given that Canada's Indigenous peoples face severe challenges to their health, living standards and opportunities for quality education, their lack of representation in our data – and hence, our understanding – is unacceptable. Doing a better job of reflecting the Mi'kmaq experience will require us to work directly with those communities, over time, to identify measures that reflect their unique values and pave the way for greater participation.

This report is the first phase in an even more comprehensive look at quality of life in Nova Scotia. In the coming year, the Canadian Index of Wellbeing will conduct a province-wide survey of thousands of Nova Scotians to ask them how they experience quality of life in the same eight domains. The result will be a substantial body of information that will help us all – at the local, regional and provincial level – work together with more up-to-date data to set priorities, build strategies and coordinate approaches to the opportunities identified.

We hope this project will lay the foundation for additional research of the kind done by GPI Atlantic up until 2009. The GPI approach complements the CIW work in that it is capable of taking a deeper dive into some of the indicators listed, or researching other topics of concern to Nova Scotians. Moreover, GPI incorporates a fiscal costing analysis within their research.

The unique approach and benefits of the CIW framework – especially for this formative stage – are that its data are pan-Canadian, it shows trends since 1994, it covers a wide array of topical issues for Nova Scotians and it will include a survey of our citizens on their actual experience in each of the indicator areas.

As such, data in this report are intended as a starting point for further research, shared thinking and collaboration by policy makers and policy influencers – in government, academia, business, NGOs and the general public.







# TRENDS & STATISTICAL HIGHLIGHTS

On the following pages, we describe the progress made and the challenges faced in Nova Scotia between 1994 and 2014. The domains are presented in an order reflecting how well we have progressed – from the greatest increase in Education to the continuing deterioration of Leisure and Culture. We examine how Nova Scotia compares to Canada as a whole and point to the underlying factors that contributed to the changes.



## EDUCATION

Education is the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life, and by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adulthood.

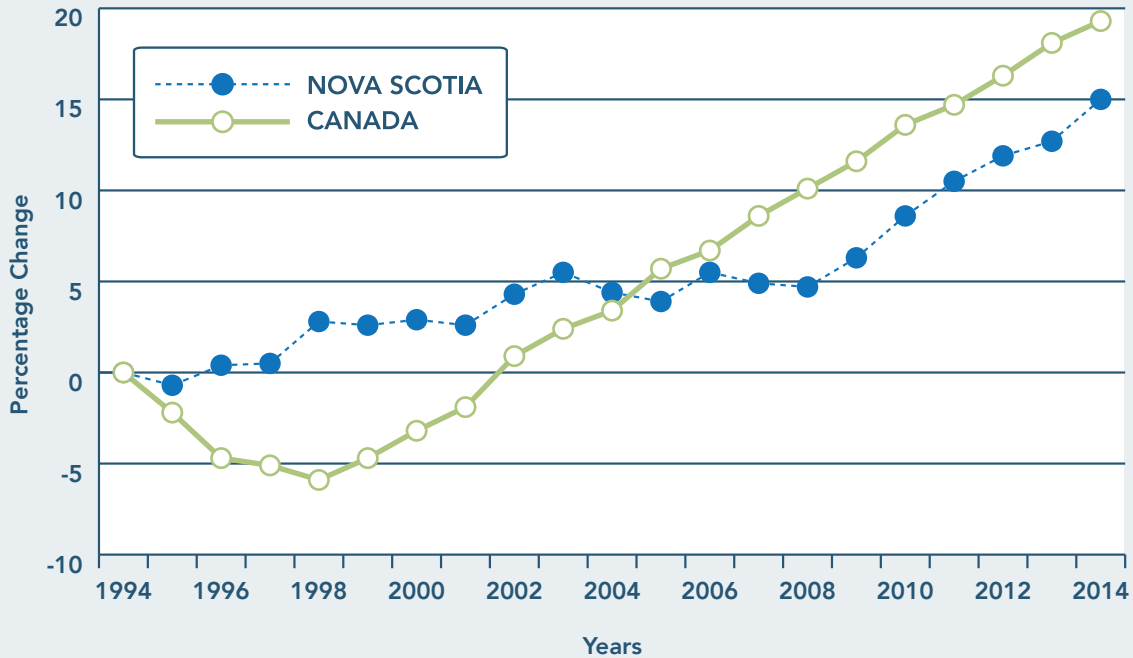
Societies that thrive encourage a thirst for knowledge — at every age and stage of life. Education is a process that begins before school age and is reflected in pre-school arrangements such as child care and early childhood education. It also continues beyond elementary and high school, to college, university and professional training through apprenticeships. Education continues as lifelong learning. As the world changes, education helps Canadians adapt to new challenges.

### Nova Scotia gets high marks for Education

The Education domain made the greatest progress overall in Nova Scotia between 1994 and 2014. For the first 10 years, growth was more modest, but still better than in Canada overall. After 2004, progress in the domain fell behind the rest of the country. However, since 2008, the Education domain has grown every year and in 2014 was closing in on the progress made across Canada.



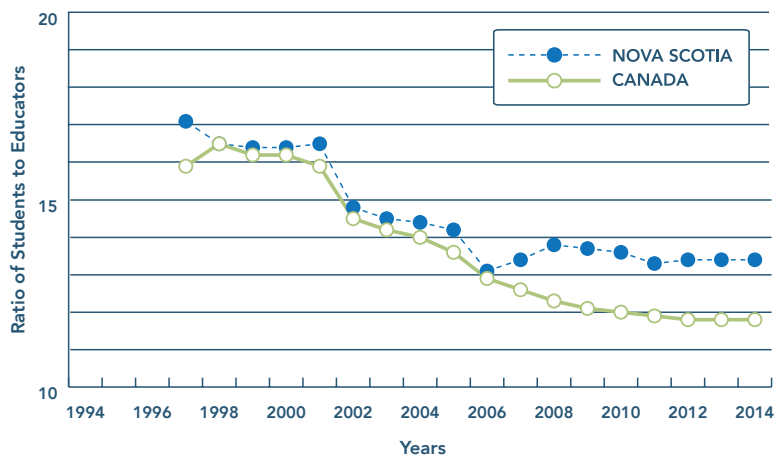
## TRENDS IN EDUCATION IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



Overall change in Education from 1994 to 2014:

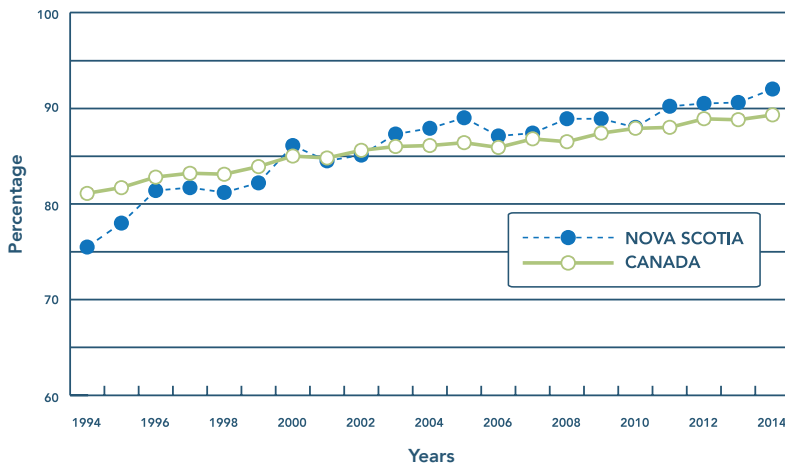
Nova Scotia ↑ 15.0% Canada ↑ 19.3%

### Ratio of students to educators in public schools



**Student-educator ratios are improving.** The ratio of elementary school students to educators in Nova Scotia improved from 17.1 students per educator in 1997 to 13.4 students per educator in 2014 – an overall improvement of 27.6%. This compares favourably to a similar trend in Canada overall.

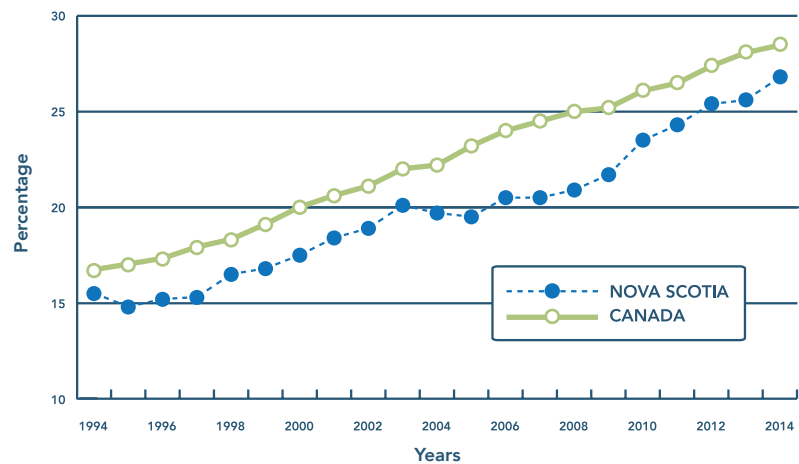
## Percentage of Canadians 20 to 24 years of age in labour force completing high school



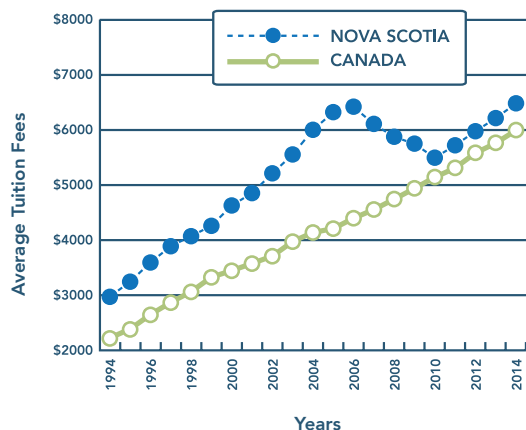
**9 in 10 young adults are completing high school.** The percentage of 20 and 24 year olds who have completed high school has grown rapidly since 1994, rising steadily from 75.5% in 1994 to 92.0% in 2014. This overall increase of 16.5% is more than twice the 8.2% increase seen overall in Canada, where the high school completion rate was 89.3% in 2014.

## Percentage of 25 to 64 year olds in population with a university degree

**1 in 4 adults now have a university degree.** University graduation rates among 25 to 64 year-olds have risen dramatically. In 1994, 15.5% of Nova Scotian adults held a university degree. By 2014, the percentage had climbed to 26.8%, representing an 11.3% increase. The trend is similar to Canada overall, where the percentage of adults with a university degree rose by 11.8%, from 16.7% in 1994 and to 28.5% by 2014. Notably, almost twice as many women as men obtained university degrees in Nova Scotia in recent years, a trend that also exceeds the rate in Canada overall.



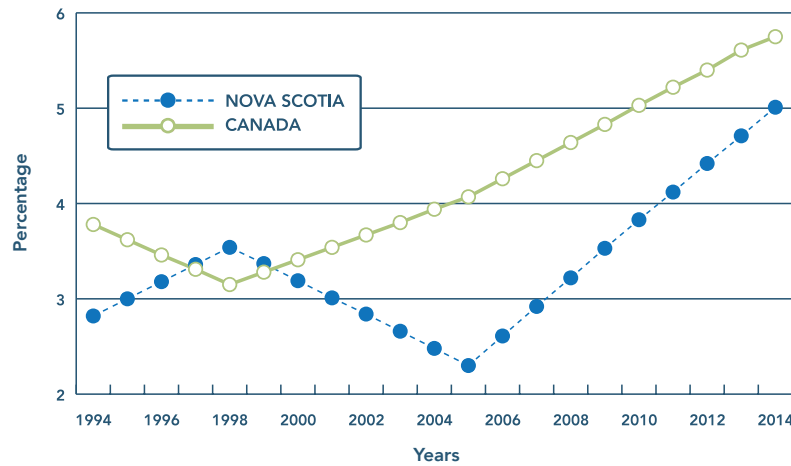
## Average annual Canadian undergraduate tuition fees (2015\$)



**Undergraduate tuition fees more than doubled from 1994 to 2014.** From an average of \$2,975 in 1994 to \$6,483 in 2014, tuition fees have been steadily rising in Nova Scotia. Between 1994 and 2006, Nova Scotian undergraduate students were paying the highest tuition fees nationally. More positively, programs introduced in the late 2000s – tuition freezes, transfers from the Federal Infrastructure Trust Fund, and the introduction of the Nova Scotia University Student Bursary Trust – reduced fees from a peak of \$6,422 in 2006 to be more in line with the national average. Since 2010, tuition fees for undergraduate students in Nova Scotia are moderately higher than the average paid by students elsewhere in Canada.



Percentage of adults aged 25 and older participating in education-related activities

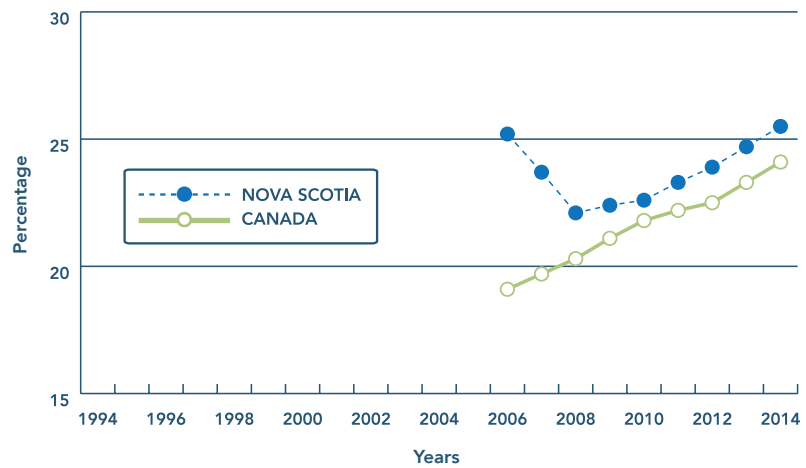


**More Nova Scotians over the age of 25 are participating in ongoing learning.** Despite a slight decline in the early 2000s, the percentage of adults 25 years of age and older who were engaged in education-related activities has almost doubled – from 2.8% in 1994 to 5% in 2014. While slightly behind the Canadian average, more adults in Nova Scotia are attending lectures in the community, engaging in professional development work, taking special interest courses and using the internet for research or homework.

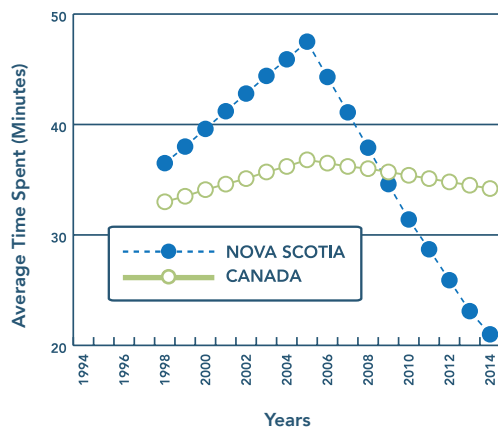
Percentage of children aged 0 to 5 years for whom there is a regulated centre-based childcare space

**One in four children has access to regulated, centre-based child care.**

After dipping to 22.1% in 2008, the percentage of children with regulated child care grew steadily after 2009 to regain lost ground. Since 2008, 3.4% more children 5-years old and younger in Nova Scotia now have access. The trend since 2008 is almost identical to national results, with the province showing slightly better progress. Access to child care spaces is critical because early childhood education contributes to later educational achievement, provides a foundation for lifelong learning and improves overall health for the child.



Average amount of time spent in talk-based activities with children aged 0 to 14 years



**Adults are spending only about 21 minutes each day in interactive, talk-based activities with kids under 14 years of age.** In 1998, the amount of time adults spent with children engaged in activities such as conversation, listening to them read or reading to them, playing, or helping with homework, was 36.5 minutes per day. That time jumped to over three-quarters of an hour (47.5 minutes) in 2005, but then plunged to just over 20 minutes, a 42.4% decline overall. Time spent in these talk-based activities by Nova Scotians is now much lower than for Canadians overall, who have spent just over half an hour each day with children since 1998. Throughout Canada, most of this time is spent by women rather than by men.



## LIVING STANDARDS

Living Standards examines Canadians' average and median income and wealth, distribution of income and wealth including poverty rates, income fluctuations and volatility. It considers economic security, including labour market security, housing and food security.

Our living standards should reflect our capacity to transform economic growth into stable current and future income streams for everyone. Economic growth does not automatically translate into better living

### **Progress in Living Standards has not recovered since the recession**

standards. A higher average income, for example, may be achieved at the cost of increased social inequality or greater economic insecurity. Achieving greater job quality, reducing poverty and providing basic affordable housing and food security to individuals and families mean more people are doing well.

As in the rest of Canada, Nova Scotians' Living Standards improved considerably from 1994 to 2008, rising 25.4% compared to 22.8% in Canada overall. After the recession, half of that progress was lost by 2014. The result is a much more modest overall increase of 13.0% since 1994. In effect, as in the rest of Canada, Nova Scotians have yet to recover the progress they had made in their living standards before the recession.

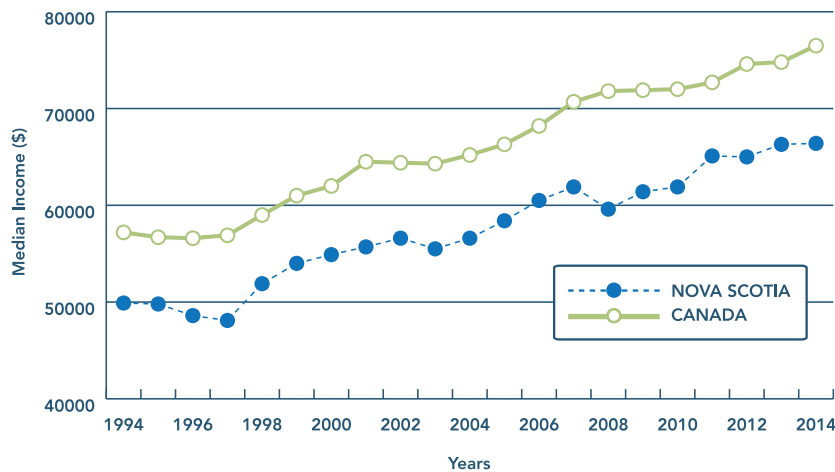


## TRENDS IN LIVING STANDARDS IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



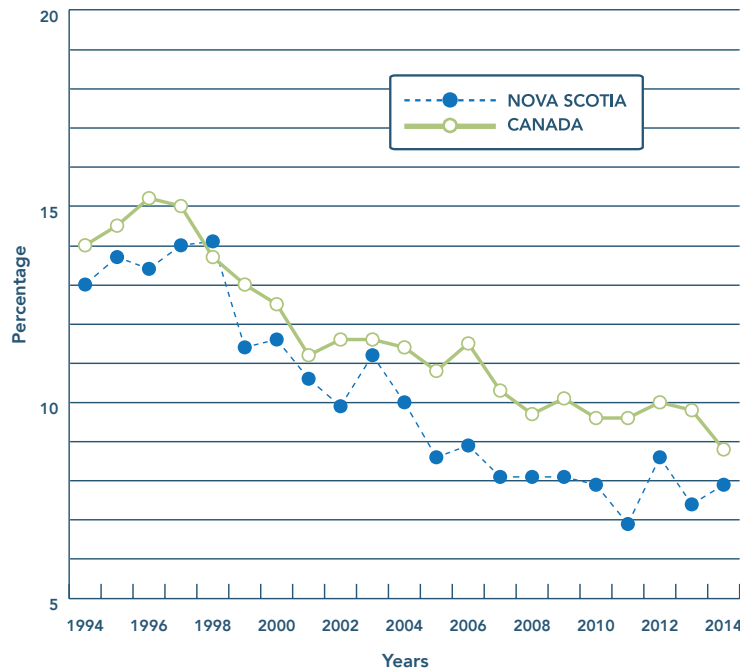
Overall change in Living Standards from 1994 to 2014:  
**Nova Scotia** ↑ 13.0% **Canada** ↑ 11.9%

## After-tax median income of economic family (2013\$)



**After-tax median family incomes rose by one-third from 1994 to 2014.** In 1994, the after-tax median family income in Nova Scotia was \$49,900. By 2014, it was up to \$66,400 – a 33.1% increase. While the increase in median family incomes in Nova Scotia is positive and has risen at the same pace as in the rest of Canada overall, it is on average \$5,500 to \$6,000 lower annually than the national average.

## Percentage of persons living in poverty based on low income cut-off (LICO)

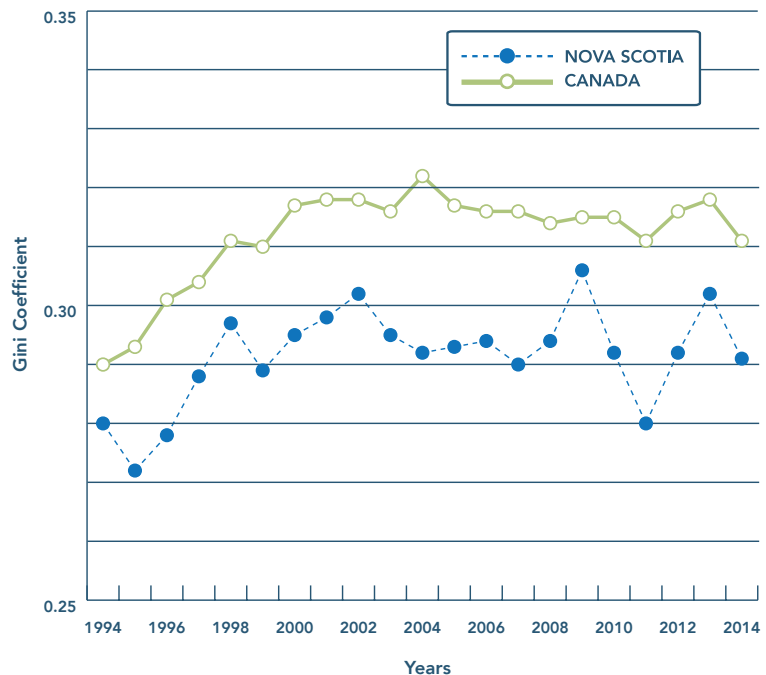


Overall, the incidence of poverty declined by almost half between 1994 and 2014. In 1995, 13.7% of Nova Scotians were living in poverty (based on low income cut-off)<sup>8</sup>, but by 2014, the percentage had dropped to 7.9%. This decline in the poverty rate in Nova Scotia was greater than in Canada overall, which had a rate hovering just below 10% in 2014.

While the poorest Nova Scotians benefited from the real increases in income during that period, the increases were not equally felt by all. As is the case in the rest of Canada, those who are still most at risk from poverty are children, lone-parent families – especially those led by women – older adults, Indigenous peoples and people with disabilities.<sup>9</sup>

## Gini coefficient (income gap)

Income inequality rose by almost 4% 1994 to 2014, but remains among the lowest in the country. In Nova Scotia, income inequality grew primarily between 1997 and 2009. Since then, the gap has narrowed and is now among the smallest of any Canadian province. According to the Conference Board of Canada, the gap in real after-tax average income between the richest and the poorest Canadians grew by over 40% between 1994 and 2009.<sup>10</sup> By failing to reduce the income inequality, nations are not using the skills and capabilities of their citizens to their fullest potential. Income inequality weakens social cohesion, which contributes to greater social tensions, especially in times of economic uncertainty.<sup>11</sup>



8. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing is moving from the income cut-off approach (LICO) for measuring poverty, to now measure after taxes (LIM-AT) to enable more direct comparisons between locations. Importantly though, analysis shows the same pattern of trends occurs over time, regardless of the absolute measure.

9. Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities. (2010). *Federal poverty reduction plan: Working in partnership towards reducing poverty in Canada*. Ottawa, ON: Communications Canada. Retrieved from <http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/hoc/Committee/403/HUMA/Reports/RP4770921/humarp07/humarp07-e.pdf>

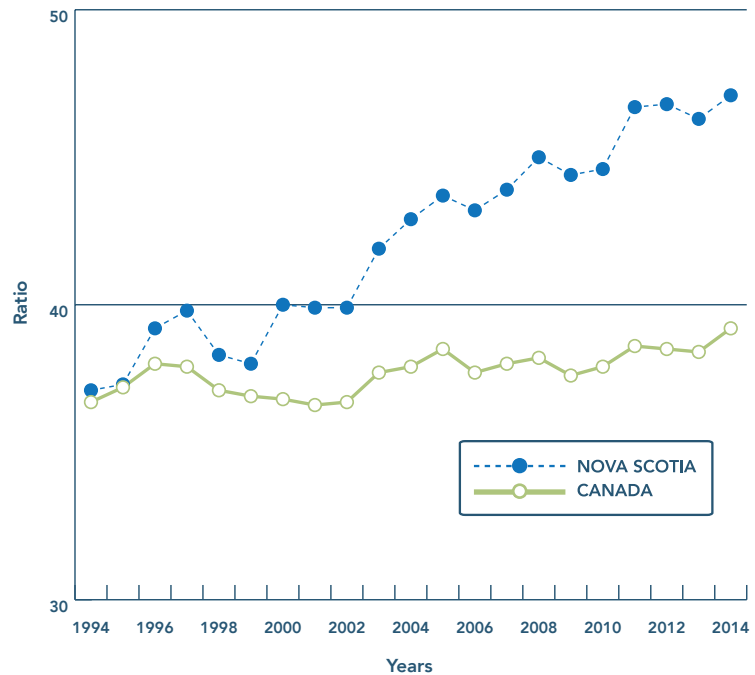
10. Conference Board of Canada. (2011). *Canadian income inequality: Is Canada becoming more unequal?* Retrieved from <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/hot-topics/caninequality.aspx>

11. Wilkinson, R., & Pickett, K. (2010). *The spirit level: Why equality is better for everyone*. London: Penguin.



## Housing affordability based on Shelter Consumption Affordability Ratio (SCAR)

Nova Scotians devote a greater proportion of their net income to meet their housing needs than in any other province in Canada. Even though housing prices are comparatively lower in Nova Scotia, housing is less affordable for Nova Scotians because they devote a greater proportion of their net income (after covering other necessities such as food, clothing, and child care) to costs associated with their shelter needs. In 1994, they devoted 37.1% of their net incomes to shelter costs, one of the highest rates in the country. The rate has steadily increased since then and by 2014, Nova Scotians were putting 47.1% of their net incomes towards their shelter needs, which is now the highest rate in the country, exceeding even British Columbia (44.7%).<sup>12</sup>

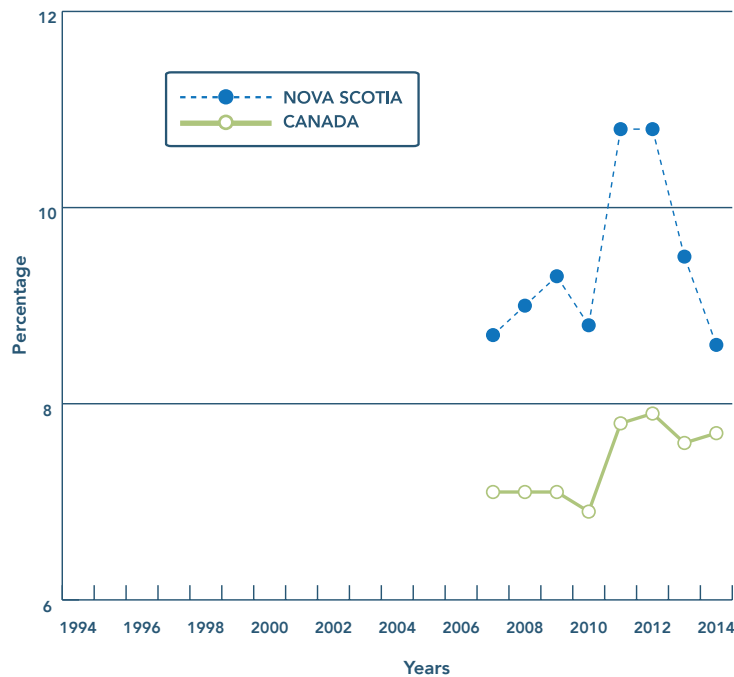


Several factors make housing affordability a challenge for Nova Scotians. Among the factors contributing to the challenges of housing affordability for Nova Scotians are comparatively lower incomes and higher utility costs, higher costs for other essentials such as food, clothing and child care, and higher taxes.<sup>13</sup>

12. Smetanin, P., Moca, I., Yusuf, F., & Kobak, P. (2015). Understanding shelter affordability issues. Research Report Executive Summary. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis. Retrieved from: <http://www.cancea.ca/?q=node/96>

13. Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis. (2016). Shelter affordability across Canada's provinces. CANCEA Bulletin #5. Toronto, ON: The Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis. Retrieved from: <https://www.cancea.ca/?q=node/102>

## Percentage of households that are moderately or severely food insecure

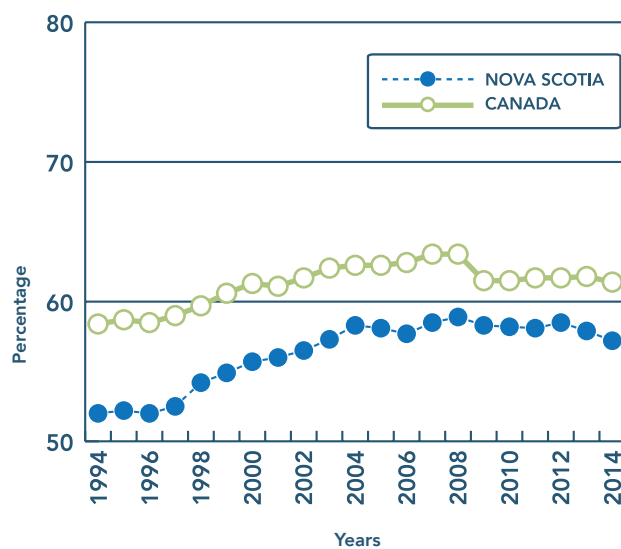


**Almost 1 in 10 Nova Scotians struggle to access and afford good quality food.** Reliable national data on food security have only been available since 2007, but even in that short time, the percentage of Nova Scotians who struggled with moderate or severe food insecurity went up from 8.7% in 2007 to 10.8% in 2012 – and only recently returned to 2007 levels. In 2014, food security in Nova Scotia was higher than in Canada overall (7.7%).

**Food insecurity is highest among households relying on government benefits and single parents of young children.** From 2007 to 2012, significantly more households that relied on government benefits as their main source of income were food insecure than those relying on

other sources such as wages from employment. Also at risk are households led by a lone parent with children under 18 years of age, which places the healthy growth and development of children at even greater risk.<sup>14</sup>

## Percentage of labour force employed

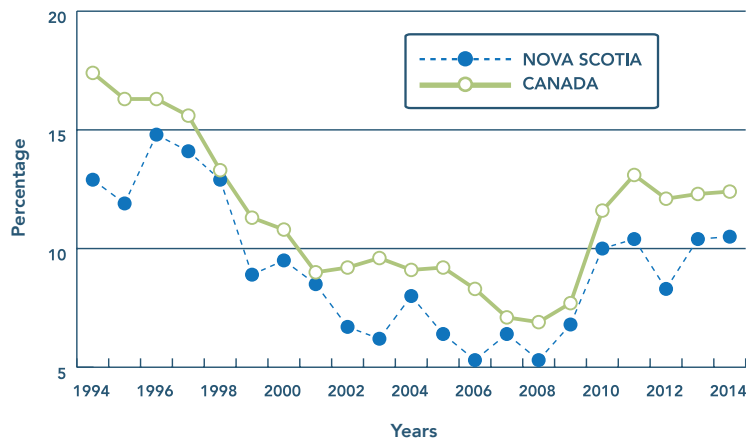


**Employment on the decline.** The percentage of the working age population that was employed in Nova Scotia increased from 52.0% in 1994 to 58.9% in 2008. That overall increase of 6.9% was higher than the 5.0% increase in Canada during the same period. However, the labour force employment rate has consistently remained 4% to 6% below the national average over the years. It continued to creep downwards following the recession and sat at 57.2% in 2014.

14. Roshanafshar, S., & Hawkins, E. (2015). Health at a glance: Food insecurity in Canada. Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 82-624-X. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry. Retrieved from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/82-624-x/2015001/article/14138-eng.htm>



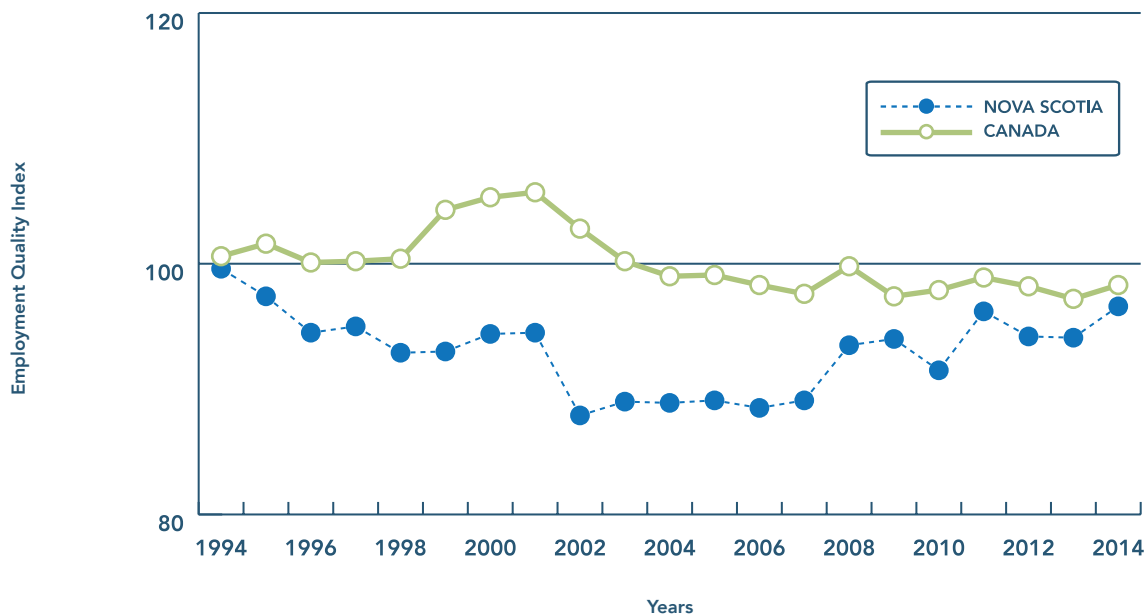
Percentage of labour force in long-term unemployment



**Long-term unemployment returned after the recession.** While long-term unemployment in Nova Scotia has not returned to the 13% to 15% levels seen in the early 1990s, it did rise above 10% for the first time since 1999 after the 2008 recession. By 2014, 10.5% of the labour force in Nova Scotia – more than 1 in 10 workers – was in long-term unemployment. This is almost twice as high as the pre-recession rate of 5.3%. While the 2014 rate is lower than the average across Canada (12.4%), long-term unemployment in Nova Scotia is more difficult to define precisely

because of the seasonal nature of many jobs. Men, older workers and individuals with lower levels of education are especially at risk of long-term unemployment.

CIBC index of employment quality (1994 Q1=100)<sup>15</sup>



**Employment quality showing signs of improvement.** The CIBC Job Quality Index in Nova Scotia fell to its lowest levels in the early and mid-2000s, but it has improved since 2007. Job quality has always been somewhat lower in Nova Scotia than in Canada overall, but recent increases have brought it closer to the national average by 2014.

15. The CIBC Index of employment quality is based on all four provinces in Atlantic Canada.



## HEALTHY POPULATIONS

The Healthy Populations domain considers the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the population. It examines life expectancy, lifestyle and behaviours, and the circumstances that influence health such as access to health care.

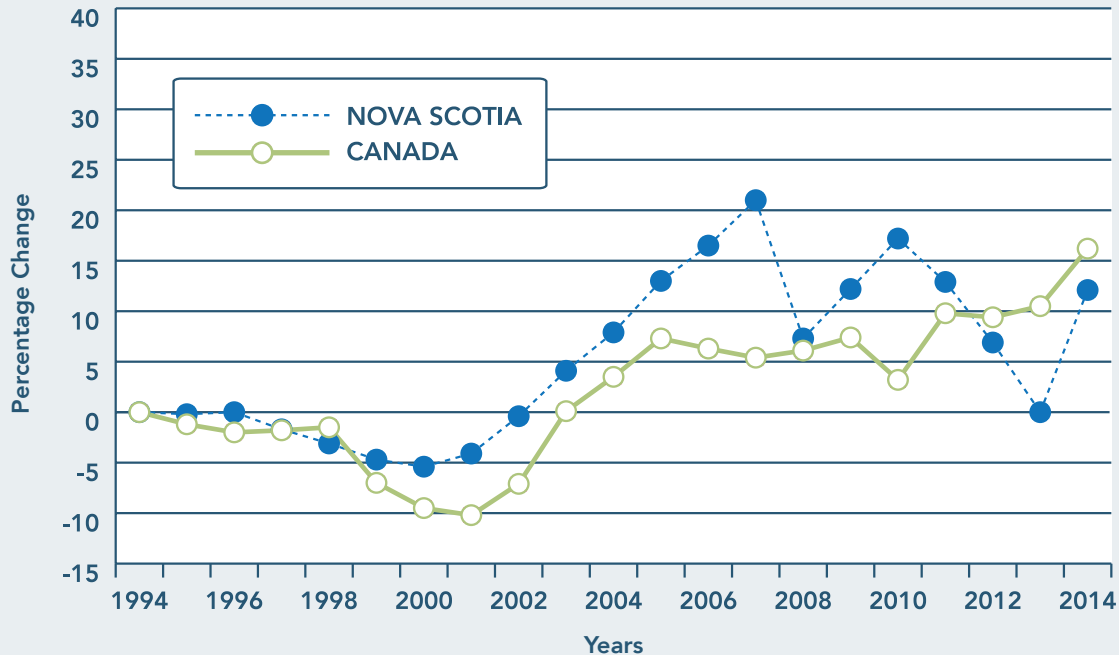
Healthy Populations captures both the overall health of the population (“health status”) as well as factors that influence health (“health determinants”). This broad perspective is used because peoples’ lifestyles and behaviours are constrained and shaped by broader social factors such as how food is distributed and priced, how houses are constructed and located, how urban transportation is designed, how easily people can access health care and recreational services, and how we interact with the natural environment.

### Early progress in health, but unclear future

Although it trails Canada slightly, the overall trend for Healthy Populations in Nova Scotia is positive, showing an overall increase of 12.1% from 1994 to 2014. After falling behind in the 1990s, the domain made its greatest strides from 2000 to 2007, improving by 26.4% and significantly exceeding the 14.9% improvement across Canada. Since 2008, the domain’s trend has fluctuated and not returned to earlier levels.

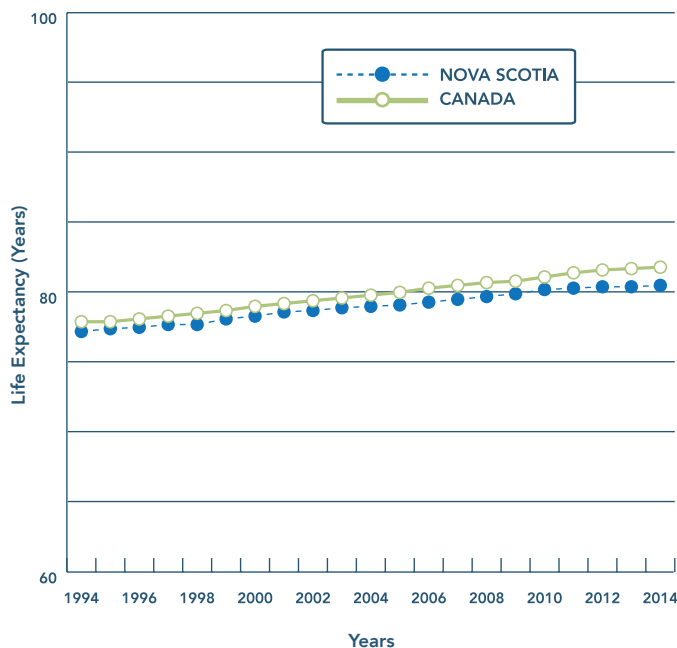


## TRENDS IN HEALTHY POPULATIONS IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



Overall change in Healthy Populations from 1994 to 2014:  
**Nova Scotia ↑ 12.1%** **Canada ↑ 16.2%**

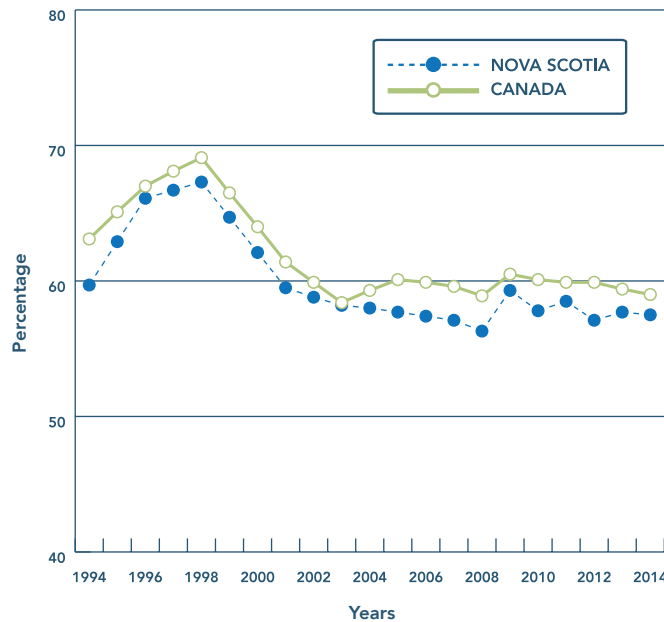
### Life expectancy at birth in years



**Nova Scotians can expect to live into their 80s.** Life expectancy has been increasing steadily from 77.2 years in 1994 to 80.5 years by 2014. Even though life expectancy does not vary by much across Canada, it is slightly over one year lower in Nova Scotia than in Canada overall and is slightly lower than in its neighbouring provinces, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island.

**Women are living longer than men.** As in the rest of Canada, women in Nova Scotia can expect to live a little over four years longer than men. In 2014, women could expect to live to 82.5 years of age compared to 78.1 years for men. But the gap is closing. Between 1994 and 2009, life expectancy for men increased by 3.7 years, compared to 2 years for women.

Percentage of population that rates their overall health as very good or excellent



Fewer Nova Scotians report having “very good” or “excellent” overall health. The percentage of people reporting their health as very good or excellent has fallen by over 10% since 1998 when the rate peaked at 67.3%. Since 2002, the percentage of Nova Scotians who considered themselves as having better health has hovered between about 57% and 59%, and is consistently 2% lower than the national average.

Age and income are linked to ratings of health. A full 10% more Nova Scotians under the age of 40 rate their health as very good or excellent (66.2%) than do those between the ages of 40 and 65 (55.4%). After age 65, ratings fall another 10% with less than half of older Nova Scotians rating their health as very good or excellent (45.5%). Seven in ten people (70.1%) with household incomes over \$80,000 per year report very good or excellent health. Just four in ten Nova Scotians (41.4%) in households with annual incomes below \$40,000 feel as healthy.

over \$80,000 per year report very good or excellent health. Just four in ten Nova Scotians (41.4%) in households with annual incomes below \$40,000 feel as healthy.

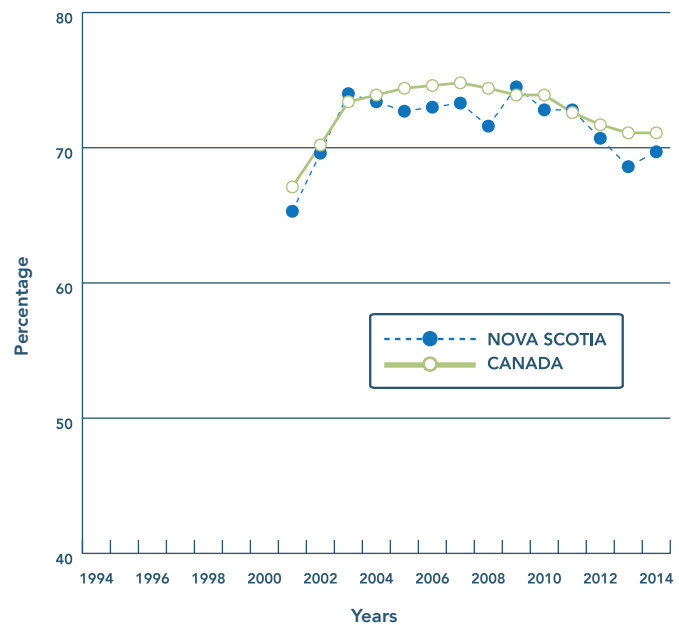
Percentage of population that rates their mental health as very good or excellent

Since 2009, fewer Nova Scotians rate their mental health as very good or excellent.

The percentage of Nova Scotians who reported their mental health as very good or excellent dropped almost 5% by 2014 (69.7%) from its peak in 2009 (74.5%). Even though the percentage has improved since 2001 (up 4.4% overall), over 3 in 10 people still are not enjoying high levels of mental health. The trend in Nova Scotia has followed a similar pattern to that seen in the rest of Canada, but has typically been about 2% lower over the years.

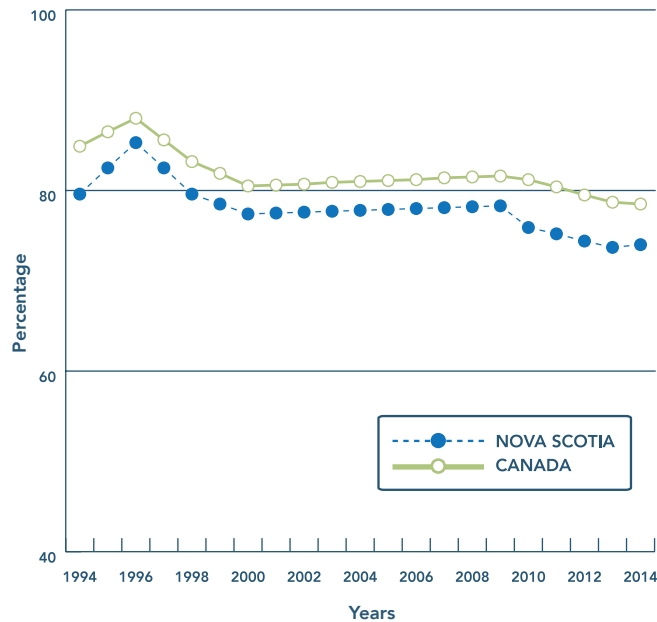
Declines in mental health differ across population groups.

Declines in mental health were particularly evident among women in Nova Scotia with only 65.5% reporting their mental health as very good or excellent compared to 74.2% of the men. More teens (73.0%) and young adults (70.1%) report better mental health than older Nova Scotians (67.1%). Contrary to the effect in Canada overall, declines in mental health were felt most strongly by Nova Scotians living in higher income households.



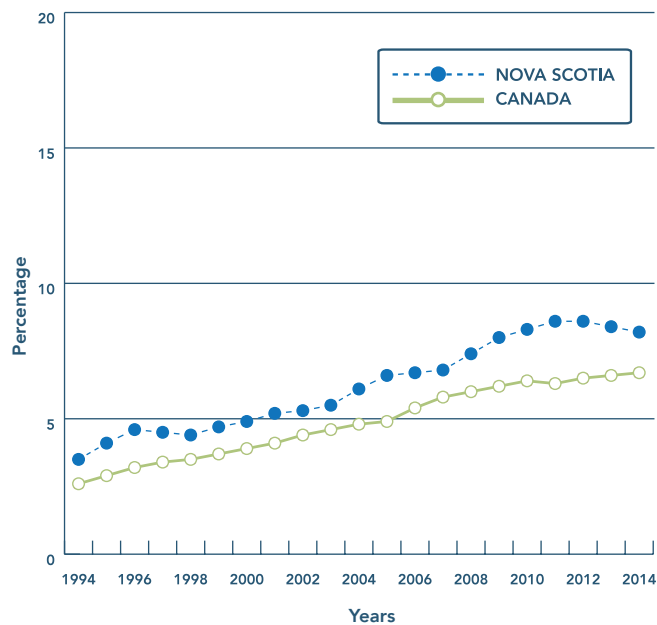


### Percentage of population with an absence of health or activity-based limitations



**Increasing numbers of Nova Scotians are living with health or activity-related limitations.** As the population ages, the percentage of people living with health limitations continues to increase. In 1994, 79.6% of Nova Scotians reported no health or activity-related limitations. By 2014, the percentage had fallen to 74.0% – a drop of 5.6%. While this trend is the same for Canada overall, about 5% more Nova Scotians have consistently reported health limitations – and the gap has been growing since 2009. As with self-reported health, older adults and people living in low income households are more likely to have health or activity limitations, which restrict their ability to participate fully in education, work, home and community life.

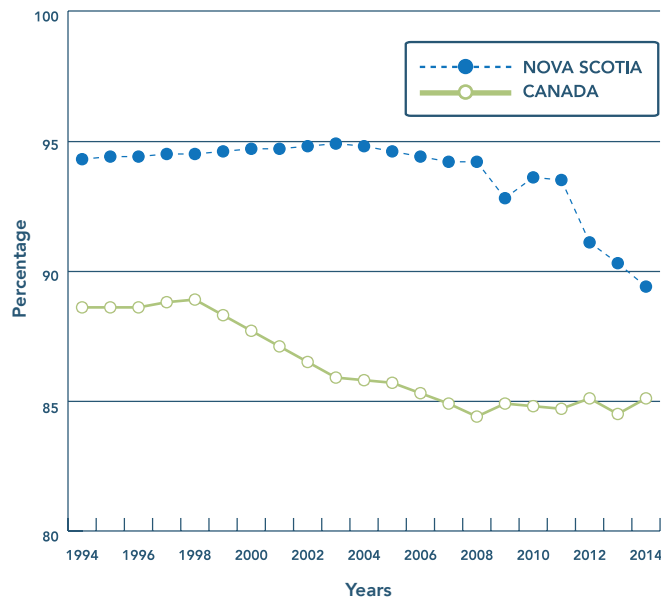
### Percentage of population with self-reported diabetes



**Diabetes rates more than doubled over the past 21 years.** In 1994, 3.5% of the population in Nova Scotia reported having diabetes. The rate was 8.2% by 2014 – an increase of 2.3 times. This is a trend seen in Canada overall, but rates in Nova Scotia have been 1% to 1.5% higher throughout the 21-year period. Diabetes is especially concerning for Mi'kmaq between the ages of 20 and 39 years, who have rates five times higher than the rest of the population.<sup>16</sup> Rates of diabetes are higher among men (8.5%) than women (7.9%) and especially for older adults – 1 in 5 Nova Scotians over 65 years of age report having diabetes (19.5% in 2014). Those living in households with annual incomes below \$40,000 also are at greater risk (11.9%).

16. Nova Scotia First Nations Client Linkage Registry. (2016). Diabetes Bulletin. Tui'kn Partnership, Strength in Numbers Project. Membertou, NS. Available at: <http://www.tuikn.ca/health-information/strength-in-numbers-project/>

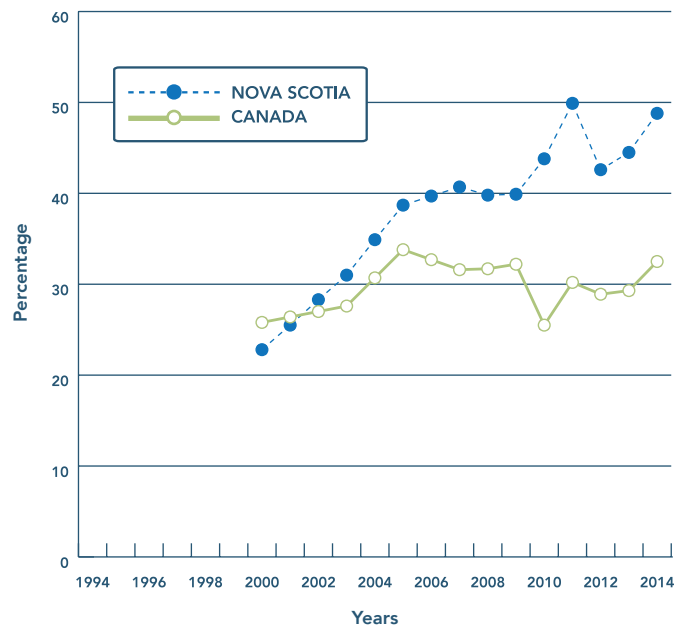
## Percentage of population with a regular medical doctor



**Access to family doctors is declining.** Between 1994 and 2014, the vast majority of Nova Scotians report having a regular doctor – more so than anywhere else in Canada other than Ontario and New Brunswick – but by 2014, almost 5% fewer (89.4%) had a doctor than in 1994 (94.3%). It points to the growing problem of access to the health system faced by many Canadians.

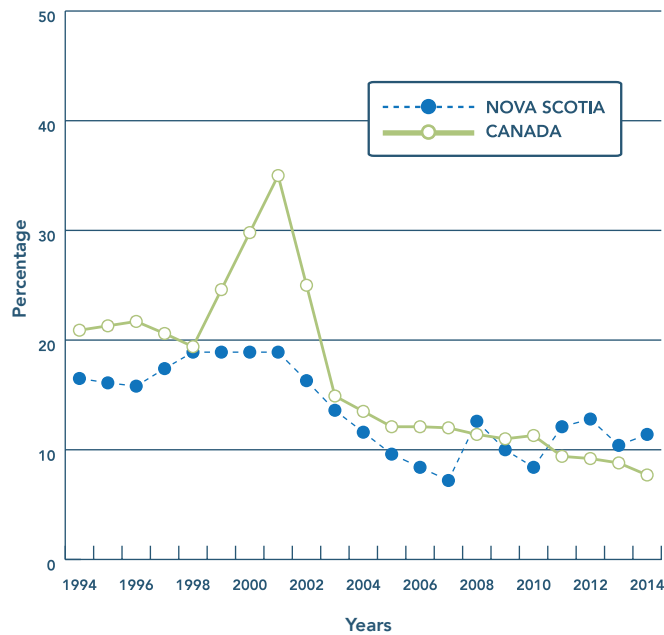
## Percentage of population getting influenza immunization in past year

**Almost half of Nova Scotians are getting their flu shot.** The percentage of Nova Scotians being immunized against influenza has more than doubled over the years, rising from just 22.8% in 2001 to 48.8% in 2014. In contrast, immunization rates overall in Canada similarly rose between 2001 and 2007, but have since stagnated at around 30%. Rates are generally much higher among women (55.9%). Also, among Nova Scotians over the age of 65, almost three-quarters were getting their flu shots in 2014 (74.1%).





Percentage of daily or occasional smokers among teens aged 12 to 19 years



Over 1 in 10 Nova Scotians aged 12 to 19 years were smoking occasionally or daily in 2014 (11.4%). That rate is lower than the 16.5% of teens smoking in 1994, but up from the record low of just 7.2% in 2007. The decline in smoking was even more pronounced for young women in Nova Scotia – just over 5.3% reported that they smoked in 2014 compared to almost three times more young men (16.8%).



## TIME USE

Time Use considers how people experience and spend their time. The use of our time affects physical and mental wellbeing, individual and family wellbeing, and present and future wellbeing. It examines the length of our workweek, our work arrangements, our levels of time pressure and the time we spend with friends and in other free-time activities.

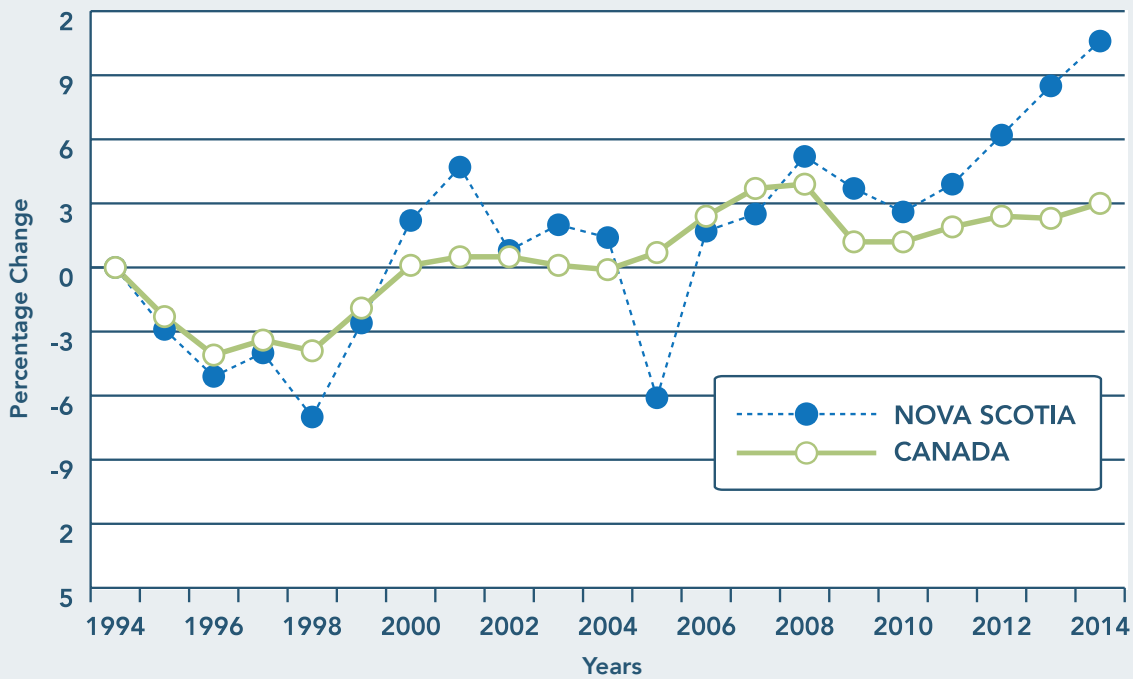
The implicit assumption with Time Use is the notion of balance. Most activities are beneficial to wellbeing when done in moderation, but are detrimental when done excessively or not at all. There are only 24 hours in a day, so too much time directed towards one activity can mean not enough or no time at all allocated for other activities that are also critical for our wellbeing. Not only does the amount of time matter, but the pace of and relative control over timing of activities throughout the day can affect overall quality of life.

### **Nova Scotians finding balance**

Nova Scotians appear to be striving for better work-life balance. Unlike in Canada overall, the Time Use domain has continued its upward progress despite a brief decline in 2005.



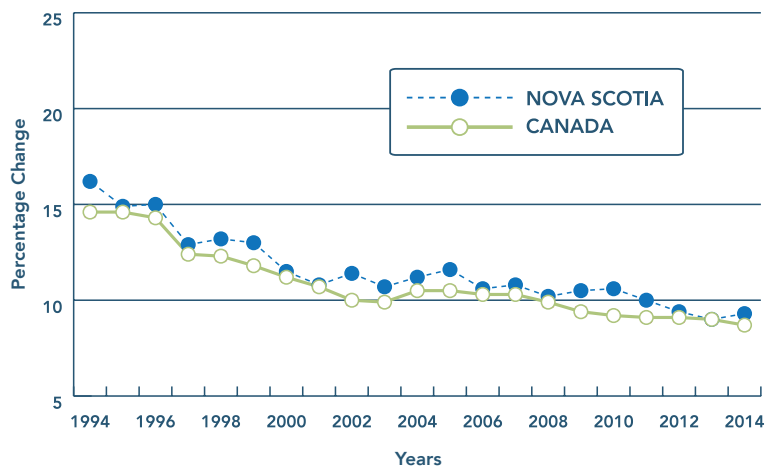
## TRENDS IN TIME USE IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



Overall change in Time Use from 1994 to 2014:

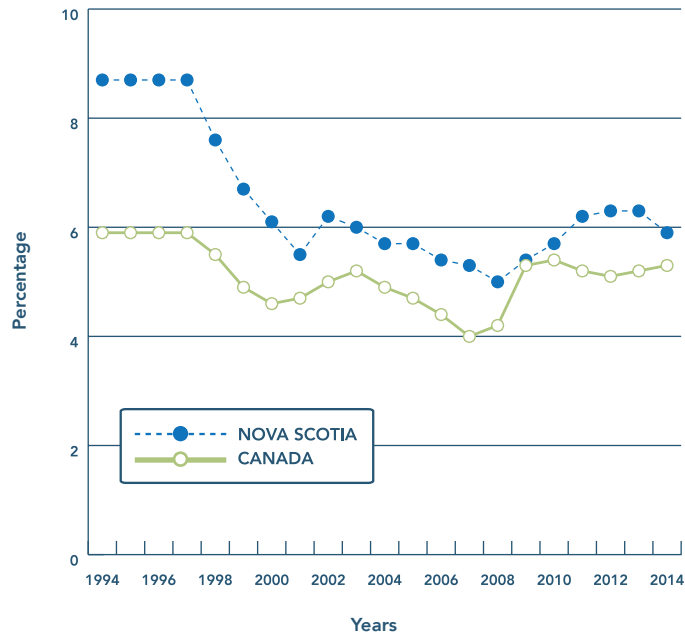
**Nova Scotia** ↑ 10.6% **Canada** ↑ 3.0%

## Percentage of population 25 to 64 years of age working over 50 hours per week at main job



**Fewer Nova Scotians are working more than 50 hours per week.** The percentage of those in the labour force who are working more than 50 hours per week has been dropping steadily since its highest point in 1994 of 16.2%. Regardless of the specific reasons for the decline, a decline in the numbers of people working long hours is positive because it reduces the risk of work-related injuries and poor health associated with long hours.

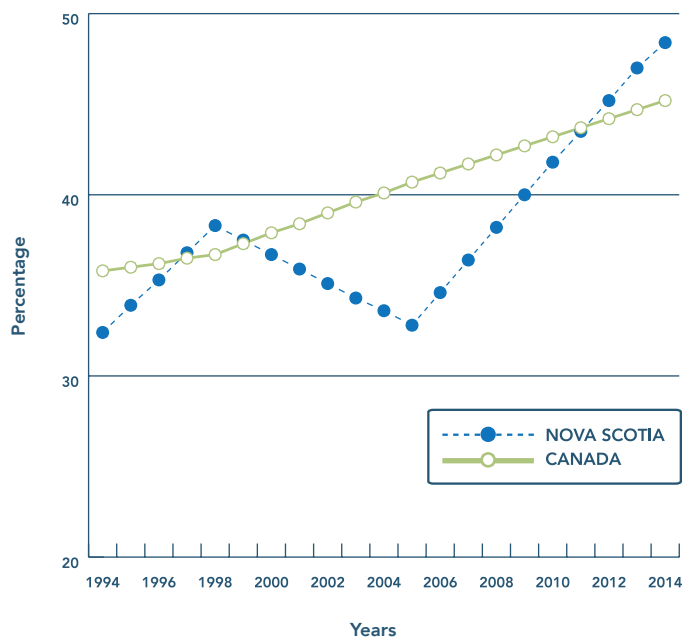
Percentage of labour force working under 30 hours per week, not by choice



**Workweeks of under 30 hours are increasing.** On a positive note, from 1997 to 2008, the percentage of Nova Scotians working under 30 hours per week not by choice fell from 8.7% to 5.0%. However, unlike any other province in Canada, the percentage increased steadily to 5.9% by 2014, which is the highest rate anywhere in the country other than Ontario. While some of this change is due in part to the seasonal nature of work in Nova Scotia, it also points to the rising percentage of the labour force in part-time, precarious work, especially women because more secure, full-time employment is less available to them.<sup>17</sup>

Percentage of individuals working for pay with flexible work hours

**Almost 1 in 2 workers now enjoy flexible work hours.** Regardless of whether they are working shorter or longer workweeks, Nova Scotians increasingly have flexible work hours, allowing them to better schedule when their workday begins and ends. The percentage of those working for pay with flexible hours fluctuated between 32% and 36% from 1994 to 2007. Since then, the percentage has risen rapidly. By 2014, just under half the labour force (48.4%) had a degree of flexibility – one of the highest rates in the country. While such flexibility does not reduce the number of hours typically required for most work, it does provide employees with a greater sense of control over how they use their time.



17. Stanford, J. (2015). *Economics for everyone: A short guide to the economics of capitalism* (2nd ed.). London: Pluto Press.



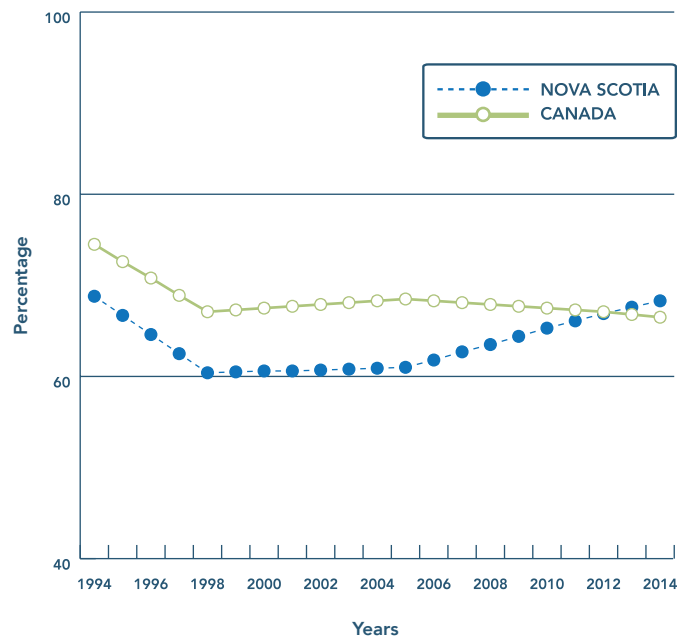
## Percentage of labour force with regular, weekday work hours

### More workers have regular daytime hours.

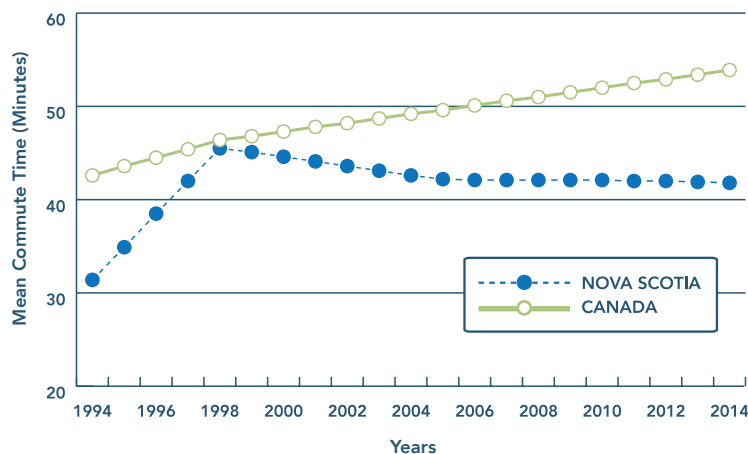
After hovering around 60% for most of the late 1990s and early 2000s, the percentage of Nova Scotia workers with regular, daytime hours rose to over two-thirds of the labour force (68.3%) by 2014. In Canada overall, the percentage of workers with regular, daytime hours has been falling since 1994, and as of 2014, sits at 66.5% – an 8% decrease.

### Women are less likely to see these changes.

In 2014, a smaller percentage of women than men work regular, daytime hours (60.8% and 69.5%, respectively). The gap between women and men is even greater in the availability of flexible work hours (see previous chart) – only a third of women (33.1%) have such flexibility compared to almost half of the men (49.5%). As a result, women have less control over the timing of their activities around their work and are less able to synchronize their personal and family routines.



## Mean workday commute time for individuals working for pay (minutes)

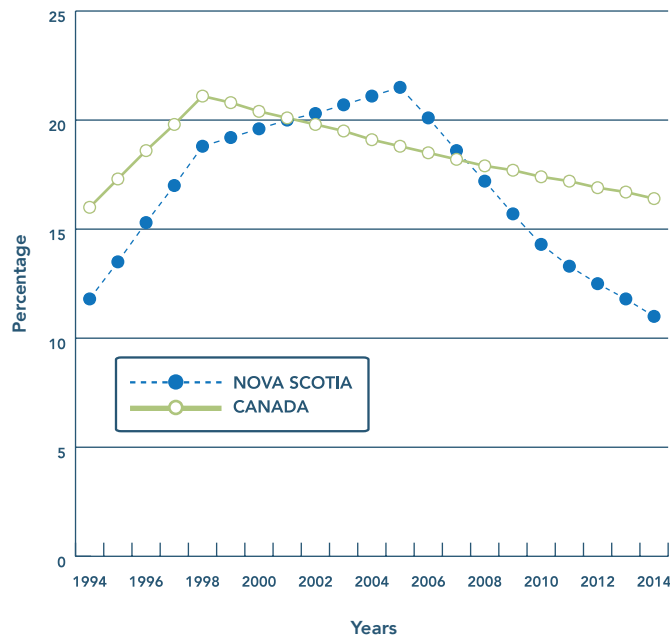


### By 2014, daily commute times had fallen to just over 40 minutes.

Between 1998 and 2010, the average daily commute time to and from work for Nova Scotians with paid employment decreased steadily every year to 42.1 minutes from 45.5 minutes. By 2014, commute times were under 42 minutes – a 9% decrease from 1998. In contrast, commute times in Canada have risen by 40% since 1994, sitting at an average of just under an hour (53.9 minutes). Overall, shorter commute times for Nova Scotians means that

they have recaptured almost half an hour of free time per week compared to other Canadians who have lost over an hour and a half each week. Over a year, that loss amounts to 78 hours.

## Percentage of 15 to 64 year olds reporting high levels of time pressure

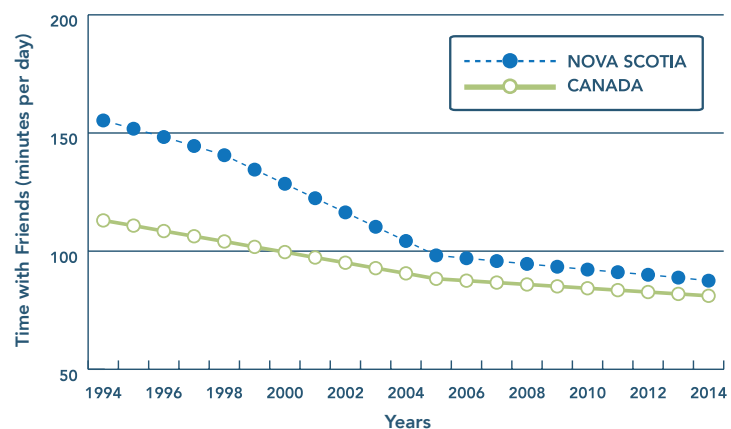


**Only 1 in 10 Nova Scotians feel high time pressure.** The percentage of Nova Scotians feeling high levels of time pressure rose from its lowest levels in 1994 (11.8%) to peak in 2005 (21.1%) before decreasing steadily. By 2014, the percentage returned to its lowest levels (11.0%), which is considerably lower than seen for Canada overall (16.4%). Like the rest of Canada, women and single parents in Nova Scotia feel the “time crunch” more severely, while individuals looking for work and having primary responsibility for household work, including child care – usually women – feel it the most.<sup>18</sup>

## Average daily amount of time with friends (minutes per day)

**Time spent with friends each day is down by over 40%.** Maintaining strong social connections with friends is an important way to manage stress, support mental health, and boost community belonging and resilience. While the average amount of time spent with friends each day has dropped by 28.2% throughout Canada, the rate of decline in Nova Scotia, especially between 1994 and 2005, has been dramatic. Time spent with friends fell from just under two and a half hours in the mid-1990s to just under an hour and a half by 2014 (from 155.3 minutes to 87.5 minutes) – a 43.7% drop over 21 years.

This loss of valued social support has been felt more so by women, single parents and by adults between the ages of 35 and 64 years – the years when pressures at work are higher and the support of friends is most important. Despite the decline, Nova Scotians still spend more time with friends on average than do Canadians overall.

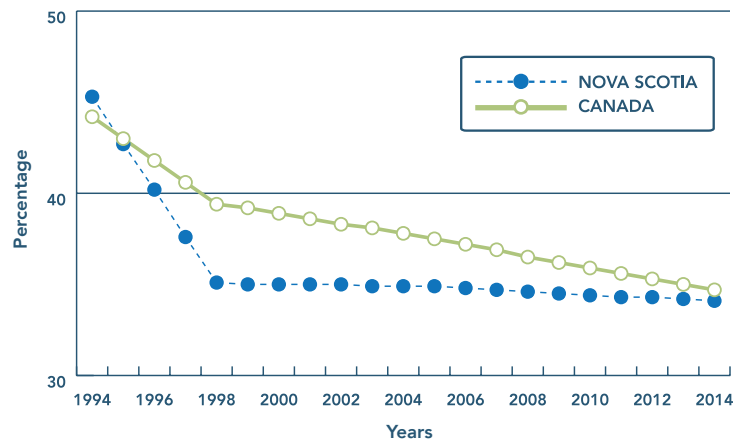


18. Stanford, J. (2015). *Economics for everyone: A short guide to the economics of capitalism* (2nd ed.). London: Pluto Press.



## Percentage of Canadians who report 7 to 9 hours of good quality essential sleep

Since 1998, only one third of Nova Scotians are getting enough quality sleep. In the mid-1990s, almost half of Nova Scotians (45.3%) reported 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep per night. By 1998, that percentage had dropped to approximately one-third of the population (35.1%) where it has since stayed. The percentage now is comparable to the rate overall in Canada. Fewer women than men in Nova Scotia report getting good quality of sleep, and persons working outside the home get even less good quality sleep. Not getting at least 7 to 9 hours of quality sleep per day places a significant number of Nova Scotians at greater risk of poorer physical and mental health, and of work-related injuries.





## DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

Democratic Engagement means being involved in advancing democracy through political institutions, organizations, and activities.

A society that enjoys a high degree of democratic engagement is one where citizens participate in political activities, express political views, and foster political knowledge. It is where governments build relationships, trust, shared responsibility, and participation opportunities with citizens. It is where citizens, governments, and civil society uphold democratic values at local, provincial, and national levels. A healthy democracy needs citizens who feel their votes count, are informed, participate, debate, and advocate. It needs governments at all levels to be transparent, inclusive, consultative, and trustworthy. In essence, political leadership, citizen participation, and communication demonstrate the level of democratic engagement.

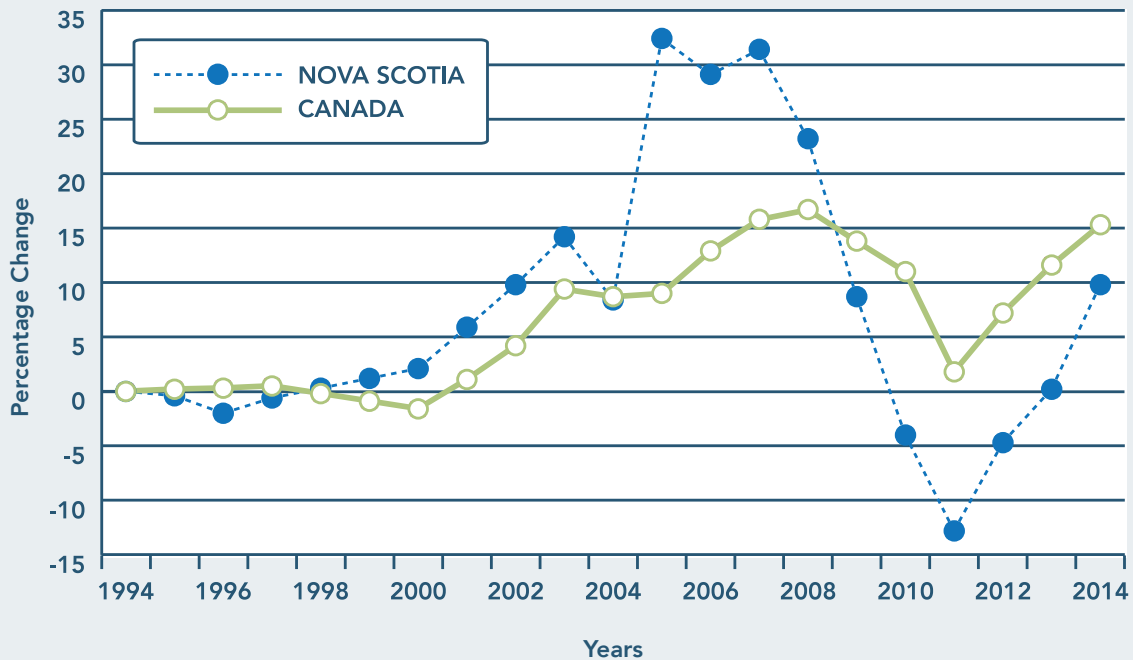
### Participation is up, but confidence is down

Trends in Democratic Engagement in Canada are somewhat more volatile than other domains of wellbeing, and this is especially true in Nova Scotia. While Nova Scotians generally participated more in the democratic process, they expressed less and less confidence in their federal government from 2003 to 2014. After years of increases, democratic engagement saw a dramatic decline in Nova Scotia, even greater than that in Canada overall. While the overall trend is positive – up 9.8% since 1994 – the increase may mask real concerns. How the changes resulting from 2015 federal election have affected these trends are as yet unclear.

*Note: To ensure comparability with the rest of Canada, this domain primarily measures federal government level indicators. As a result, given our relative size as a province, small changes can look more dramatic when graphed.*



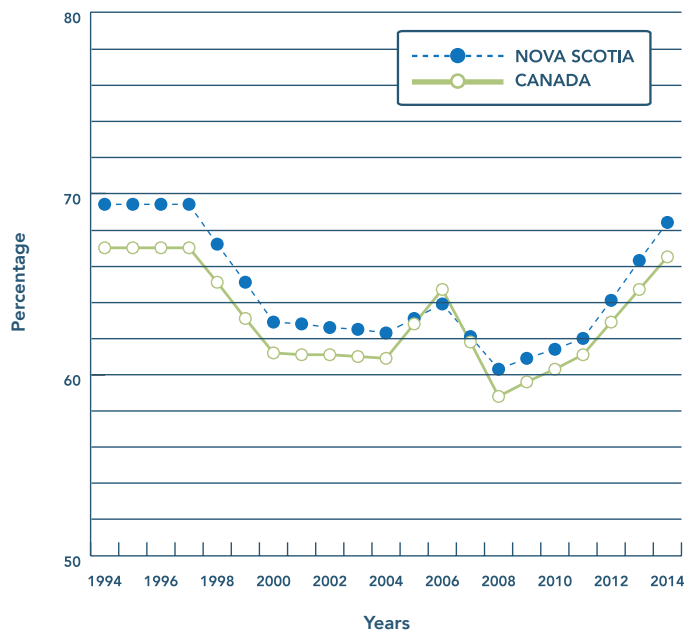
## TRENDS IN DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



Overall change in Democratic Engagement from 1994 to 2014:

**Nova Scotia** ↑ 9.8% **Canada** ↑ 13.0%

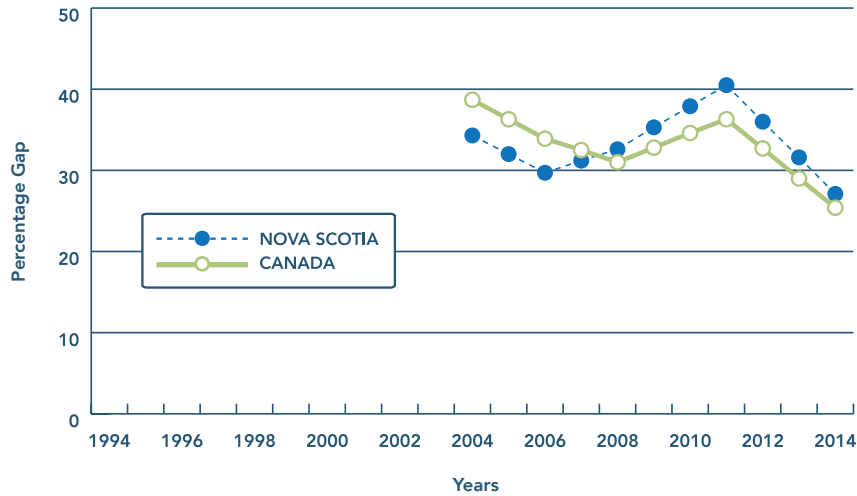
### Percentage of voter turnout at federal elections



**Voter turnout is increasing.** Turnout at federal elections hit its lowest point since 1994 when just 60.3% of Nova Scotians voted in 2008, which was still 2.5% higher than the rate in Canada overall. Voter turnout in Nova Scotia rose to 62.0% in 2011 and then to 70.5% in 2015 – higher than any turnout in the 21 prior years and higher than national voter turnout (68.3%). The 8.5% increase in Nova Scotians who turned out to vote in 2015 was due to much greater numbers of people under 45 years of age – especially those between 18 and 34 years of age – voting than in previous elections.<sup>19</sup>

19. Elections Canada. (2016). Estimation of voter turnout by age group and gender at the 2015 general election. Gatineau, QC: Elections Canada. Available from: <http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=rec/part/estim&document=index&lang=e>

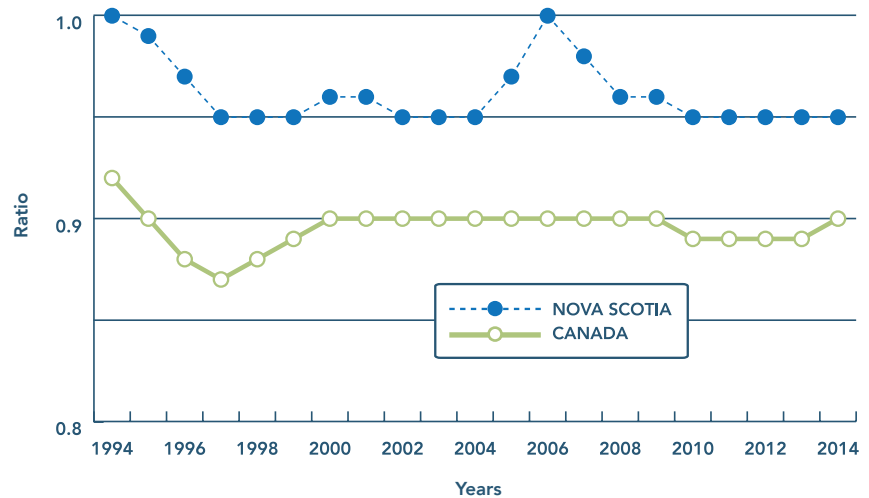
### Gap in percentage turnout between older and younger voters



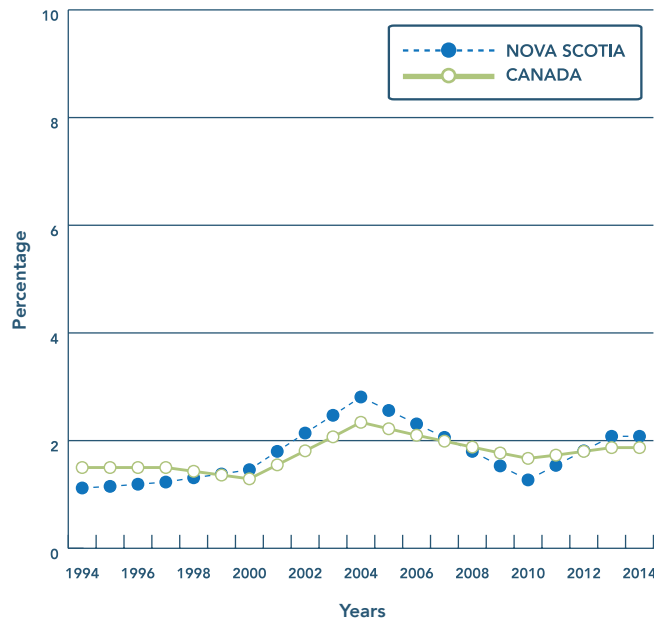
**Voter age gap is decreasing.** The higher turnout of younger voters in recent federal elections is a positive trend. The percentage gap between younger and older voters was 34.3% in the 2004 election and 29.7% in 2006, but jumped to 40.5% in 2011 as fewer younger Nova Scotians turned out for the federal election. In 2015, the gap narrowed again to 22.7% as younger voters returned to the polls, mirroring the trend across the country.

### Ratio of registered to eligible voters

**Slightly fewer eligible voters are registered.** The number of eligible Nova Scotians registered to vote has always been over 95% and was nearly 100% in 2006, but has edged downwards in recent years. By 2014, the percentage of eligible voters who were registered had returned to 95.0%, which is still above the national average of 90.0%. Encouraging eligible voters to register is an important step in the democratic process since it is essential to exercising the right to vote.



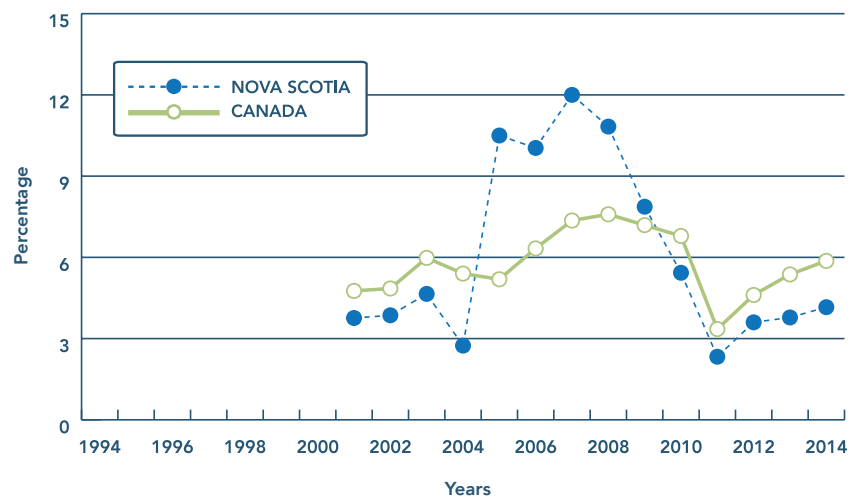
Percentage of population that volunteers for a law, advocacy, or political group



Only 2% of Nova Scotians volunteer for a political party, law or advocacy group. Like in the rest of Canada, the number of people volunteering is very low. From 1994 to 2014, the percentage ranged from only 1.1% to 2.8%. During that time, the rate across Canada has only ever exceeded 3% once – in British Columbia in 2004. Despite a significant increase in voter turnout in recent years – likely in response to the many pressing issues facing all Canadians – engagement in democratic activities has not increased participation in organized political, law, or advocacy groups.

Percentage of Members of Parliament's office budget devoted to sending communications to constituents

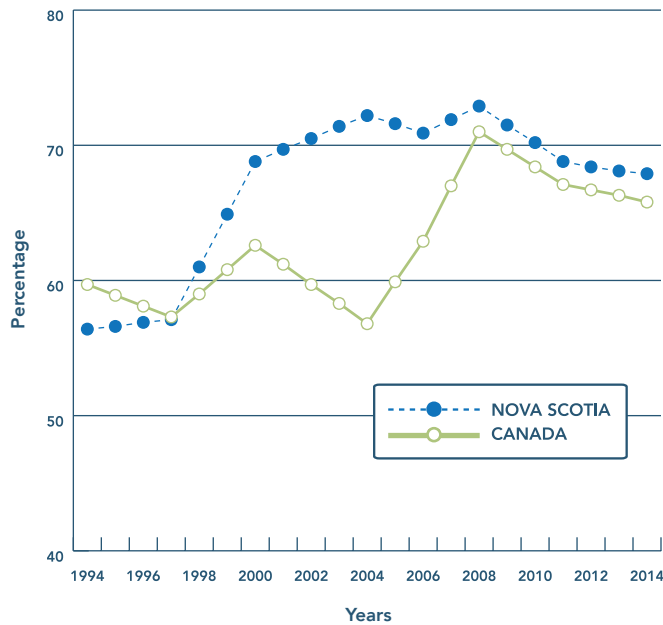
Nova Scotia MPs only spent more money to communicate between 2004 and 2011. As our elected representatives, Members of Parliament (MPs) are expected to reach out to their constituents to invite their participation, report on their activities as representatives, and work to understand their concerns and ideas.<sup>20</sup> MPs from Nova Scotia ridings generally have spent a smaller percentage of their office budgets on communications, typically about 3% to 5% annually. In the four years leading up to the 2008 federal election, however, that percentage jumped to over 10%, which was higher than any other MPs across the country except New Brunswick. As more and more MPs use social media to communicate with their constituents, it is unclear how expenditures on traditional "householders" will be affected.



20. Samara Canada. (2015). Samara's Democracy 360: The numbers. Toronto, ON: Samara Canada. Retrieved from: <http://www.samaracanada.com/research/samara-democracy-360>



Percentage of population that is very or fairly satisfied with way democracy works in Canada

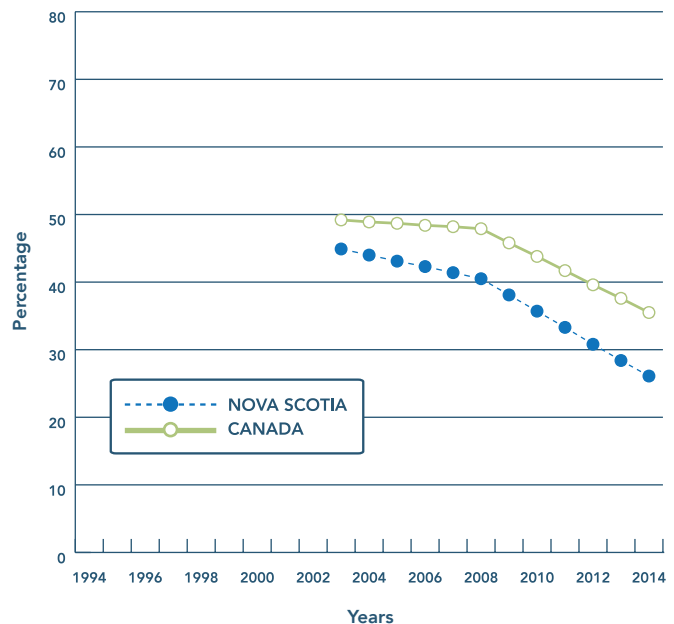


**Satisfaction with how democracy is working has declined since 2008.** In 1994, 56.4% of Nova Scotians expressed being fairly or very satisfied with the way democracy was working in Canada, just shy of the 59.7% in Canada overall. Unlike in the rest of the country, satisfaction continued to rise until 2008 when it peaked at 72.9% in Nova Scotia. Then it tumbled. By 2014, the percentage of Nova Scotians who were satisfied with the way democracy was working in Canada had fallen to 67.9%, just above the national average of 65.8%.

Percentage of population with a great deal or quite a lot of confidence in federal Parliament

**One in four Nova Scotians had confidence in Parliament in 2014.** In 2003, just under half of Nova Scotians (44.9%) reported they had a “great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in our federal Parliament. This rate was higher than the percentages in Canada’s western provinces, which ranged from 36.6% in Alberta to 39.3% in British Columbia, but lower than in any of the other Atlantic provinces. By 2014, the percentage of Nova Scotians who expressed confidence in Parliament had fallen by almost half, to just 26.1% of the population.

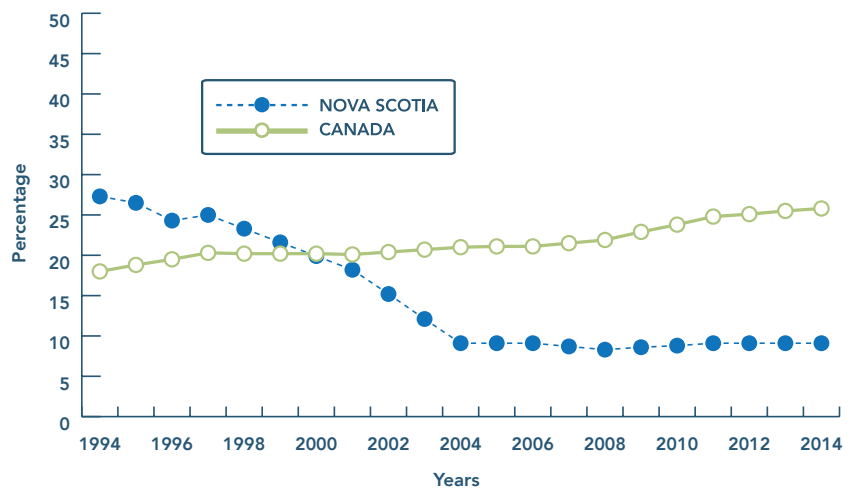
While these results do not include the 2015 election, they suggest a strong disconnect between the activities of Canada’s Parliament and how confident Canadians feel about the government’s policies and priorities. As new information emerges, it will be interesting to see if satisfaction with our democracy and especially confidence in our federal Parliament is recovering.



## Percentage of women in federal Parliament

The percentage of women in federal Parliament has dropped to a 21-year low. In 1994, 27.3% of MPs from Nova Scotia were women, surpassing the national rate of 20.3%. By 2011, that figure had fallen to 9.1% even as the national rate rose to 24.8%. In 2015, Nova Scotia elected only one female MP among its 11 ridings. In contrast, 17 women were elected to the Nova Scotia Legislature in 2017 – one-third of the 51 seats – and two more than previously.

It is worth noting that with 11 MPs representing Nova Scotians in Ottawa, a change in the sex of just one MP means a 9% swing in the percentage of women. Nationally, the 2015 federal election saw 88 women elected, representing 26.0% of the seats in the House of Commons.<sup>21</sup> While these small increases are encouraging, female representation in government still falls well short of the approximately 50% of the population that women comprise.



21. Parliament of Canada. (2016). Women candidates in general elections – 1921 to date. Ottawa, ON: Library of Parliament. Retrieved from: <http://www.lop.parl.gc.ca/About/Parliament/FederalRidingsHistory/hfer.asp?Language=E&Search=WomenElection>



## ENVIRONMENT

The Environment is the foundation upon which human societies are built and the source of our sustained wellbeing. On a broader level, environmental protection involves the prevention of waste and damage while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards the sustainability of all our resources.

The Environment is the basis for our health, our communities and our economy. Despite its fundamental importance to human existence and the natural resource wealth it provides to Canada, we often fail to appreciate the various ecosystem services provided by nature that sustain human wellbeing.

### Real progress on the environment in Nova Scotia<sup>22</sup>

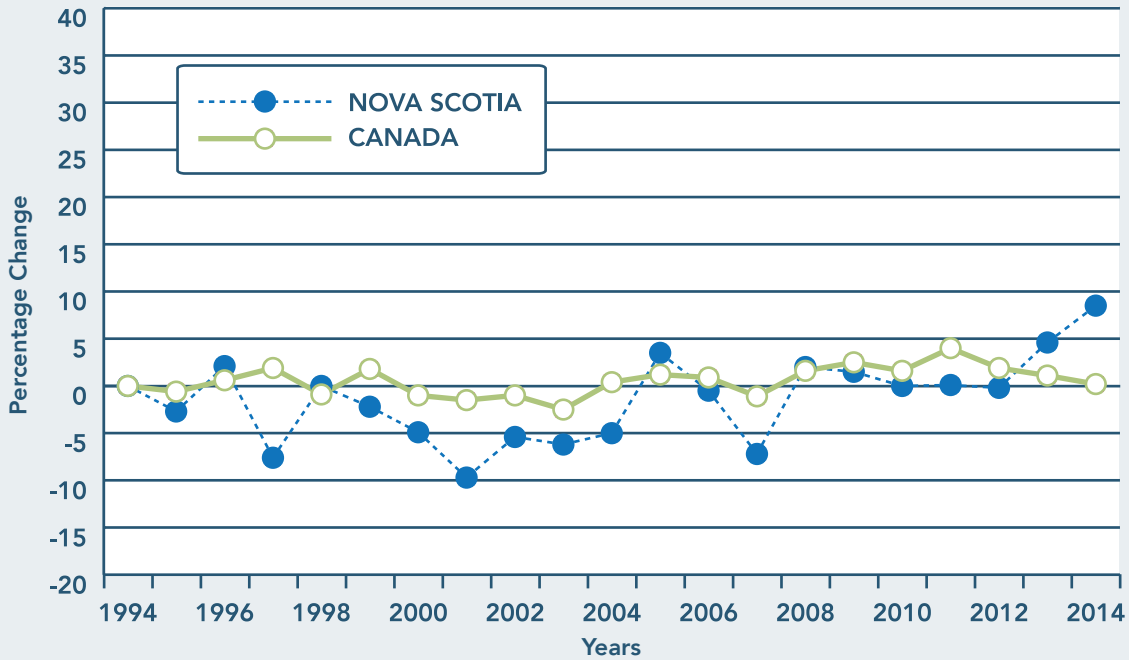
Nova Scotia has shown progress towards improving the environment. Overcoming declines in earlier years, the Environment domain improved by 8.5% from 1994 to 2014. Much of the progress has come about due to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and ground level ozone, as well as reduced residential energy use and stability in the amount of farm land in Nova Scotia.

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22. Three of the indicators for the Environment domain reported at the national level were not available for Nova Scotia – Ecological Footprint, primary energy production, and the Viable Metal Reserves Index. However, the remaining five indicators provide a viable portrait of trends for those aspects that can diminish as well as contribute to the environment, and therefore how changes to it influence quality of life.

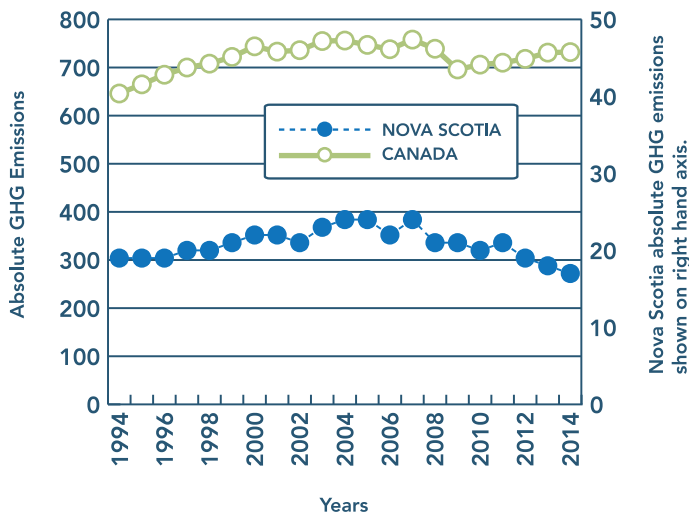


## TRENDS IN THE ENVIRONMENT IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



Overall change in Environment from 1994 to 2014:  
**Nova Scotia** ↑ 8.5% **Canada** ↑ 0.2%

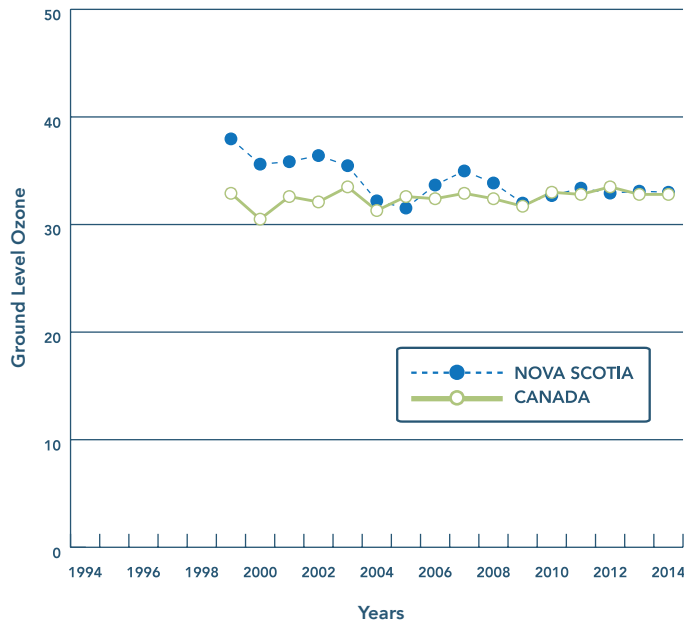
### Absolute GHG emissions (megatonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year)



**Current greenhouse gas emissions are below 1994 levels.** Relative to provincial totals, Nova Scotia reduced its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions more than anywhere else in Canada. After seeing almost 20% increases in emissions from 1994 to 2004, emissions declined steadily from 2004 to 2014 by 36.7% to levels below those reported in 1994.

National GHG emissions are well above levels needed to avoid dangerous impacts on climate. Across Canada, absolute GHG emissions increased by 11.7% from 1994 to 2014. As the country strives to meet its commitment to the Copenhagen target of 17% below 2005 levels by 2020, steps are being taken. Overall, Nova Scotia appears to be setting a positive example.

## Ground level ozone (population weighted in parts per billion)

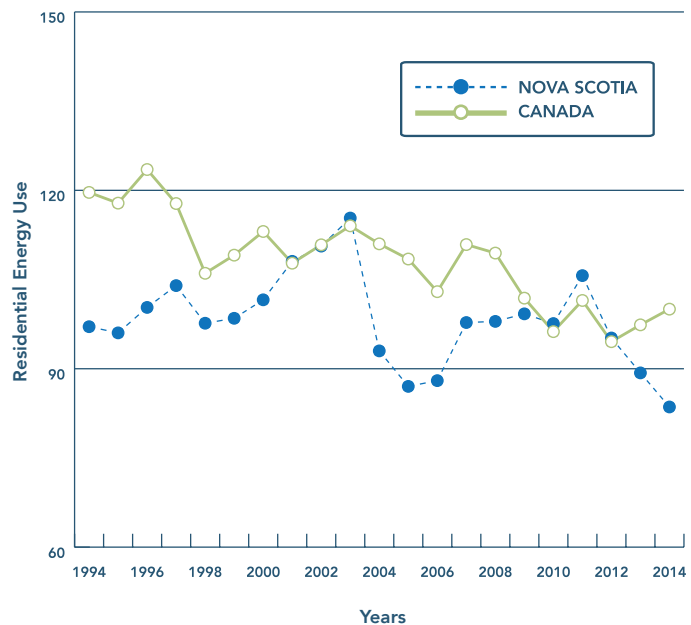


**Smog levels dropped between 1999 and 2009.** Air quality as reflected in ground-level ozone – or smog – dropped by 18.6% between 1999 and 2009 in Nova Scotia and has largely remained at those lower levels up to 2014. Across Canada, ground-level ozone has remained close to 1994 levels. As a potential problem for respiratory health and for its contribution to crop damage, these early reductions in smog in Nova Scotia hopefully can be sustained or even improved upon in the years to come.

## Residential energy use (terajoules per 1,000 dwellings)

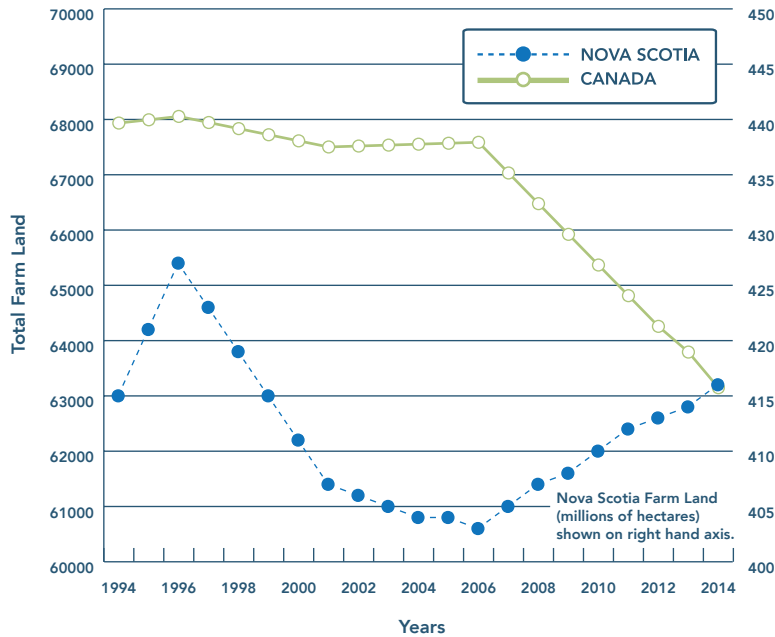
**Residential use of energy declined by over 16%.** Households in Nova Scotia are doing their part by helping to reduce the impact of their energy use on the environment. The 16.2% decline from 1994 to 2014 is even more remarkable when one considers that residential energy use actually increased by 15.8% from 1994 to 2003, and then dropped by 32.0% in the ten years up to 2014.

**Nova Scotians are proactively reducing their energy use.** By 2011, 82% of Nova Scotians had taken measures to reduce their energy consumption. They use fewer light bulbs in their homes than most other provinces in Canada. They are more likely to use cold rather than hot water for laundry. And 45% of Nova Scotia households completed a retrofitting (e.g., installing more efficient heating and cooling systems, upgrading a home's insulation, and re-caulking windows and doors) between 2008 and 2011 to improve energy efficiency.<sup>23</sup>



23. Statistics Canada. (2015). *Households and the Environment Survey: Energy Use – Analysis*. Ottawa, ON. Available online at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-526-s/2013002/part-partie1-eng.htm>

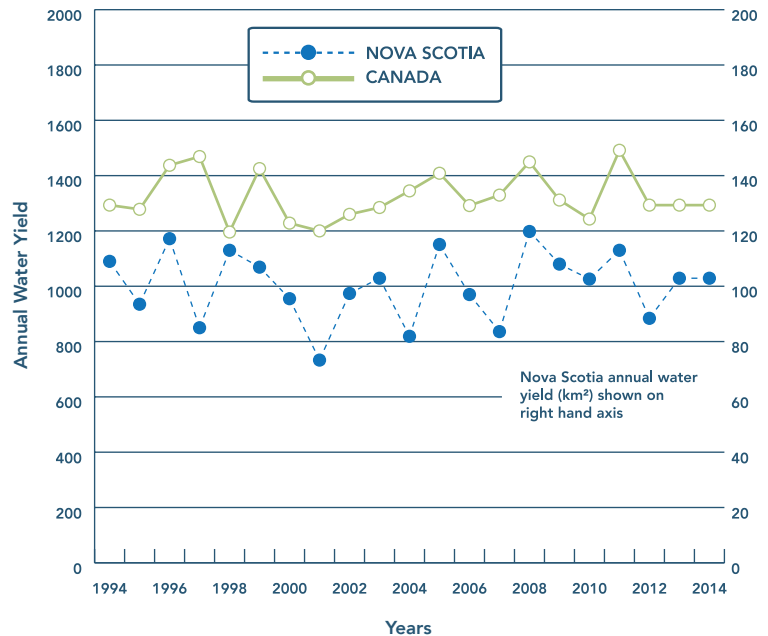
### Total farm land (000's of hectares)



The total land base in Nova Scotia devoted to farmland returning to 1994 levels. With increasing development putting strains on land that is available for agriculture, farming has become more resilient in Nova Scotia in recent years. After losing almost 3% of farmland between 1994 and 2006, Nova Scotia has reclaimed much of that agricultural land. By 2014, the hectares of land devoted to farming is back to 1994 levels. Nova Scotia is a critical agricultural contributor in Canada, so the recovery of its farmland is a good sign for all Canadians.

### Annual water yield in Southern Canada (km<sup>3</sup>)

Our stock of fresh water is vulnerable to climate change. Over the entire period from 1994 to 2014, the availability of fresh water in Nova Scotia – and southern Canada overall – is relatively unchanged, but there have been dramatic annual fluctuations over the years. There have been both decreases and increases in fresh water yields of almost 30% in one year. Despite the stability over 21 years, such fluctuations are linked increasingly to climate change and its effect on the water cycle, which in turn has an impact on our freshwater supply, so we must remain vigilant in protecting this resource.







## COMMUNITY VITALITY

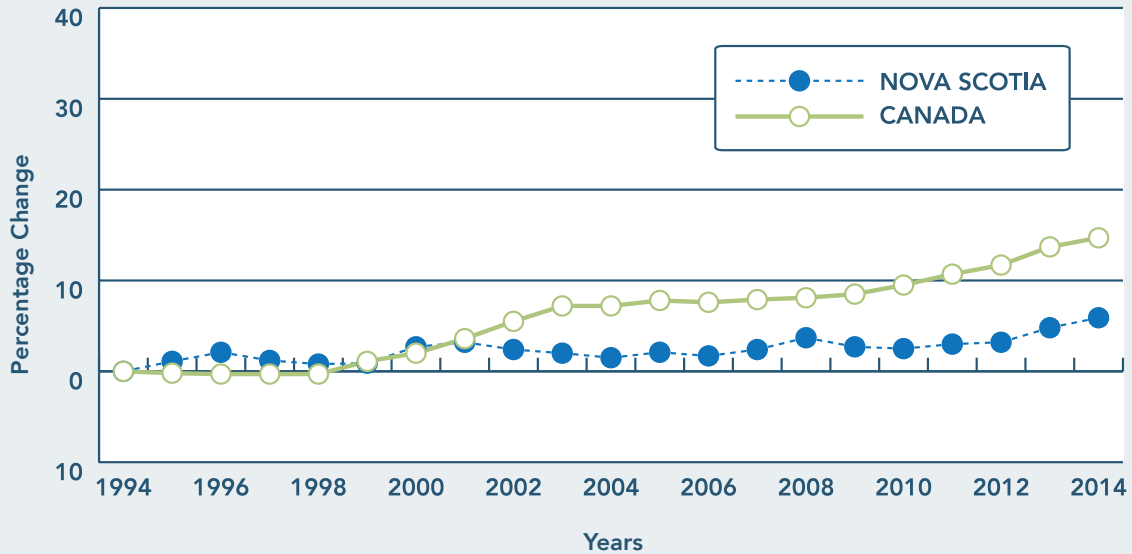
Vital communities are those that have strong, active and inclusive relationships among people, private, public and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.

Vital communities are able to cultivate and marshal rich and diverse relationships in order to create, adapt, and thrive in the changing world. They do so by focusing on social relationships and support, including community safety and social engagement, and on social norms and values, including feelings towards others and residents' sense of belonging to their communities.

### Building on strength with more caring communities

Community Vitality has improved steadily in Nova Scotia since 1994, increasing by 5.9%. While this progress appears modest compared to the 14.7% increase in Canada overall, it reveals a paradox for Nova Scotia. Despite the slower progress overall, Nova Scotia performed better than, or at least as well as, Canada overall on every Community Vitality indicator since 1994. Nova Scotians provide more help to others in need, are more trusting of others, experience less discrimination, and have a stronger sense of belonging to their communities. Indeed, Nova Scotia has always been a province of strong, vital communities made up of supportive and friendly people.

## TRENDS IN COMMUNITY VITALITY IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



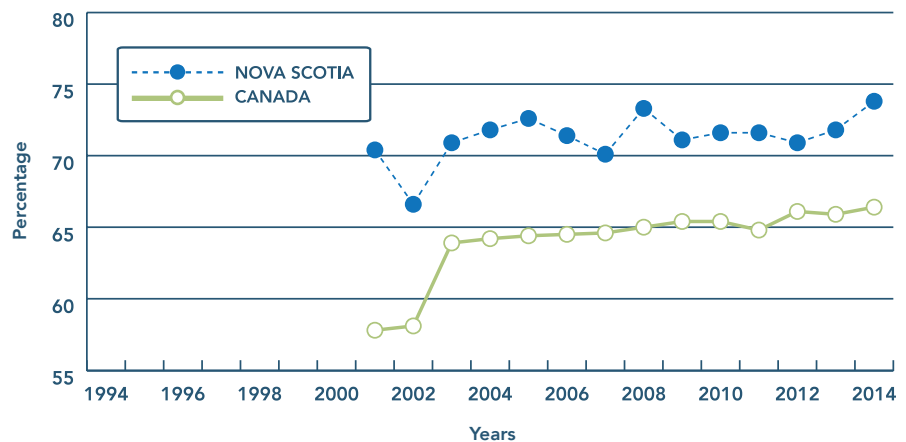
Overall change in Community Vitality from 1994 to 2014:  
**Nova Scotia ↑ 5.9%** **Canada ↑ 14.7%**

## Percentage of population that reports very or somewhat strong sense of belonging to community

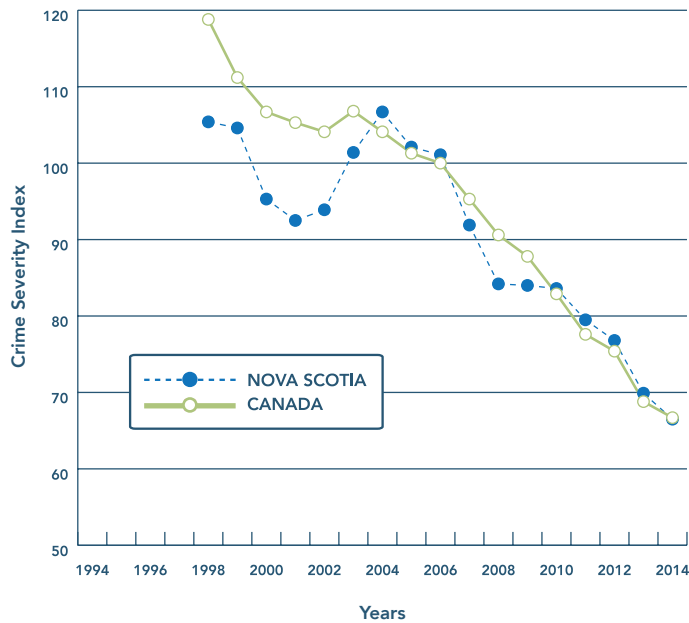
**Almost three-quarters of Nova Scotians have a strong sense of belonging to their communities.**

Rising slowly and steadily over the years, sense of belonging has risen from 66.6% in 2001 to its highest level ever – 73.8% in 2014. This is more than 7% higher than in Canada overall (66.4%), and consistent with the other Atlantic provinces. Strong feelings of belonging are

even higher among Nova Scotians who are younger, 12 to 19 year olds (79.8%), and older, 65 years of age and above (81.0%). Sense of belonging to one's community is important for better overall health and helps people to participate more fully in all aspects of their community.



## Crime Severity Index

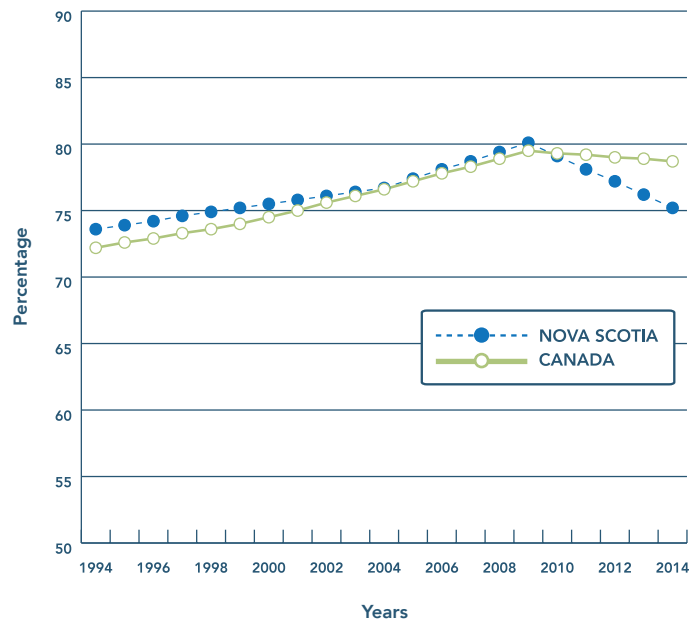


### Serious crime is down 58.4% since 1998.

While the rate of serious crimes fell less in Nova Scotia than in Canada overall (78.2%), the province was considerably safer in 1994 and the rest of Canada has simply caught up. By 2014, both Nova Scotia and Canada share similar scores on the Crime Severity Index. Indeed, the severity of crimes committed has declined nation-wide even more so than the overall crime rate, which fell by just over one-half (54.0%) between 2003 and 2014.<sup>24</sup>

## Percentage of population that feels safe walking alone after dark

**3 in 4 people feel safe walking alone after dark in their communities.** Overall, feelings of safety in Nova Scotia have increased by 2.2% since 1994. By 2014, three-quarters of Nova Scotians (75.2%) said they feel safe. That number was down from a peak of 81.0% in 2009 and is now 3.5% below the Canadian average. Not surprisingly, men feel safer than women. In 2014, almost 92% of men in Nova Scotia (91.7%) said they felt safe whereas only two-thirds of women (66.0%) felt safe walking alone after dark.

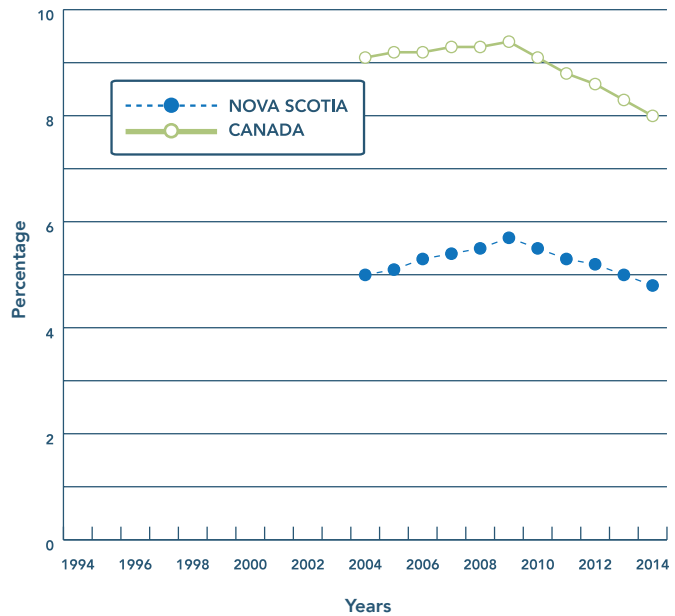


24. Statistics Canada. (2009). Measuring crime in Canada: Introducing the Crime Severity Index and improvements to the Uniform Crime Reporting Survey. Catalogue no. 85-004-X. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of Industry.

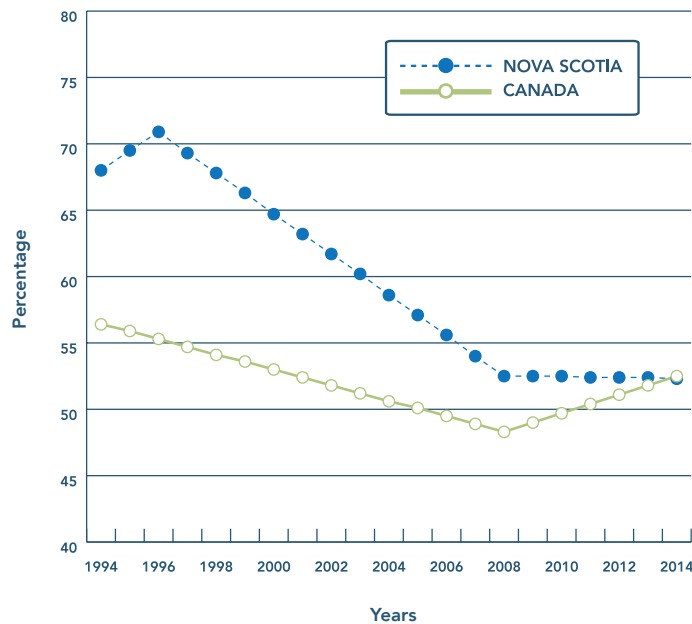


Percentage of population experiencing discrimination in past 5 years based on ethno-cultural characteristics

Experiences of discrimination based on ethnicity dropped from 5.7% in 2009 to 4.8% in 2014. Even though rates have dropped across the country, almost twice as many people experienced discrimination in Canada overall (8.0%) as did residents of Nova Scotia in 2014 (4.8%). Discrimination was more prevalent among people under the age of 25 (15.8%) and among members of racialized groups (17.4%). Clearly, much work is still needed to ensure an inclusive society.



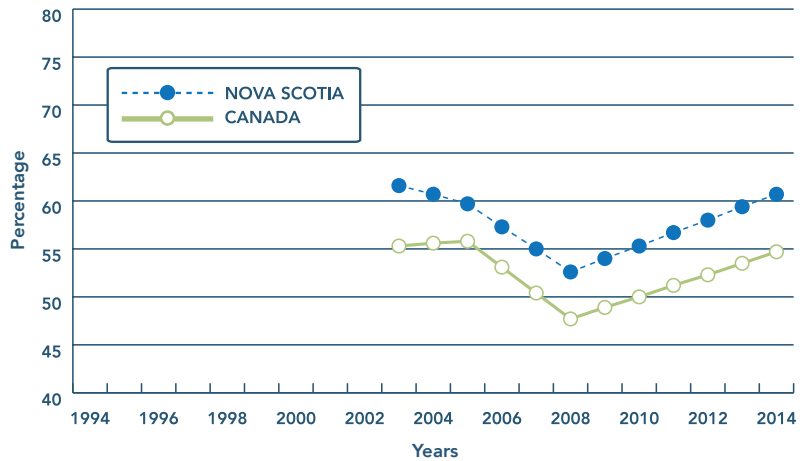
Percentage of population with 5 or more close friends



Since 2008, Nova Scotians have been retaining their close friends. Until 2008, the percentage of Nova Scotians who reported having five or more close friends on whom they could rely had dropped steadily from 68.0% in 1994 to 52.5%. After 2008, that percentage stabilized. By 2014, 52.3% of Nova Scotians had five or more close friends, in line with Canadians overall (52.5%), but still far below levels from the 1990s.

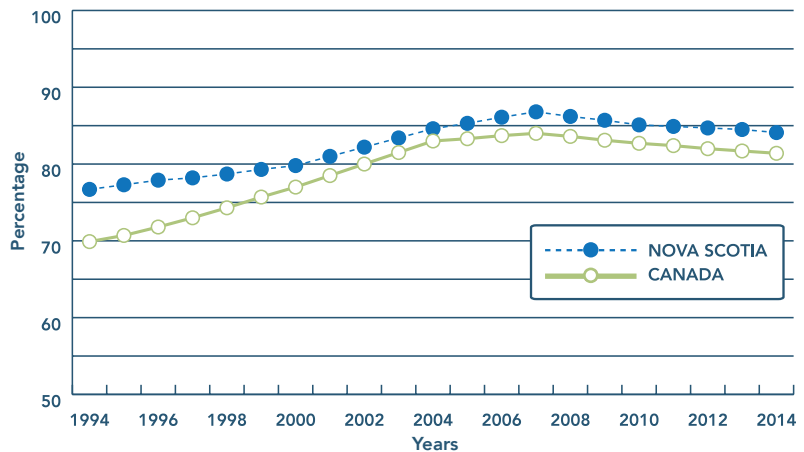
Percentage of population that believes that most or many people can be trusted

**Six in ten Nova Scotians are more trusting of others.** In 2014, 60.7% of Nova Scotians believed most people could be trusted, which was 6% higher than among Canadians overall (54.7%). However, feelings of trust have been recovering in Nova Scotia since 2008 when percentage had dropped to 53.6% of the population. Levels of trust among members of racialized groups in Canada sits much lower than the overall national rate at 48.4%.

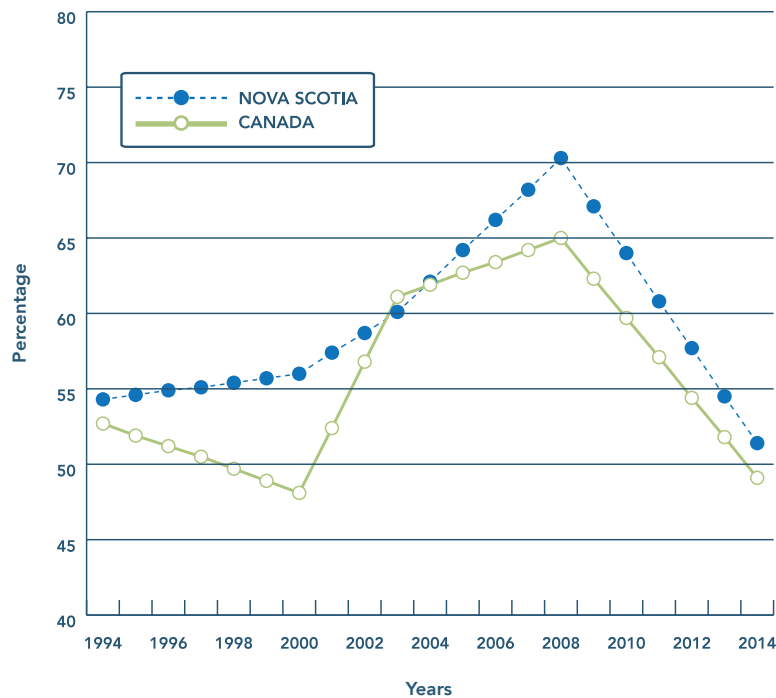


Percentage of population that provides unpaid help to others on their own

**More than 8 in 10 Nova Scotians provide unpaid help to others.** The percentage of people lending support to others in need has risen steadily since the mid-1990s. It reached its highest level in 2007 (86.8%), which was 2.8% higher than in Canada overall (84.0%). Since 2008, the percentage has dropped slightly to 84.5% in 2013. Despite the small drop, individuals providing unpaid help to others remains an important activity for most Nova Scotians.



Percentage of population reporting unpaid, formal volunteering for groups or organizations



Since 2008, increases in unpaid, formal volunteering for groups or organizations were all lost. In 1994, more than half of all Nova Scotians (54.3%) volunteered for groups devoted to activities such as arts and culture, sport and recreation, education, or environmental advocacy. By 2008, that percentage had climbed to 70.3%. But by 2013, it had tumbled to just above half (54.5%) – basically the same participation rate as 1994. While the percentages are slightly higher by about 2% higher in Nova Scotia than in Canada overall, the trends are over the 21-year period are very similar. This is troubling, because formal volunteering – at all ages – is critically important to community belonging, to democratic participation, to combat social isolation, and to maintain physical and mental health.





## LEISURE AND CULTURE

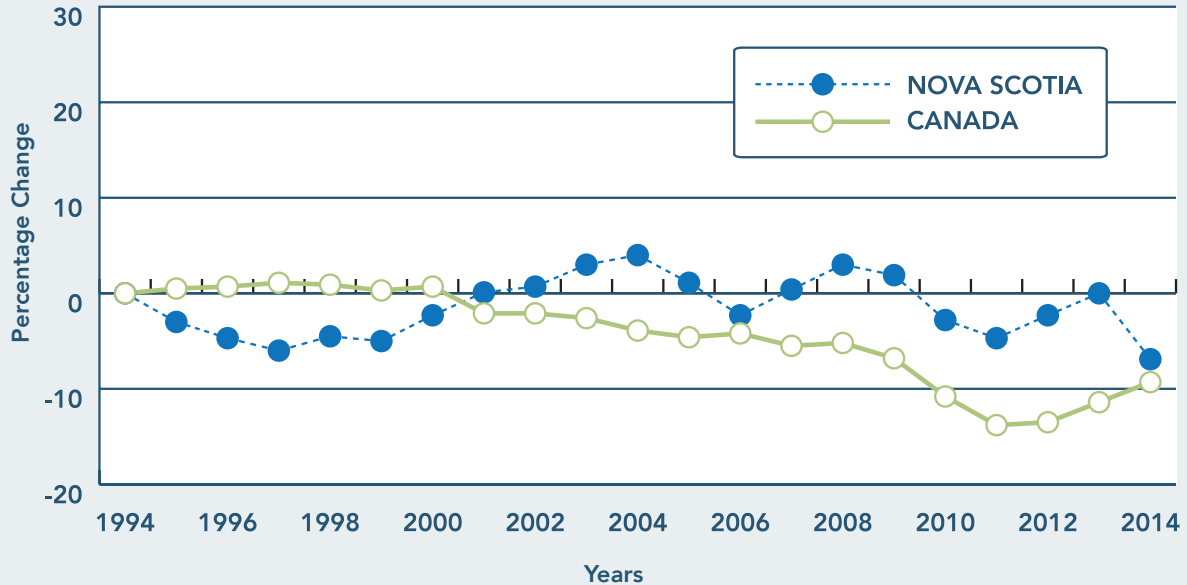
By participating in Leisure and Culture activities, whether arts, culture, or recreation, we contribute to our wellbeing as individuals, to our communities, and to society as a whole. The myriad of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall life satisfaction and quality of life.

As forms of human expression, leisure and cultural activities help to more fully define our lives, the meaning we derive from them, and ultimately, our wellbeing. This remains true throughout our lives regardless of age, gender, or social group. The impact of participation in leisure and cultural activities is even greater for people in marginalized groups, such as those living with disabilities, living in poverty, or as members of a minority population.

### Leisure time takes the greatest hit

Of all the domains, Leisure and Culture is the only one to decline in Nova Scotia since 1994 – an overall drop of 6.9%. Like Canada overall, six of the eight indicators of leisure and cultural engagement are worse now than two decades ago. The good news is that Nova Scotians are more physically active, which helps to maintain good health. Average attendance at performing arts performances has been up and down since the recession, but is still higher than in the 1990s. The bad news is that Nova Scotians are spending less time in arts, culture, and social leisure. They are spending less time volunteering for culture and recreation organizations and taking fewer nights away on vacation. Most troubling, household spending on culture and recreation is at its lowest point since 1994.

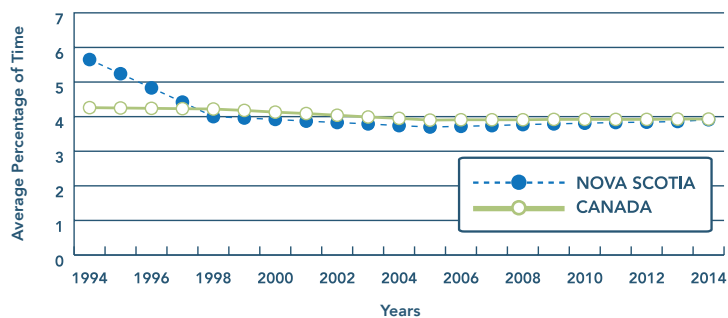
## TRENDS IN LEISURE AND CULTURE IN NOVA SCOTIA AND CANADA FROM 1994 TO 2014



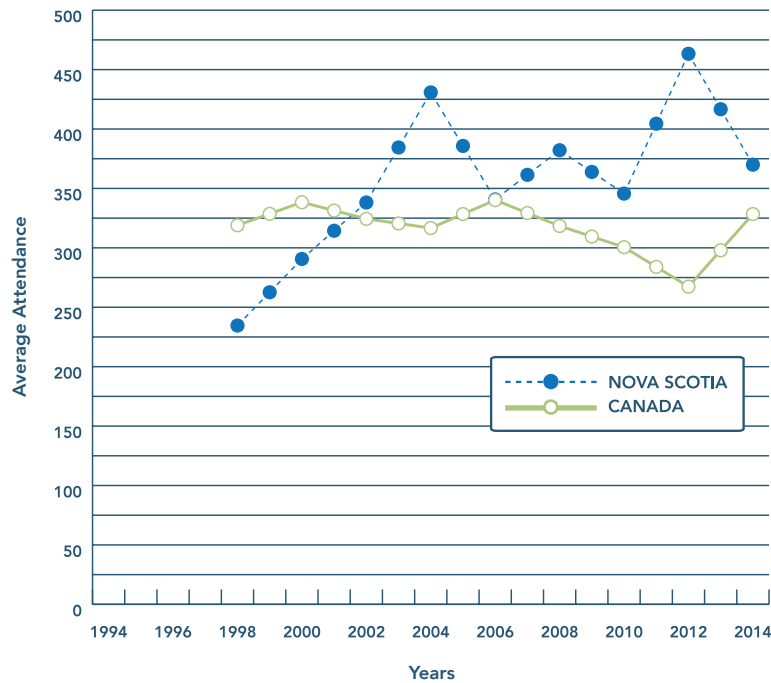
Overall change in Leisure and Culture from 1994 to 2014:  
**Nova Scotia ↓ 6.9%** **Canada ↓ 9.3%**

### Average percentage of time spent on previous day in arts and culture activities

Arts and culture participation now represents less than 4% of Nova Scotians' time. In 1994, people in Nova Scotia spent more time on average engaged in arts and culture activities (5.7%) than Canadians overall (4.3%). Only four years later, they were spending less (4.0%). Participation continued to drop slightly every year until 2005 when it leveled off at 3.7%. Since 2005, participation has remained comparatively stable, increasing by 0.2%. On average, this drop in participation by Nova Scotians – and all Canadians – represents about one hour less each month of engagement in arts and culture activities.

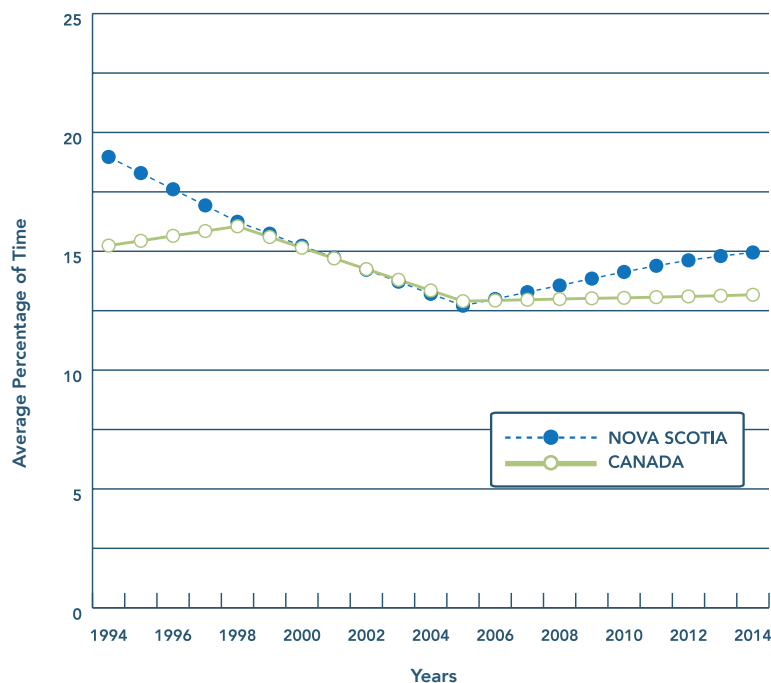


### Average attendance per performance at all performing arts performances



**Nova Scotians are returning to the arts.** Average attendance at all types of performing arts performances fluctuated over the years, but overall, it increased by 57.7% between 1994 and 2014. Since 2002, Nova Scotians have had a higher average attendance per performance than Canadians overall.

### Average percentage of time spent on previous day in social leisure activities



**Since 2005, Nova Scotians are recovering lost time spent socialising with others.** Between 1994 and 2005, the average portion of total time that Nova Scotians spent on the previous day engaged in social leisure activities dropped from 19.0% to 12.7%. This 6.3% drop in social leisure represents approximately one and a half hours per day, and is more than double the drop experienced by all Canadians in the same period. However, since 2005, Nova Scotians have begun to reclaim their time spent in social leisure activities. By 2014, time spent socialising with others had risen to 15.0%, still well short of its peak in the mid-1990s, but a positive sign nevertheless.

**The decline in social leisure activities affected women the most.** On average, women spend a much greater percentage of their time than men do engaging in social leisure and arts and culture activities. The 4.0% overall drop in participation from 1994 to 2014 was due almost entirely to losses of social leisure time among women in Nova Scotia, not by men.

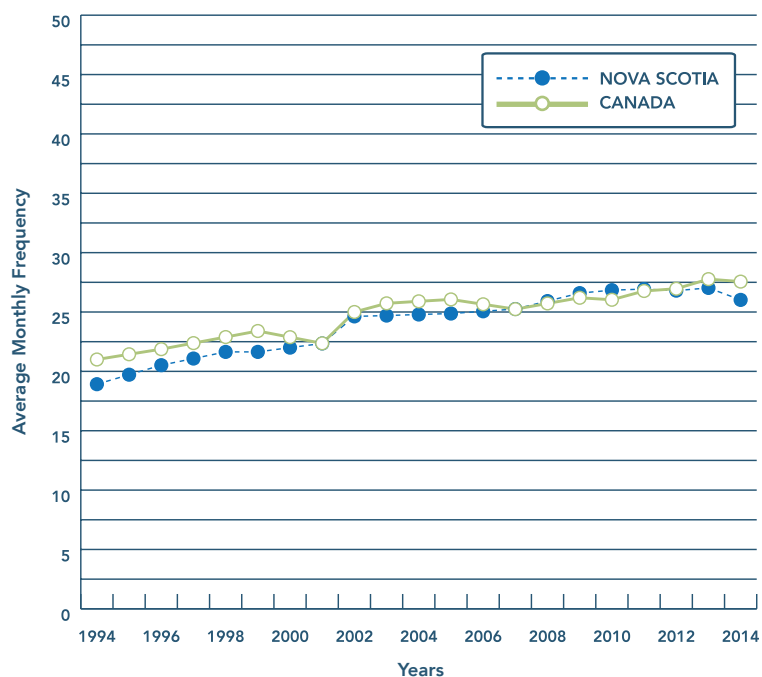


## Average monthly frequency of participation in physical activity lasting over 15 minutes

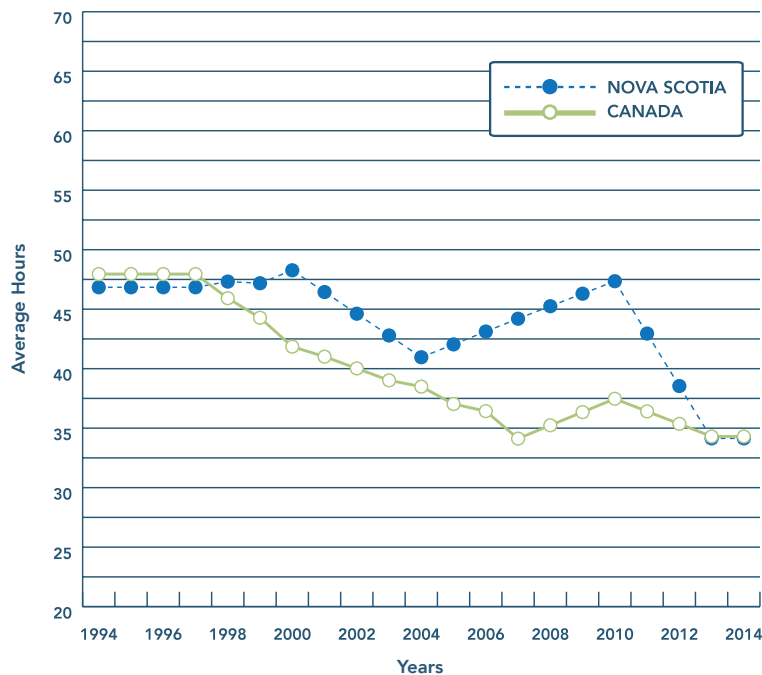
**Nova Scotians are physically active almost every day.** From 1994 to 2014, overall participation by Nova Scotians in at least 15 minutes of daily physical activity rose steadily from an average of 18.9 to almost 26.0 times per month. Participation rates in activities such as walking, bicycling, exercising, various sports, gardening, and social dancing continue to attract new and more frequently engaged participants.

**Younger Nova Scotians are the most active, but older people are also embracing active lifestyles.** While physical activity rates are highest for Nova Scotians under the age of 30, rates are quite similar for 30 to 79 year-olds. Older Nova Scotians are increasingly embracing more active lifestyles, which bodes well for their health and community involvement as they approach later life.

**The physical activity gender gap is also smaller in Nova Scotia.** Across Canada, men reported participating almost twice as often each month in physical activity as did women. In contrast, men in Nova Scotia reported only slightly more episodes of physical activity per month than women in 2014.



## Average number of hours volunteering for culture and/or recreation organizations



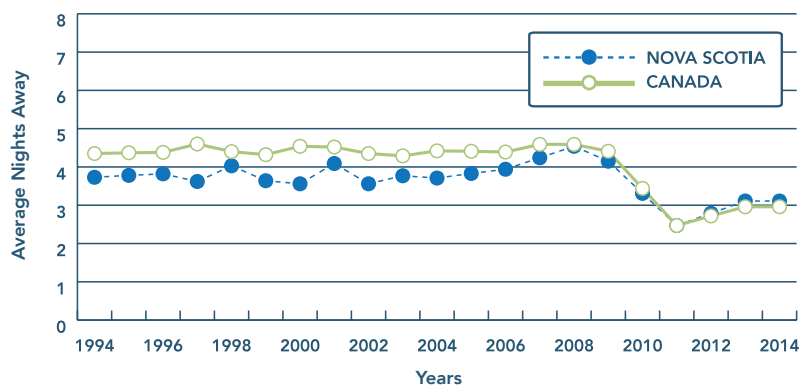
**Volunteering for culture and recreation is down almost 30% since 1994.** The average number of hours spent volunteering for culture and recreation organizations in Nova Scotia made a small increase of 3.1% until 2000 before dropping off by 15.7% in 2004. After recovering most all of that lost time by 2010, volunteering plummeted by 28.2% to its lowest levels over the entire 21-year period. Similarly across Canada, the average number of hours devoted to volunteering for culture and recreation organizations dropped dramatically, falling by 29.8% from 1997 to 2007, rebounding slightly following the recession, only to drop again by 2013.

amount of time for both men and women has dropped since 1994, in 2013, men in Nova Scotia reported on average almost four times as many hours volunteering for culture and recreation organizations as women. Time spent volunteering for culture and recreation is lowest among Nova Scotians between 24 and 35 years of age, and continues to be much higher among those over the age of 65.

## Gender and age gaps emerge among volunteers.

## Average number of nights away on vacation trips to destinations at least 80km from home

**Nights away on vacation have dropped since 2008.** The total number of nights Nova Scotians spent away from home on each vacation trip was relatively stable from 1994 to 2008, averaging between 3.5 and 4.5 nights, which is slightly lower than for Canadians overall. However, after 2008, nights away dropped by over a third (38.3%), averaging about three nights away per trip by 2014. Across Canada, people have traditionally been able to protect their vacations against fluctuations in the economy. Did the recession affect their ability to do so?

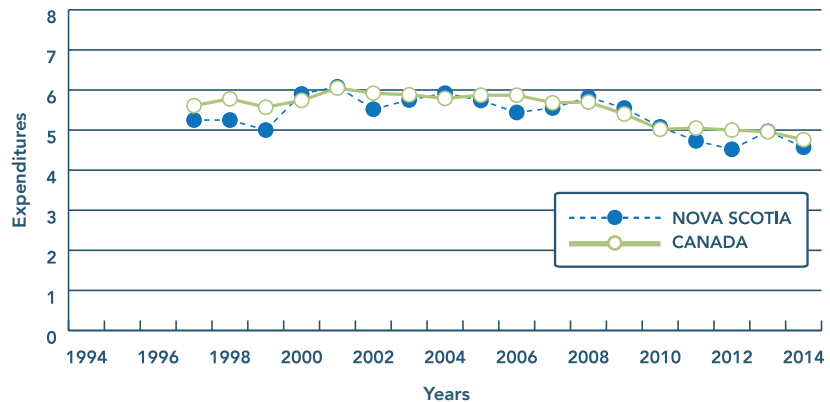


## Expenditures on all culture and recreation as a percentage of total household expenditures

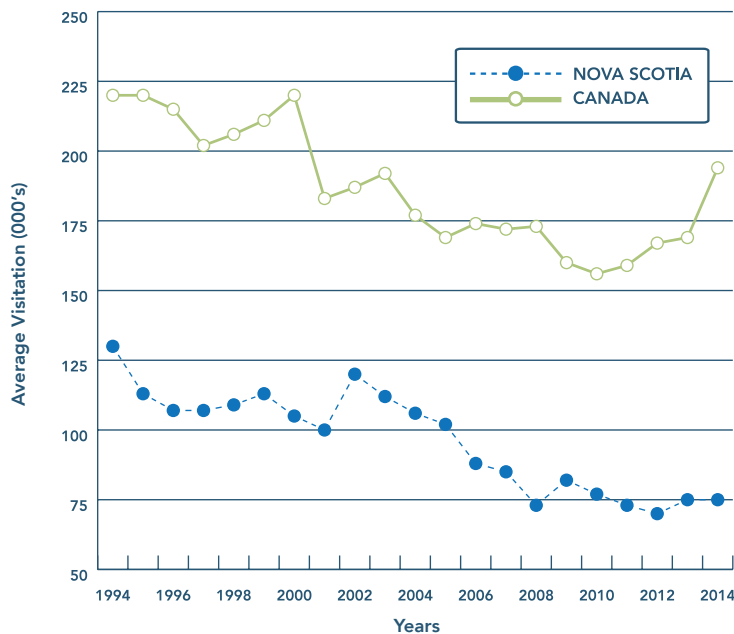
### Nova Scotians are spending less on culture and recreation.

Regardless of whether household income went up or down over the years, the percentage of that total income devoted to culture and recreation remained at approximately 5% to 6% from 1997 to 2008. After 2008, that percentage fell every year. By 2014, spending on culture and recreation sat at 4.6% of Nova Scotians' household expenditures.

This trend in Nova Scotia mirrors the experience of all Canadians, and is concerning. While a drop of just under 1% in expenditures for culture and recreation activities appears small, it represents an average decline of almost \$6,000 of total household expenditures between 2008 and 2014, and indicates Nova Scotians have considerably less access to the activities and opportunities they desire most in their free time.



## Average visitation per site past year to National Parks and National Historic Sites



### Interest in Canada's National Parks and Historic Sites continues to slide.

Apart from a small increase in 2002, annual visitation to Canada's National Parks and National Historic Sites has been dropping since 1994. Over the entire 21-year period, average visitation to the National Parks and Historic Sites in Nova Scotia has fallen by 42.1%. Similar declines occurred across Canada, but beginning in 2011, visitation rates have been on the upswing, increasing by 16.0%. However, the visitation rate in Nova Scotians shows little sign of recovering.

### Several factors contributed to the decline across Canada during this period.

Among the factors contributing to the decline were 9/11, the outbreaks of SARS, West Nile virus, and the economic slump. The renewed marketing efforts by Parks Canada, especially to attract both new and young Canadians for whom the park experience is unfamiliar, contributed to recovering visitation – but not in Nova Scotia.



# APPENDIX A.

## WHY CANADA NEEDS THE CANADIAN INDEX OF WELLBEING

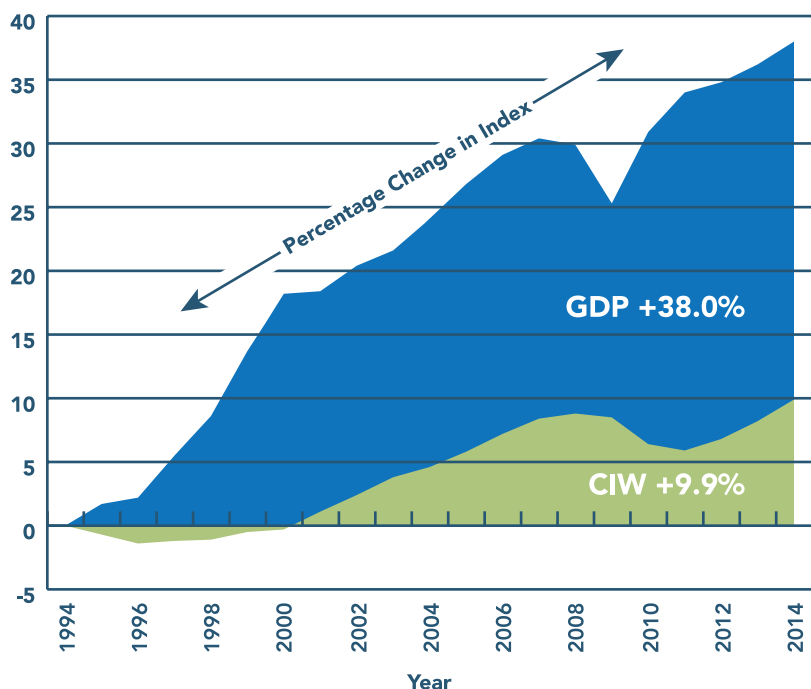
The United Nations and the OECD agree – the true measure of a country’s progress must include the wellbeing of its citizens. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) shifts the focus from solely the economy to include other critical domains of people’s lives.

Increasingly, citizens and their government are thinking “beyond GDP” as a measure of our progress and quality of life. Even though Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is an important measure of our economic performance, it does not capture those areas of our lives that we care about most like education, health, the environment and the relationships we have with others. GDP also is not sensitive to the costs of economic growth such as environmental degradation, loss of farmland or growing income inequality.

In 1930, in an essay entitled “Economic possibilities for our grandchildren,” economist John Maynard Keynes predicted that in a century’s time, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) would be four to eight times greater and by 2010 the average workweek would be 15 hours.<sup>25</sup> The great challenge would be to fill up people’s leisure time with meaningful activities.

While the first half of Keynes’s prediction has come true, a corresponding improvement in quality of life has never come close. As Figure A1 clearly shows, GDP per capita in Canada has been rising much faster than wellbeing as measured by the CIW. In the 21-year period from 1994 to 2014, GDP grew by 38.0% while the Canadian Index of Wellbeing (CIW) rose by only 9.9%. Until the 2008 recession, GDP per capita grew by 29.9% and the CIW by 8.8%. Since the recession, GDP, after faltering, has grown by another 8.1%, but our wellbeing has grown by barely 1.1%. The gap between these measures reveals a deeper issue: GDP alone cannot measure how well our population is doing as a whole.

Figure A1: Trends in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing and GDP (per capita) from 1994 to 2014



25. Keynes, J.M. (1930/1963). *Economic possibilities for our grandchildren*. In *J.M. Keynes, Essays in persuasion* (pp. 358-374). London: Macmillan.

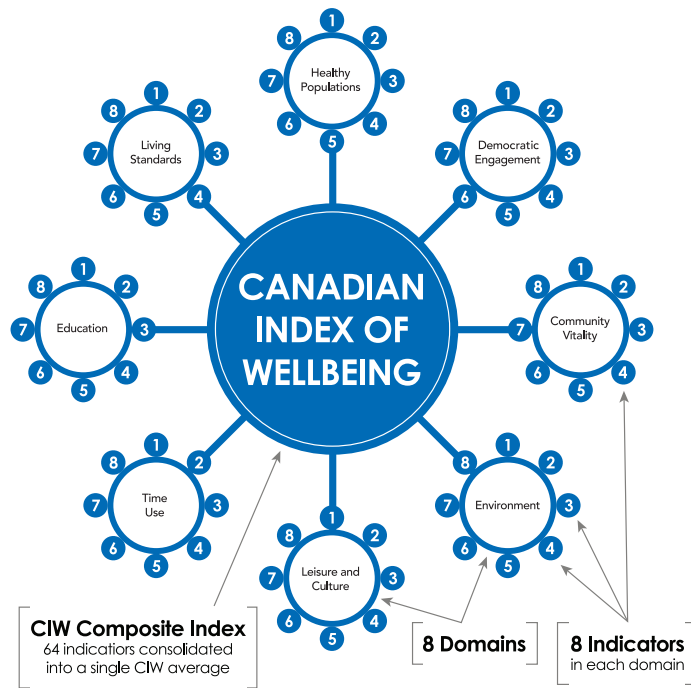
## Core Values and Domains Identified by Canadians

Since its inception and throughout its development, the CIW has been designed to ensure everyday Canadians hear their own voices and see themselves reflected in it.

The CIW is the result of the combined efforts of national leaders and organizations, community groups, research experts, indicator users, and importantly, the Canadian public. Through three rounds of public consultations, everyday Canadians across the country candidly expressed what really matters to their wellbeing. The process culminated in the identification of core Canadian values – including equity, diversity, sustainability, economic security – and eight domains of life that contribute to and affect the wellbeing of Canadians: Community Vitality, Democratic Engagement, Education, Environment, Healthy Populations, Leisure and Culture, Living Standards and Time Use (see Figure A2). This framework shifts the focus from solely the economy to other factors that affect the quality of life of Canadians.

- **Community Vitality** means vital communities that have strong, active and inclusive relationships amongst people; and private, public and non-governmental organizations that foster individual and collective wellbeing.
- **Democratic Engagement** means being involved in advancing democracy through political institutions, organizations and activities.
- **Education** is the systematic instruction, schooling or training given to the young in preparation for the work of life, and by extension, similar instruction or training obtained in adulthood.
- **Environment** is the foundation upon which human societies are built and the source of our sustained wellbeing. On a broader level, environmental protection involves the prevention of waste and damage while revitalizing our ecosystems and working towards the sustainability of all our resources.
- **Healthy Populations** considers the physical, mental and social wellbeing of the population. It examines life expectancy, lifestyle and behaviours, and the circumstances that influence health such as access to health care.
- **Leisure and Culture** considers how participating in leisure and cultural activities, whether arts, culture or recreation, contributes to our wellbeing as individuals, to our communities and to society as a whole. The myriad of activities and opportunities we pursue and enjoy benefit our overall life satisfaction and quality of life.
- **Living Standards** examines Canadians' average and median income and wealth; distribution of income and wealth including poverty rates, income fluctuations and volatility; and economic security, including the labour market, housing and food security.
- **Time Use** considers how people experience and spend their time. It examines how the use of our time affects physical and mental wellbeing, individual and family wellbeing, and present and future wellbeing.

Figure A2. The Canadian Index of Wellbeing Framework



Together, these eight domains provide a more complete picture of wellbeing, incorporating a comprehensive set of the key social, health, economic and environmental factors contributing to overall quality of life. Teams of nationally and internationally renowned experts then identified eight valid, reliable and relevant indicators within each domain that are directly related to wellbeing. By integrating the 64 indicators and eight domains and revealing their complex interconnections, the CIW composite index provides a comprehensive portrait of quality of life in Canada.

The CIW composite index tracks all indicators and domains of wellbeing to measure our progress over time, highlighting how we are doing – where we are doing well and where we could be doing better.

An ongoing cycle of public engagement, consultation and refinement is one of the defining characteristics of the CIW. It ensures that the Index is rooted in Canadian values,

grounded in community experience, shaped by technical expertise and responsive to emerging knowledge. The CIW is not a static measure. As new issues emerge and new knowledge, understandings and data become available, the CIW adapts to strengthen its measure of wellbeing without veering from the values on which it is grounded. Validating and continually improving the CIW is an ongoing process.



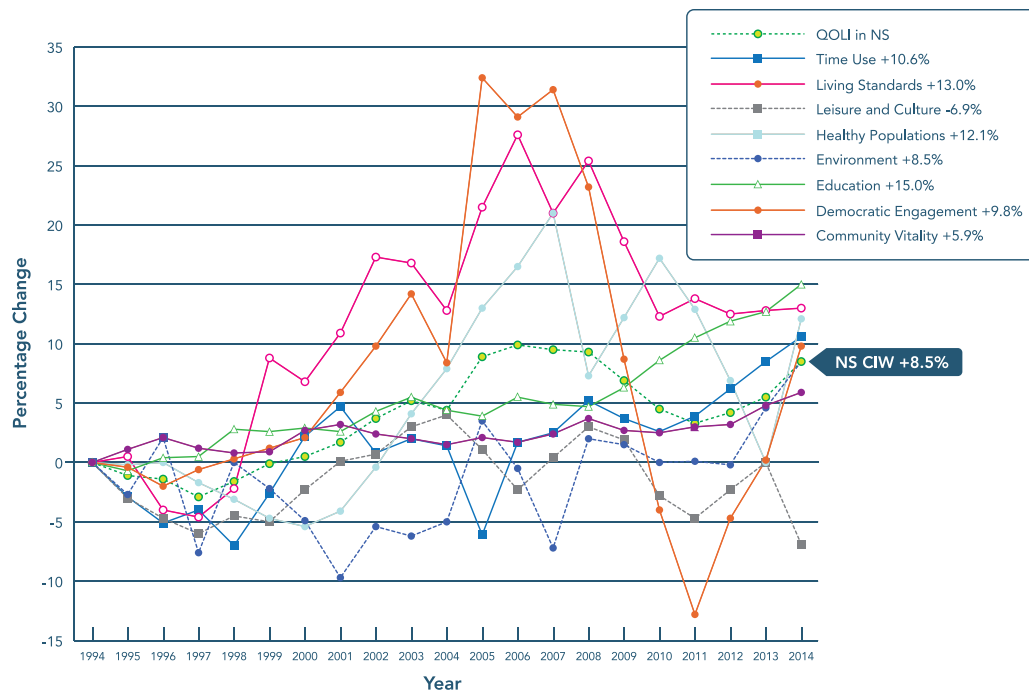
# APPENDIX B.

## AGGREGATE OBSERVATIONS BY CIW

In keeping with the CIW’s mission, the Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index report focuses on the question: “how are Nova Scotia doing and how has quality of life changed in Nova Scotia?” To answer these questions, the report draws on data collected for the CIW’s national report in 2016, and based on rigorous research, describes how the quality of life for Nova Scotians has progressed from 1994 to 2014. It looks at quality of life overall, trends within each domain and how those trends compare to Canada as a whole.

Nova Scotia and Canada show very similar increases in overall quality of life with 8.5% and 9.0% progress respectively. Interestingly, these gains in quality of life are due to changes in quite different domains. Looking at the trends, Nova Scotia shows very similar progress to Canada in several domains, including Education, Living Standards and Healthy Populations – with only Leisure and Culture revealing a decline since 1994. The mid-2000s were especially volatile for Democratic Engagement and Healthy Populations, with rapid progress followed by steep declines, and then recovery (*see Figure B1*).

Figure B1: Trends in the Domains of the Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index, 1994 to 2014



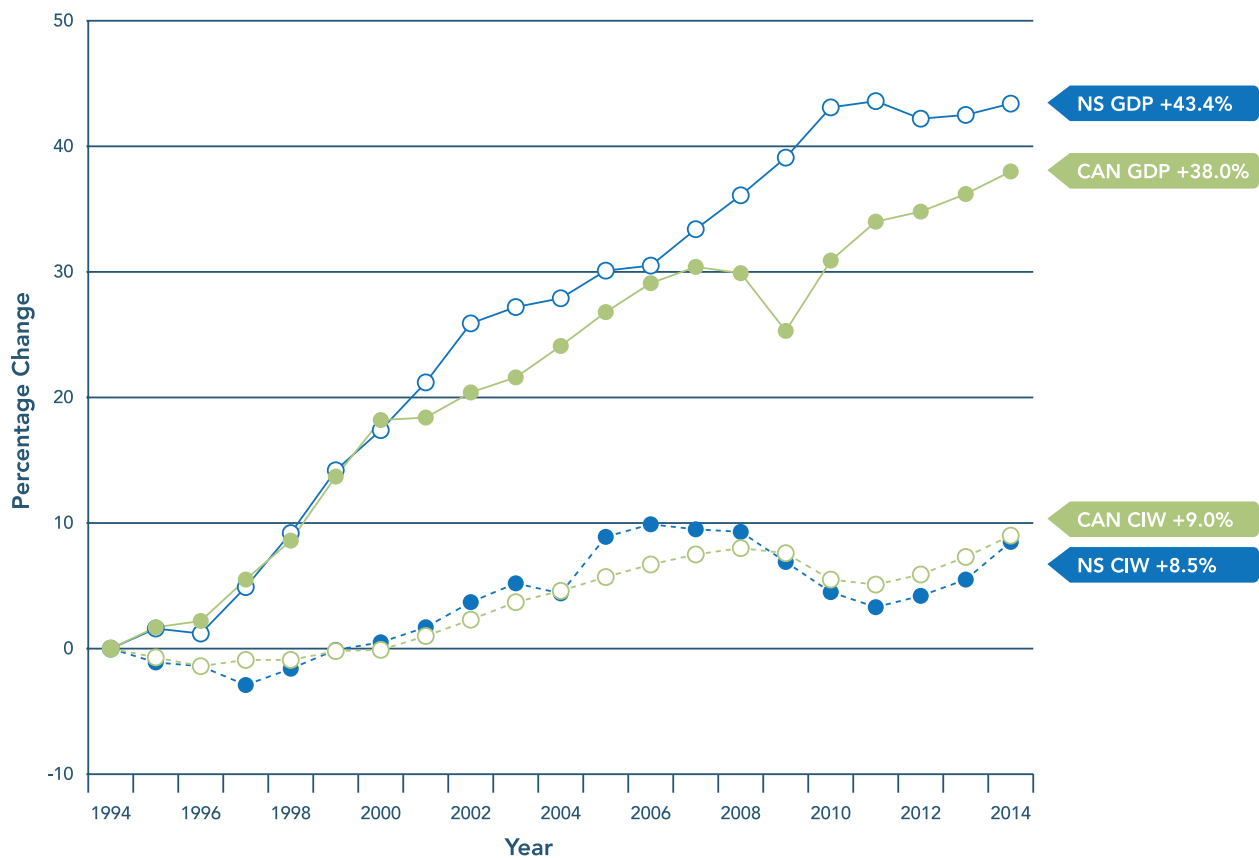
Given that positive changes in the economy, as reflected in GDP per capita, were quite consistent, these more volatile trends in the domains of the CIW suggest that quality of life in Nova Scotia has been subject to other forces. Of course, each of these domains also tells its own complex story. Even modest improvements in overall quality of life do not necessarily mean positive trends in all domains or their indicators. Throughout all domains, the impact of the 2008 recession – while felt differently – sent Nova Scotia on a volatile ride from which it is still recovering.

# APPENDIX C.

## QUALITY OF LIFE AND GDP

The economy in Nova Scotia continued to grow from 1994 to 2014 despite the 2008 recession. Quality of life in Nova Scotia, as measured by the CIW, has also grown, but has been slow to recover following a recessionary dip. (See Figure C1)

Figure C1: Trends in the Canadian Index of Wellbeing compared to GDP (per capita) for Nova Scotia and Canada, 1994 to 2014



The Ivany Commission reported that total growth in *real* GDP from 1990 to 2009 in Nova Scotia was the lowest in the country. The trends reported here on percentage change in GDP per capita appear to stand in contrast to that data, but can be explained by a shrinking workforce in Nova Scotia and a slower-growing population than Canada overall.<sup>26</sup>

26. Nova Scotia Commission on Building Our New Economy. (2014). *Now or never: An urgent call to action for Nova Scotians*. Halifax, NS: One Nova Scotia. (p. 16). Available from: <http://www.onens.ca/img/now-or-never.pdf>

# APPENDIX D.

## METHODS: THE CIW APPROACH

The base year selected for monitoring trends in wellbeing is 1994, the year the National Population Health Survey began. In this report, we update trends until 2014, which is the most recent year for which the latest full set of data across all eight domains is available.

The indicators used in the Index are drawn principally from data sources provided by Statistics Canada. National surveys conducted over time from which data are drawn include the Canadian Community Health Survey, the Labour Force Survey, various cycles of the General Social Survey (e.g., Time Use, Social Networks and Identity, Victimization), Travel Survey of Residents of Canada and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics. Indicators also are drawn from data sources provided by Environment Canada, the Board of Internal Economy, Elections Canada and Parks Canada. Finally, selected indicators have been provided by independent groups and organizations such as the OECD, the Global Footprint Network, CIBC, Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis and the Childcare Resource and Research Unit.

Within the sections describing trends in the indicators for each domain, the data are reported in the original units of measure (e.g., percentage of the population, expenditures in constant dollars from a base year, average time in minutes, and so on). Some indicators are positive in nature, so if the trend is upwards, the indicator is contributing to quality of life. For example, life expectancy in Healthy Populations, average monthly participation in physical activity in Leisure and Culture, and average tax median income in Living Standards are all positive indicators showing upward trends so have all been contributing to our wellbeing since 1994. Similarly, if a positive indicator – such as the percentage of population with five or more close friends in Community Vitality – is showing a downward trend, then it is having a diminishing affect on our wellbeing.

Other indicators are negative in nature, so if the trend is upwards, the indicator is lessening quality of life. For example, increases in the incidence of diabetes in Healthy Populations, housing affordability in Living Standards and annual average undergraduate tuition fees in Education have all been detracting from our wellbeing. Conversely, declines in the Crime Severity Index in Community Vitality, the gap in percentage turnout between older and younger voters in Democratic Engagement and residential energy use in Environment reflect contributions to our wellbeing within those domains.

With many of the indicators measured in very different ways, a first step is to set each indicator to a value of 100 at the base year. Percentage changes are then calculated for each subsequent year thereby allowing for direct comparisons between indicators and domains. All indicators are weighted equally. Some have argued that one or another indicator is more important, but what is missing is a universally agreed upon reason for assigning any particular indicator a weighting greater or less than that of some or all other indicators. The absence of such a reason justifies the equal treatment of all indicators at this time.

Throughout the report, trends for the eight domains are presented and specific indicators highlighted to reflect how Nova Scotians' quality of life has changed – for better and for worse – over the 21-year period from 1994 to 2014. In addition, comparisons are made to the rest of Canada. The domains are presented in the order reflecting how well we have progressed since 1994 – from the greatest increase in Education to the continuing deterioration of Leisure and Culture.

## Missing indicators

Of the 64 indicators reported in the CIW national report, “How are Canadians Really Doing?” 60 are available and used in this report of Nova Scotia Quality of Life Index (NSQOLI). The four indicators not reported were either not available for Nova Scotia or had been suppressed due to confidentiality concerns. One indicator within the Education domain (i.e., average expenditure per public school student) and three indicators within the Environment domain (i.e., Ecological Footprint, primary energy production and Viable Metal Reserves Index) are not available. Consequently, the composite indices for these two domains and the CIW index were re-calculated for the national data excluding these four indicators to allow direct comparison with trends in Nova Scotia. With these refinements to the national data, trends in the Education and Environment domains as well as in overall wellbeing for Canada differ slightly from the trends in the 2016 national report.