

# FASD Advocacy Package - Nova Scotia Election

## **Tell your leaders to address FASD in Nova Scotia**

A provincial election is a great opportunity to put FASD on the agenda and build a better future for all Nova Scotians. Take action and tell your leaders what's important to you. Help us move support for FASD forward in Nova Scotia. Here are our priorities and how you can support.

### Election Priorities

- 1. Invest in an FASD informed workforce** to better identify possible cases of FASD and ensure appropriate supports are provided for these individuals and their families. Particular focus should be given to workforces that have a higher likelihood of interacting with those with FASD, such as justice, corrections, education, child welfare, addictions, and mental health services.
- 2. Become a member of the CanFASD FASD Research Network** to ensure Nova Scotians have access to evidence-based information about FASD and to support the development and dissemination of new research and knowledge on FASD in Nova Scotia.
- 3. Public funding for harm reduction, trauma-informed supports** for people who are pregnant to reduce the incidence of FASD in Nova Scotia and encourage healthy families for all.

### Take Action

Contact your local election candidates and ask them to take action to address FASD in Nova Scotia:

- Reach out on email, by phone, or on social media
- Tag them in posts on social media
- Connect with them at election events including town halls and neighbourhood canvassing

### Key Points

- FASD is a very common disability that is underrecognized and under supported in Nova Scotia.
- FASD impacts 4% of Canadians, which is over half a million people. That's more than autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome combined.
- FASD is a complex disability that intersects with issues like mental health, substance use, law and justice, and child welfare. Policies and practices that are FASD-informed and recognize the interconnected challenges of this disability are essential.
- Provinces and territories that are connected to the Canada FASD Research Network – a national network of FASD experts - are more advanced in their response to FASD.
- When unsupported, the economic impact of FASD is calculated at \$27,000 annually per case. With 38,800 people in Nova Scotia with FASD, the annual cost of FASD in Nova Scotia is estimated to be over one billion dollars.

### Language Matters

Talking about FASD can be difficult, and sometimes what we say can do more harm than good. We need to make sure that the language we use is accurate and respectful and the information we share is up to date with the latest research findings. These media guides can help with your messaging:

- [Common Messages: Guidelines for talking & writing about FASD](#)
- [Language Guide](#)
- [Language & Images Matters](#)

[Download our graphics package](#)

## Sample Letter or Script for Candidates

Dear [CANDIDATE NAME],

As the 2024 provincial election candidate for [PARTY NAME] in the riding of [NAME OF RIDING], I am calling on you to support the 38, 800 with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) in our province.

FASD is leading developmental disability in Canada, impacting 2.5 times more people than autism, but it is underrecognized and under supported. Support these individuals by committing to:

- 1. Investing in an FASD-informed workforce** to better identify possible cases of FASD and ensure appropriate supports are provided for these individuals and their families. Particular focus should be given to workforces that have a higher likelihood of interacting with those with FASD, such as justice, corrections, education, child welfare, addictions, and mental health services.
- 2. Becoming a member of the CanFASD FASD Research Network** to ensure Nova Scotians have access to evidence-based information about FASD and to support the development and dissemination of new research and knowledge on FASD in Nova Scotia.
- 3. Providing public funding for harm reduction, trauma-informed supports** for people who are pregnant to reduce the incidence of FASD in Nova Scotia and encourage healthy families for all.

FASD is a lifelong disability impacting the brain and body of people who were prenatally exposed to alcohol. When unsupported, people with FASD are at extraordinarily high risk for adverse outcomes. Approximately 4% of Canadians have FASD, equating to 38, 800 people in Nova Scotia. In fact, more people have FASD than autism, cerebral palsy, and Down syndrome combined. Nova Scotia needs to invest in programs and services for people with FASD.

Improving diagnosis and supports is extremely important, but more needs to be done to ensure Nova Scotia's workforce has the information and tools to identify and support those with FASD. Preventing FASD is more than awareness. Systematic steps need to be taken to ensure women and girls have the supports they need to prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce substance use, and promote their health and wellbeing. Provinces and territories that are part of the CanFASD Research Network are more advanced in their response to FASD and further along in achieving these priorities.

Investing in FASD now can reduce the enormous economic impact of this disability in Nova Scotia and improve the health and wellbeing of all. This election is an opportunity to commit to supporting those with FASD who have been consistently left behind. I urge you to commit to investing in an FASD-informed workforce; funding services and supports for people who are pregnant; and renewing Nova Scotia's membership with the Canada FASD Research Network.

I await your response to these commitments.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]