

NEWS RELEASE

Per-person spending in Newfoundland and Labrador increased from \$3,072 to \$15,019 (in 2021 inflation-adjusted dollars) since 1965

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For Immediate Release

ST. JOHN'S—From 1965 to 2021, per-person spending in Newfoundland and Labrador increased substantially from \$3,072 (in 2021 inflation-adjusted dollars) to \$15,019, finds a new report published today by the Fraser Institute, an independent, non-partisan Canadian public policy think-tank.

“An effective way of measuring a government’s fiscal policy is by comparing per-person program spending by various Premiers,” said Alex Whalen, senior economist with the Fraser Institute and co-author of *Newfoundland and Labrador Premiers and Provincial Government Spending*.

This study reviews annual per-person program spending (inflation-adjusted) by Newfoundland and Labrador premiers from 1965 to 2021, and finds that the highest per-person spending on record was under Premier Joey Smallwood, with a 14.3 per cent average annual change in per person spending—substantially higher than the premier with the next largest increase, Danny Williams at 7.8 per cent.

Overall, Kathy Dunderdale, at -1.5 per cent, and Tom Marshall, at -1.9 per cent, are the only premiers who reduced spending by a meaningful amount during their tenure.

Current Premier Andrew Furey essentially held spending flat, at -0.1 per cent during the 2020-2021 period (the latest year of available data).

“The intention is to provide a historical analysis of this key measure of government fiscal policy,” said Whalen.

“It will be important to see how per-person inflation-adjusted spending develops in Atlantic Canada moving forward.”

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