

# *Protecting | Saskatchewan*

The logo graphic consists of three overlapping, upward-pointing shapes in yellow and green, resembling a stylized sun or a leaf, positioned to the right of the main title.

*Provincial Budget | 2026-27*

## **2026-27 BUDGET ADDRESS**

Honourable Jim Reiter  
Deputy Premier and Minister of Finance  
March 18, 2026

*Check against delivery*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to welcome all the guests joining us here today.

(Speak about family attending)

It is my honour and privilege to present the 2026-27 Saskatchewan Budget this afternoon.

Our government's 19th budget.

Today's budget is being presented at a time of significant global economic and geopolitical turmoil.

The tariffs imposed by the US administration on virtually every country are affecting our economy and upending trade relationships around the world.

Every province in Canada has been impacted,... and while Saskatchewan's strong and diverse economy puts us in better position than most,... we are not immune.

Tariffs and other world events like the conflict in the Middle East have an impact on our economy and provincial finances.

So as we prepared this Budget, we had a choice: raise taxes,... cut services,... or protect Saskatchewan.

We chose to protect Saskatchewan.

This budget protects our economy and jobs.

It protects Saskatchewan households by keeping the federal carbon tax off their monthly power bills.

It protects communities by hiring more police officers.

It protects vulnerable individuals, including our friends and family members struggling with mental health and addictions challenges.

It protects communities from wildfires.

It protects our education system, students and schools.

It protects our agriculture sector, producers, farmers and ranchers.

It protects drivers by making our highways safer.

It protects law-abiding firearms owners.

We have listened to Saskatchewan people... and the top two concerns we have heard are affordability, ... and access to health care.

This budget addresses both.

It protects Saskatchewan families by lowering taxes to make life more affordable,...

And it protects patients by investing in the Patients First Health Care Plan announced by the Premier last week,...

To ensure everyone can get the right care in the right place at the right time.

The new provincial Budget is protecting Saskatchewan.

We can do that because Saskatchewan has a strong and growing economy.

Our government has focused on strengthening our economy through diversifying our trade markets.

This is accomplished by expanding our trade offices, building relationships around the world, and by focusing on results rather than politics.

While our relationship with the US has become more challenging of late, we've reduced our trade dependence on the US.

We have also been able to work more closely with the new Prime Minister than with his predecessor.

In just the past few weeks, our Premier joined Prime Minister Carney on trade missions to China and India.

In China, an agreement was signed that reduced Chinese tariffs on canola and other Canadian agricultural products.

In India, the Premier joined the Prime Minister as Cameco signed a \$2.6 billion deal to supply uranium through 2035, meaning reliable electricity for India and good jobs for northern Saskatchewan residents. And more revenue for the province.

We will continue working to expand our export markets around the world...

Because unlike some in this Assembly who have criticized our trade efforts and even campaigned on closing Saskatchewan trade offices,...

Our government did not suddenly discover the importance of growing and diversifying trade following the election of Donald Trump.

These important trade deals are the result of years of hard work and relationship building,... and being in foreign markets to tell Saskatchewan's story to the world.

Because we have a great story to tell.

Saskatchewan has what the world needs,... and our government is making sure the world knows about it.

We are joined today by many people whose businesses are producing what the world needs, expanding their export markets and creating new jobs here at home.

I can't introduce you all,... but I would like to thank you for everything you do for Saskatchewan... to build our economy,... create jobs,... and make this the best place to live in Canada. We applaud you!

(APPLAUSE)

Expanding and diversifying our export markets is one way we are protecting our economy.

And it's working.

In 2025, Saskatchewan had:

- the lowest unemployment rate among provinces;
- the highest growth in housing starts;
- the highest growth in private capital investments;

- our GDP reached an all-time high of nearly \$90.5 billion; and
- Saskatchewan's unemployment rate remains the lowest in the country and we also have the strongest rate of full-time employment growth in Canada.

This strong economic performance is set to continue as private sector forecasters expect Saskatchewan to have the second-fastest growing economy among provinces in both 2026 and 2027.

This budget also protects Saskatchewan's economy through investments in developing the province's workforce to ensure workers have the skills and training they need to support a growing economy.

And this budget provides ongoing support for Saskatchewan businesses by maintaining the small business tax rate permanently at one per cent, saving them \$50 million annually in taxes that can be reinvested in the economy.

Saskatchewan's strong and stable business climate positions the province well to attract new investments.

There are currently 60 large-scale projects in planning or underway in Saskatchewan...

Projects worth over \$60 billion dollars.

New uranium mines,... the largest potash mine in the world,... a new copper mine,...

Canola crush plants and other agricultural value-added projects,... forestry,... oil and gas,... manufacturing,...

And just this week, our Premier joined with Bell Canada to announce one of the largest projects ever built in our country...

A new \$12 billion data centre will be built just outside of Regina.

These projects will create thousands of construction jobs as they are being built,...

And thousands more good-paying permanent jobs all across our province once they are complete.

Mr. Speaker, we recently heard one of the members opposite say there's really nothing to be proud of in Saskatchewan.

We don't believe that.

And more importantly, the companies who are investing \$60 billion in our province,... and the workers who are building those 60 major projects don't believe that.

They know there is a lot to be proud of in Saskatchewan.

I know many of those companies are represented here today,... so to you and through you to your thousands of employees,...

Thank you for your incredible vote of confidence in Saskatchewan.

(APPLAUSE)

## **AFFORDABILITY**

The strength of our economy means we can make life more affordable for Saskatchewan people.

In the 2024 election, our government ran on a four-year plan to make life more affordable.

Unlike some provincial governments who are using the current economic challenges as an excuse to break their election promises on affordability,...

Our government has kept and will continue to keep every one of the affordability commitments we made to make life more affordable for students, for seniors, for homeowners, for families and for everyone.

Mr. Speaker, the 2026-27 Budget is protecting Saskatchewan residents with \$2.5 billion in annual affordability measures.

It builds on commitments introduced last year in *The Saskatchewan Affordability Act* by implementing the second year of our four-year commitment to lowering income taxes for everyone.

The personal, spousal, equivalent-to-spouse, and child exemptions, as well as the seniors' supplement, will all increase by \$500 each again this year.

And the Saskatchewan Low-income Tax Credit will be increased by another 5 per cent this year.

On top of these tax cuts, annual indexation will provide Saskatchewan residents a further \$42 million in tax savings this year.

These tax cuts combined with indexation are providing about \$200 million in tax savings this year,...

Meaning a family of four pays no income tax on their first \$65,000 of income.

That's the highest tax-free threshold in all of Canada.

A family of four earning \$100,000 will be paying \$4,400 less in income tax than they would have when our government was first elected in 2007.

These are not one time savings.

They are ongoing savings that save families money every year,... year after year.

And there's more.

The Saskatchewan Affordability Act also fulfilled all of our other commitments to make life more affordable. We increased the First-Time Homebuyers Tax Credit.

We brought back the Home Renovation Tax Credit.

We increased the Graduate Retention Program.

We introduced the Fertility Treatment Tax Credit.

We doubled the Active Families Benefit.

We increased the Disability and Caregivers tax credits.

We increased the Personal Care Home Benefit for seniors.

And,... we removed the federal carbon tax on SaskPower customer bills –

The new Budget protects Saskatchewan individuals and families by making life more affordable for everyone.

## **PROTECTING HEALTH CARE**

The 2026-27 Budget is protecting health care services by investing in the new Patients First Health Care Plan to ensure everyone has access to the right care in the right place at the right time.

Health is the largest expenditure in the province's budget,... with record funding of \$8.5 billion, an increase of \$393 million, or nearly five per cent.

Our government has been listening to Saskatchewan residents and the two main concerns we heard are...

People want access to a primary care provider...a doctor or a nurse practitioner,... and...

They want diagnostics and surgery in a more timely manner.

This year's Health budget invests in more than 50 specific actions outlined in the Patients First Health Care Plan, including:

- Increasing the number and expanding the scope of practice for all health care professionals;
- Expanding access to virtual care;
- Increasing the number of and access to Urgent Care Centres throughout the province;
- Continuing to recruit, train and increase the number of doctors, nurses and nurse practitioners; and
- Expansion of diagnostic services like MRIs and CT scans.

This budget makes significant investments to continue the largest nurse practitioner expansion in provincial history, which will see thousands more patients connected with a primary care provider.

Access to primary care and timely surgeries are being improved through the stabilization of emergency departments, continuing the expansion of hospital bed capacity in Saskatoon, and augmenting critical care supports.

Additional investments will continue addressing capacity for Saskatoon hospitals with 60 new permanent acute inpatient beds between Royal University and St. Paul's Hospitals.

Substantial increases will support pediatric enhancements across Saskatchewan to ensure safe, sustainable care for critically ill and premature infants, and children requiring specialized services.

Multiple Sclerosis patients will be better supported with a future comprehensive Regina-based MS Clinic offering specialized care closer to home, improving quality of life and long-term health outcomes.

Increased funding to the provincial Genetics and Metabolics Program will provide critical diagnostic and treatment pathways for individuals and families affected by complex or rare health conditions.

The budget also makes significant investments in health care infrastructure with over \$636 million in capital for health care facilities, including:

- Ongoing construction of the Prince Albert Victoria Hospital acute care tower;
- Construction of a new specialized long-term care facility in Regina;

- Replacement of the long-term care home in Grenfell;
- The Royal University Hospital ICU expansion project;
- Starting construction on the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency Saskatoon Patient Lodge;
- Completion of the Saskatoon Urgent Care Centre;
- Completion of the pre-design phase and start of design work for the Yorkton Hospital project;
- Funding to support ongoing plans for new Urgent Care Centres in Moose Jaw, North Battleford, Prince Albert, Regina and Saskatoon; and,

It's also important to note that our government is reducing the community contribution for design and construction costs of new health care facilities from

20% to 10%, meaning that more dollars stay in that community to address local priorities.

The budget also protects those facing mental health and addictions challenges by:

- Expanding access to mental health and addictions services;
- Opening more treatment spaces;
- Creating a new secure youth detox site;
- Supporting individuals in specific stages of their recovery journey; and
- Making the system easier to access so patients and families can receive the help they need.

This budget will invest in opening approximately 200 more addictions treatment spaces, fulfilling the government's commitment to create 500 new spaces.

Operating funding is being provided for two new complex needs facilities in Prince Albert and North Battleford that will provide a safe place for individuals in crisis to stabilize while being monitored for negative effects of drugs or alcohol.

And the first phase of *The Compassionate Intervention Act* will be operationalized, with an addiction treatment model used in rare cases where adults with severe and life-threatening addictions who are unable to ask for help will receive treatment.

This budget protects Saskatchewan by ensuring everyone is getting the care they need when they need it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the thousands of health professionals in our province who provide the best possible care to Saskatchewan people.

I know some of you have joined us here today, so on behalf of everyone in Saskatchewan,... thank you for all that you do.

(APPLAUSE)

## **PROTECTING COMMUNITIES**

The 2026-27 Budget is also protecting Saskatchewan communities.

The budget will provide an increase of \$50 million for Saskatchewan RCMP operations and First Nations policing, as well as introduce a new Small Town and Rural Policing Grant Program.

Additional funding will go to the Saskatchewan Marshals Service, which became operational in spring 2025, and for an increase in workforce capacity for the Saskatchewan Highway Patrol.

Funding for cities, towns, villages and rural municipalities is increasing.

The 2026-27 Budget delivers another record amount for Municipal Revenue Sharing at nearly \$400 million.

That's up eight and a half per cent from last year,...

And Municipal Revenue Sharing is now more than three times what it was when we were first given the privilege of forming government.

This is unconditional funding.

That means our municipal leaders are free to use that money to invest in their communities as they see fit,...

As they know better than anyone what is needed most in their city, town, village or RM.

Mr. Speaker, there are many mayors, reeves and councilors with us here today.

Before I was first elected to this Assembly, my background was in local government.

So I know none of you do those jobs for the pay.

You do it because you love your community,... and you want to make it a better place.

So can we just take a moment and thank all of the municipal council members across the provinces... including the ones joining us here today.

(APPLAUSE)

We are also joined by a number of volunteer firefighters and other first responders.

Our government recognizes the risks volunteer firefighters, emergency services personnel and search and rescue teams face and we thank them for the incredible work they do.

To recognize the important and sometimes heroic work they do to protect their communities and their friends and neighbours,...

I am pleased to announce that today in this budget, our government is doubling the Volunteer First Responders' Tax Credit from \$3,000 to \$6,000.

Please join me in recognizing all the volunteer firefighters and other first responders who are joining us here today, and the thousands more that they represent throughout the province.

(APPLAUSE)

The Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency is also receiving additional funding in this year's budget as part of a four-year commitment to purchase four repurposed land-based airtanker aircraft.

Last year was an unprecedented wildfire season in Saskatchewan and we will continue to make the investments necessary to protect communities from wildfires.

The 2026-27 Budget is protecting communities.

## **PROTECTING VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

This Budget is also protecting our most vulnerable residents,... those who need assistance for various reasons.

Our government is providing predictable multi-year funding to municipalities for the Provincial Approach to Homelessness to create up to 40 new shelter spaces, up to 60 new supporting housing spaces and adding more trusteeship services to support individuals in transitioning to supportive housing.

The budget also increases funding for Saskatchewan Income Support clients by adding a \$1,000 one-time per household utility arrears repayable benefit to ensure clients can remain successfully housed.

In addition, Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) residential support benefits will increase 10 per cent each year for the next three years.

Community-based organizations (CBOs), that provide important services to vulnerable residents, will receive a funding increase of two per cent.

More funding will be provided for individuals experiencing interpersonal violence through programs and services that enhance victim services, broaden housing supports, raise awareness of human trafficking, and improve access to legal and court-based resources.

This budget is also protecting victims and families by improving timely access to justice through investments in court infrastructure and judicial capacity, including the appointment of four new Court of King's Bench associate judges, three new Provincial Court judges, six new justices of the peace, and two new Crown prosecutors.

## **PROTECTING EDUCATION**

The 2026-27 Budget is protecting education by ensuring students in Saskatchewan are getting their best start with an investment of \$2.5 billion in school operating funding for the 2026-27 school year, an increase of \$62 million.

Increased funding for 50 additional specialized support classrooms across the province will bring the total up to 108.

The specialized support classroom model provides targeted assistance to help students in building stronger self-regulation skills, so they are better able to focus and participate, enhancing educator capacity to better support all students in the classroom.

The budget also makes significant capital investments in schools, including a new joint-use middle and high school in Martensville-Warman,... a new school in Shellbrook... and a major renovation of Esterhazy High School.

Funding is also being provided to support the 20 new school builds and three major school renovations already underway, along with \$20 million for new relocatable classrooms that help school divisions manage space pressures.

The renewal of the childcare agreement with the Government of Canada will provide continuity for childcare operators and protect Saskatchewan families by ensuring they have continued access to affordable, high-quality early learning and childcare.

A new multi-year funding agreement will provide stability and predictability for our post-secondary institutions.

This agreement will provide post-secondary institutions with three per cent increases to operating funding each year over four years, which means stable funding that supports student success.

The agreement also protects students by limiting annual tuition increases.

The budget also provides funding for loans, grants and bursaries to protect affordability for students.

This includes \$68 million for the enhanced Graduate Retention Program that allows students to now receive up to \$24,000 in tax savings if they choose to start their career in Saskatchewan after graduation.

## **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Saskatchewan continues to have one of the strongest economies in Canada and we are among the strongest in provincial finances.

This budget ensures that will continue.

The 2026-27 Budget continues the Government of Saskatchewan's focus on responsible fiscal management by investing in key priorities while not raising taxes or cutting services for the people of Saskatchewan.

In the short term, this means running a deficit in order to protect what matters most to Saskatchewan residents.

The 2026-27 Budget projects \$21.4 billion in revenue compared to \$22.2 billion in total expense, resulting in a deficit of \$819 million.

That is the lowest budget deficit relative to size of the economy of any provincial budget presented to date,... and I expect it will be among the lowest once all the provincial budgets are presented. For the outyears,... you will see in the budget a projection to be back to balance in four years.

Saskatchewan has the best credit rating of all provinces and we also retain the second lowest net-debt-to-GDP ratio in Canada.

While this budget protects Saskatchewan residents with lower taxes and important investments in vital services, we are also managing our finances carefully and continuing to reduce costs where possible.

One way we are doing this is through a vacancy management strategy within the public service.

As retirements and voluntary departures occur within ministries and Crown Corporations,...

Government will manage the size of its workforce and reduce expenses without eliminating any filled positions and without compromising front-line service by carefully reviewing each vacancy to determine whether it must be filled.

By focusing on operational efficiencies rather than job cuts, expenses will be reduced while maintaining the high-quality service Saskatchewan people expect.

## **CONCLUSION**

While tariffs and other world events will continue to have an impact on our economy and finances,...

Saskatchewan is in the best position of any province in Canada to get through this turmoil,... and come out even stronger.

In the meantime, we will protect Saskatchewan.

Last fall, everyone in Saskatchewan was thrilled to watch our Roughriders have a great season and win the Grey Cup.

Our quarterback - Grey Cup MVP Trevor Harris - had an incredible year.

But that was only possible because his offensive line gave him time.

He had a great year because he had great protection.

Saskatchewan will continue to achieve great things.

We have the strongest economy in Canada - and it will get stronger.

We are expanding our export markets all over the world - and we are attracting the investment needed to grow our economy.

We are the most affordable place to live in Canada - and lower taxes for everyone will make life more affordable.

Our Patients First Health Care Plan will ensure everyone in our province has access to the right care at the right time.

All of these things and more are possible,... if we start by protecting Saskatchewan.

Much like the Roughriders, our province is well positioned for success.

This budget is protecting Saskatchewan.