



2025-26 BUDGET ADDRESS

Honourable Jim Reiter
Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance

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Check against delivery

INTRODUCTION

Good afternoon,

Mr. Speaker,

It is my honour and responsibility today to present the 2025-26 Saskatchewan budget...

Our government's 18th budget.

(Speak about family attending)

Today, we find ourselves in a challenging time and place in national and international politics.

It's a time of uncertainty and upheaval caused by the words and actions of the President of the United States on tariffs.

To say the President has been erratic and unpredictable is an understatement.

We simply do not know what tariffs the U.S. will impose nor how long they will remain in effect.

These two unknowns made it extremely challenging to develop this year's budget, as it was not possible to build in the exact impact of the tariffs.

You have seen some other provinces include contingencies in their budgets.

However, these contingencies are not surpluses that are set aside, they simply increase deficits that will already be funded by borrowing.

The budget includes an analysis from the Ministry of Finance on the potential impacts of the tariffs on Saskatchewan.

The uncertainties will show why including any amount of contingency at this time would not be realistic.

However, we've been cautious on expenditures in today's budget and prudent on revenues to put us in the best possible financial position to weather the impacts of tariffs.

In developing this budget, we did not allow the threat of tariffs to back us away from any of our election commitments on affordability and safer communities.

Or our commitment to deliver change by addressing the challenges of growth, like crowded classrooms and access to health care.

Mr. Speaker, this budget delivers on those commitments.

The theme of this year's budget is Delivering for You, and that's what this budget does.

It's about strengthening our economy, growing our province and promoting Saskatchewan's economic interests here at home, across Canada, and around the world.

Whether you live in a city, town or village, or live in rural Saskatchewan or northern areas of our province, the 2025-26 Budget delivers for you.

The priorities in this year's budget reflect the priorities Saskatchewan residents told us were most important to them.

This year's budget delivers:

- Relief from cost-of-living pressures for everyone in Saskatchewan;
- Improved access to care for patients and health care professionals;
- Additional supports in the classroom for students, parents and teachers;
- Safer communities for residents in every part of Saskatchewan; and
- Strong financial management.

AFFORDABILITY

Mr. Speaker, in this year's budget, our government is following through on our promise to ensure the province remains the most affordable place to live, work, raise a family and start a business.

In December we introduced *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act*.

Thirteen commitments from that legislation are being funded through this year's budget, including reducing income taxes for every resident, family and small business in our province.

They will also provide targeted reforms that support seniors, families with children, new post-secondary graduates, persons with disabilities, caregivers, first-time homebuyers and people undertaking home renovations.

We will deliver the largest personal income tax reduction in the province since 2008 by raising the basic personal exemption, spousal and equivalent-to-spouse exemption, dependent child exemption and the seniors supplement by \$500 a year, for the next four years.

These changes will allow a family of four earning a combined \$100,000 to save more than \$3,400 over the next four years, while two seniors with a combined income of \$75,000 will save more than \$3,100.

Once fully implemented, these changes will mean an additional 54,000 residents of our province will no longer be paying provincial income tax.

We are also increasing monthly income assistance benefits by two per cent for Saskatchewan Income Support and Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability clients.

Combined, more than 38,000 people are expected to receive these increased benefits.

This year's budget also delivers on our commitment to support access to fertility treatments by offering a refundable tax credit of 50 per cent towards the cost of an eligible fertility treatment in Saskatchewan of up to \$20,000.

It also delivers on our commitment to permanently maintain the small business tax rate at one per cent.

This change will benefit more than 35,000 small businesses in Saskatchewan, saving them more than \$50 million in corporate income taxes annually.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to affordability measures, the 2025-26 Budget benefits everyone in our province.

This includes property owners, who will see reductions in education property tax mill rates to absorb the increase in assessment values and keep education property taxes collected in the province revenue neutral.

This will save property owners more than \$100 million annually, compared to leaving the mill rates unchanged.

That means the increases in education funding you will hear about today, will not come at the expense of homeowners and property owners.

This budget also delivers:

- For students....a 20 per cent increase to the Graduate Retention Program benefit for a maximum tax credit of \$24,000 per post-secondary graduate who stays in Saskatchewan;

- For homeowners....a 50 per cent increase to the First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit and reinstating the Home Renovation Tax Credit;
- For families with young children....this budget doubles the Active Families Benefit and also doubles the income threshold so that more families qualify for that benefit;
- For seniors who live in a personal care home, this budget delivers a \$1000 a month increase to the Personal Care Home benefit; and
- For persons living with a disability, this budget delivers a 25 per cent increase to the Disability Tax Credit.

In total, the taxation changes introduced in the 2025-26 Budget will provide more than \$250 million in tax savings this year.

In addition to the new and enhanced programs, our government continues to invest in ongoing affordability initiatives that assist with cost-of-living pressures.

This includes such things as the seniors and children's drug plans, ambulance coverage for seniors, the Saskatchewan Housing Benefit and the Secondary Suite Incentive.

Every year we also adjust the provincial income tax brackets and basic tax credits to protect people from the rising cost of inflation.

This measure tends to fly under the radar, but its impacts are large, providing Saskatchewan residents with more than \$40 million in tax savings this year.

These are part of the \$2 billion in affordability measures that are built into each and every budget.

They are another example of how the 2025-26 Budget is delivering affordability for the people of Saskatchewan.

HEALTH CARE

In healthcare, this year's budget will deliver better patient access and more responsive care for Saskatchewan residents.

This year the Ministry of Health will receive a record \$8.1 billion, which is an increase of \$485 million, or 6.4 per cent.

The Saskatchewan Health Authority will receive an increase of \$261 million, or 5.6 per cent, for a record \$4.9 billion budget.

This funding delivers better access to acute care programs and services, including:

- Reducing surgical wait times through an ambitious plan to perform 450,000 procedures over four years, which includes an innovative robot-assisted surgery program at Regina's Pasqua Hospital;
- Optimizing and realigning services at Saskatoon City Hospital to address inpatient capacity pressures by opening more than 100 acute medicine and specialized beds;
- Enhancing and expanding pediatric care and programs, including specialist recruitment in the areas of endocrinology, respirology, rheumatology and palliative care;
- Reducing wait lists by performing specialized medical imaging services, such as CT scans, PET scans and MRIs;

- Completing and staffing the new Breast Health Centre in Regina;
- Enhancing kidney health programs and dialysis services by adding 30 full-time positions to allow people to receive treatment closer to home in Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Fort Qu'Appelle, Tisdale, Moose Jaw, Regina and Saskatoon; and
- Supporting initiatives to fund approximately 170 paramedic positions created within 58 rural communities since 2022-23.

Mr. Speaker, this year's budget will also deliver better and more timely access to primary care.

This includes investments in programs that will work towards connecting all residents to a primary health care provider.

Our government is proud to be enhancing access to primary care through additional Patient Medical Home sites that were based on a successful pilot project in Swift Current.

The program allows clinics to care for additional patients due to the extra capacity the team creates, with each provider working to their full scope.

This year's budget also delivers \$279 million to the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency, which is an increase of \$30 million, or 12.2 per cent.

This funding will ensure Saskatchewan patients have access to the most current and effective oncology drugs, therapies and treatment options, including:

- Continuing development of a provincial lung cancer screening program;
- Lowering breast cancer screening eligibility to age 43; and

- Adding a second mobile bus to increase mammogram capacity for women in rural and northern Saskatchewan.

Rural, regional and remote communities will benefit from improved access to primary care services with the addition of 27 new nurse practitioners.

Through this year's budget, our government will strengthen continuing care to help residents remain at home and within their own communities as long as possible.

This also continues support for alternate level of care services.

50 long-term care beds and 65 convalescent beds in Saskatoon will help reduce pressures and assist with the flow of patients in the health care system.

As always, mental health and addictions remain a priority for our government.

In this year's budget, we are making a record investment of nearly \$624 million in mental health and addictions programs and services. This is an increase of \$53 million, or 9.2 per cent..

Overall, mental health and addictions is receiving 7.7 per cent of the overall health budget.

This will allow for continued progress on the *Mental Health and Addictions Action Plan*, which continues to make services more accessible, provides better coordination of care and allows people to access the treatment they need in a more timely manner.

The 2025-26 Budget invests an additional \$16 million in addictions spaces to build on our government's commitment to add 500 addictions treatment spaces across the province.

Once completed, this will double the capacity of addiction spaces in the public health system.

This year's budget also:

- Increases access to addictions medicine across the province by implementing a new Virtual Access to Addictions Medicine Program and adding supports for the existing Opioid Agonist Therapy Program;
- It supports the development of a central intake and navigation system that patients can contact directly for treatment; and
- Facilitates the transition to a recovery-oriented system of care model.

Mr. Speaker, it's important for our government to provide these investments for our provincial health care system.

However, we also need to ensure we have the people in place to provide these services.

The 2025-26 Budget delivers on our commitment to accelerate the hiring of health care professionals through the *Health Human Resources Action Plan*.

This includes:

- Adding 10 more physician training seats for family medicine, anesthesia, plastic surgery and other specialties...for a total of 150 seats in the province.
- Supports for 65 enhanced permanent full-time nursing positions in 30 rural and northern locations across the province to improve nursing stability and reduce the reliance on contract nurses. This builds on 250 positions that were approved over the past few years.

- Investments to support the province's efforts to recruit and retain doctors, including funding for fee increases, increased utilization of services and additional physicians.
- And, supporting incentives for recruitment of specialist physicians in areas of high demand.

The 2025-26 Budget also invests in steady and significant progress on multiple infrastructure projects.

Overall, health capital funding will increase by \$140 million, for a total of \$657 million.

This is the highest-ever capital budget to deliver major health infrastructure projects.

Some of the projects include:

- Construction of Prince Albert Victoria Hospital;

- Construction of the Regina specialized long-term care facility;
- Construction of the Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre;
- Construction of the La Ronge Long-Term Care facility;
- Construction of the Weyburn General Hospital; and
- Construction of the Grenfell Long-Term Care facility.

Due to the positive response to the Regina Urgent Care Centre, planning is underway for additional urgent care centres in Moose Jaw, Prince Albert and North Battleford, as well as second urgent care centres in Regina and Saskatoon.

The budget also provides new capital funding to plan for the expansion of Complex Needs Emergency Shelters in new communities, building on the pilot projects in Regina and Saskatoon.

These shelters provide individuals in crisis with a safe place to stabilize while being monitored for the negative effects of drugs or alcohol.

EDUCATION

The 2025-26 Budget delivers increased opportunities and supports for kindergarten to Grade 12 students, parents and teachers across Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, over the last two years, our government has invested more than \$5 billion in kindergarten to Grade 12 education.

This year, the Ministry of Education will receive \$3.5 billion, which is an increase of \$184 million, or 5.5 per cent.

School operating funding will total \$2.4 billion, which is an increase of \$186 million, or 8.4 per cent.

We were pleased when the results of binding arbitration were recently announced so we can finalize an agreement with our province's teachers.

This budget will fully fund that agreement.

It includes an increase of \$130 million to fund the new collective agreement and address growing student enrolment and the challenges facing today's classrooms.

Investments in specialized support classrooms will help address some of these challenges.

Building on the success of a pilot project in eight Saskatchewan schools last year, this year's budget provides funding for 50 additional specialized support classrooms throughout the province.

These classrooms help reduce interruptions by providing additional supports to students who need them.

Student literacy is another area of emphasis in this year's budget.

Learning to read at an early age is one of the most valuable skills developed during childhood and sets the foundation for lifelong academic success.

Given its importance, our government is providing additional funding to build upon the work taking place in the Ministry of Education and school divisions to improve kindergarten to Grade 3 reading levels in Saskatchewan.

We also want to ensure our students have properly maintained schools to attend.

The budget provides increased preventative maintenance and renewal funding to allow school divisions to maintain existing facilities.

It also delivers on the challenges of student enrolment growth by investing in new schools.

This includes ongoing funding for 21 new or consolidated schools and three major renovations, as well as funding to begin planning for one new replacement school and preplanning for four new schools.

These include:

- A replacement for South Corman Park School;
- Preplanning for a new public school and a new Catholic school in Kensington in west Saskatoon; and
- Preplanning for a new joint-use school in Aspen Ridge in northeast Saskatoon.

Mr. Speaker, our government's commitment to education doesn't end there.

The 2025-26 Budget also supports students as they advance into post-secondary education and start to determine their career paths.

It provides opportunities that will allow students to pursue post-secondary education close to home, while focusing on programs that meet the needs of Saskatchewan's labour force and provincial economy.

The Ministry of Advanced Education will receive \$788 million in this year's budget, with \$1.6 billion invested in post-secondary education over the past two years.

Health care training is a key priority in this year's budget.

New and expanded programs will help build a stronger health care workforce to meet the needs of Saskatchewan residents...including training seats in areas of critical need.

Investments include:

- 60 new training seats this year for nurse practitioners, registered psychiatric nurses and medical radiologic technologists; and
- Four new training programs that will soon be accepting students – physician assistant, speech-language pathology, occupational therapy and respiratory therapy.

The budget also focuses on another in-demand profession in Saskatchewan, veterinary services in rural and urban communities.

Our government is investing in the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, which is working towards an expansion that will allow for more students in the future.

This year's budget provides \$41 million in capital investments to improve learning environments and align academic programs with labour market needs.

Some of the major investments include:

- Adding seats in programs for medical laboratory technology, medical radiologic technology and respiratory therapy programs at Saskatchewan Polytechnic's Regina campus;
- Ongoing seat expansion of the medical radiologic technology program at Polytechnic's Saskatoon campus; and
- On going planning for the new Saskatchewan Polytechnic, Joseph A. Remail Saskatoon Campus.

Mr. Speaker, to help ensure predictable and stable funding for our province's post-secondary institutions, the 2025-26 Budget extends the current multi-year funding agreement for an additional year.

This will allow our government and post-secondary institutions time to work through the potential impacts of the federal government's reduction of foreign student visas before engaging in another multi-year funding agreement.

Post-secondary funding in this year's budget also includes an increase of \$12 million to base funding to reflect an increase provided in 2024-25, and an increase of \$6 million in operating funding.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Everyone in Saskatchewan should feel safe in their community.

The 2025-26 Budget delivers safer communities across the province by enhancing the presence of law enforcement in Saskatchewan.

Over the last two years, we have invested \$2 billion into community safety.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety will receive \$798 million, including \$119 million for the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency.

The Ministry of Justice and Attorney General will receive \$271 million.

Increases to the Municipal Police Grant Program will help frontline officers respond to more calls for service, while increased funding for the RCMP will support operations in the province and the RCMP First Nations Policing Program.

This year's budget also includes funding to continue public safety commitments announced last fall. These include:

- Hiring approximately 100 new municipal police officers;
- Hiring 14 new Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods personnel to reduce crime by targeting nuisance properties; and
- Funding for the Saskatchewan Police College to train more officers in the province.

In addition to these law enforcement resources, the budget is funding 50 new positions for the Saskatchewan Marshals Service, which is expected to become operational in the coming months...a full year ahead of schedule.

In January of this year, our government introduced the *Saskatchewan Border Security Plan* to mobilize Provincial Protective Services officers to work in partnership with provincial policing services and federal agencies to boost law enforcement's presence near the border.

To complement the increased presence of law enforcement personnel, the budget includes funding to improve safety and address capacity concerns at correctional facilities.

This includes support for the opening of the new expansion at the Saskatoon Correctional Centre and expanding capacity for women in the correctional system.

Increased funding is also being provided to the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan to support its efforts to successfully reintegrate female offenders back into their communities.

Saskatchewan communities will have greater access to justice services through the budget to enhance public safety.

Additional investments will be made in interpersonal violence programs and services, including second-stage housing.

The budget also delivers funding to create a more accessible court system for municipal bylaw offences to ensure cases are ready to move to trial more quickly.

This includes the development of municipal bylaw hubs in Fort Qu'Appelle and Rosthern, which will streamline and improve municipal bylaw enforcement and reduce the strain on our provincial courts.

The budget also supports initiatives that reduce the amount of time police need to spend in court, giving them more time to focus on core policing duties that keep our communities safe.

The safety of our communities also extends to protection and support during emergencies such as wildfires and floods.

Safety investments in this year's budget will allow the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency to continue its four-year plan to purchase four repurposed airtankers for use in fighting wildfires and other emergency services.

DELIVERING MORE FOR YOU

Mr. Speaker, the 2025-26 Budget delivers on the priorities of affordability, health care, education, community safety and strong financial management.

However, it delivers much more than that.

Some of the other important investments in this year's budget include:

- The Ministry of Social Services will receive \$1.6 billion in this year's budget, an increase of \$70 million, or 4.5 per cent.
- \$9 million in new funding to start multi-year repair and renovation projects for 285 Saskatchewan Housing Corporation-owned units in Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert.
- \$25 million for services developed through the Provincial Approach to Homelessness.

- Over the past two years, funding from the Ministry of Social Services has created 120 new emergency shelter spaces, 155 new supportive housing spaces, new street outreach services and an expanded income assistance mobile workforce serving clients on-site at more than 30 community-based organization locations.
- A \$20 million increase across government in funding for community-based organizations.
- A record \$362 million in municipal revenue sharing, which is an increase of \$22 million, or 6.3 per cent.
- Investment in capital projects that will improve our provincial transportation system, including:
 - Passing lanes for Highway 10 between Fort Qu'Appelle and Melville, and Highway 17 north of Lloydminster;
 - Highway 39 twinning at Weyburn;

- Ongoing corridor improvements on Highway 5 east of Saskatoon; and
- Improvements on more than 1,000 kilometres of provincial highways.
- It also delivers the creation of a new Saskatchewan Young Entrepreneur Bursary to support youth entrepreneurship in the province.
- The creation of a new Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Tax Credit.
- And, introduction of the Low Productivity and Reactivation Oil Well Program to encourage new capital investments in low-producing and inactive horizontal oil wells.

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

Mr. Speaker, the 2025-26 Budget delivers for Saskatchewan people on all of these priorities and more.

While also delivering a balanced budget!

The forecast surplus is \$12 million.

This year's surplus is driven by forecast revenues of \$21.1 billion, which is an increase of \$1.2 billion, or 6 per cent, compared to last year.

Revenues are forecast to increase due to a combination of increased corporate income tax, PST and uranium resource royalties, as construction activity and our population continue to grow.

Total expense is projected to be \$21.0 billion - an increase of \$909 million, or 4.5 per cent, from the 2024-25 Budget.

Besides the surplus, another sign of Saskatchewan's strong financial position is our net debt position.

Currently, it remains the second lowest net debt-to-GDP ratio among Canadian provinces.

Mr. Speaker, our government's strong financial management is also reflected in the province's credit ratings.

Saskatchewan currently maintains the second highest credit rating among the provinces when the ratings from the three major agencies are considered.

These ratings influence the cost the government pays to borrow money and are an important indication of a government's fiscal health.

Saskatchewan's strong financial position in this year's budget builds on the strong performance of our provincial economy in 2024.

Last year, Saskatchewan reached an all-time high population. I am pleased to share that just today, Statistics Canada announced that Saskatchewan's population has topped one and a quarter million people for the first time ever.

Saskatchewan also had:

- Record-high levels for labour force and employment, including full-time, female and off-reserve Indigenous Peoples;
- The third-highest value of goods exported in Saskatchewan history at more than \$45 billion;
- The second-lowest inflation rate; and
- The second-lowest unemployment rate.

The Saskatchewan economy is expected to continue to grow in 2025.

The province's real GDP is projected to grow by 1.8 per cent in 2025 – the third-highest rate of growth in the country. Investment in business and residential construction is expected to increase, along with continued strength in population and employment growth.

All of these signs point to the continued strength of the Saskatchewan economy.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, since 2007, our government has been guided by growth.

Growing our population;
Growing our communities;
Growing our exports;
Growing our job opportunities;
Growing our industries; and
Growing our economy.

We do not seek growth simply for the sake of growth... but for what it means to our province and its people.

Growth drives increases in revenue which pays for the things that matter...health care, education, community safety, and a lot more.

A growing economy and a growing province means a better quality of life for the one and a quarter million people – and counting – who now call Saskatchewan home.

That's what this budget delivers.

There will always be challenges to overcome, and there certainly are today.

But the spirit and resilience of this great province will always overcome any challenges we may face.

Saskatchewan is and will remain a strong province with a strong economy within a strong and united Canada.

Our future is bright, and our province has a history of delivering when it really counts.

That's what this budget is doing, Delivering for You.

Mr. Speaker, I now move, seconded by the Member for White City-Qu'appelle, that the Assembly approves in general the budgetary policy of the government.

Thank you.