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Province Is Taking Action to Bring Cell Service to All Nova Scotians

Cellular for Nova Scotia Program - Fall 2023 Update

On October 26, 2023, the Province announced it is investing \$47.3 million to start the new [Cellular for Nova Scotia Program](#) to expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks throughout the province.

Build Nova Scotia has been charged by the Province to plan, design, and manage the implementation of expanded cellular coverage throughout the province.

Led by Build Nova Scotia, this will involve a two-phased approach:

- [The first Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) is seeking innovative and cost-effective proposals to install cellular equipment on existing provincially-owned towers and other existing towers and/or infrastructure identified by proponents to expand cell coverage in underserved areas. The focus is on more immediate innovative solutions.
- RFP 2 will follow to seek solutions to address remaining gap areas.

This will also ensure that the solutions identified are sustainable and are being coordinated with federal and provincial initiatives planned or underway, while ensuring maximum coverage as early as possible.

This investment is based on an initial understanding/analysis of the anticipated cost however responses to the RFPs will better determine exact costs. Build Nova Scotia will look to maximize investments from and leverage key

The coverage objective is to provide cellular coverage to 99% of Nova Scotia where people live, work, and travel. This is for Basic Voice Call service.

Overall, the goal is to achieve the following coverage targets throughout the populated areas of the province:

1. 99% coverage for Basic Voice Call service
2. 95% coverage for Standard-Definition service (eg. emails, web browsing and social media)
3. 85% coverage for High-Definition service (eg. video conferencing, movie streaming, and other data intensive applications)

The initial focus will be in major transportation corridors and areas with civic addresses.

A separate \$3.3 million is being invested to build four new trunked mobile radio 2 (TMR2) towers to expand radio coverage for first responders in West Bay Road/Marble Mountain, Pleasant Bay in Inverness County, Framboise, Richmond County, and Greenfield in Queen's County.

These areas were identified as strategic locations that would play a role in the expansion of rural coverage for the TMR2 Public Safety Radio network. This could also help improve cell coverage access if telecommunications providers attach their equipment to those towers to extend coverage.

In 2022, Build Nova Scotia commissioned a cell gap study on behalf of the Province to study cell service levels and identify critical gaps throughout the province. This study and additional analysis has provided a clearer understanding of a common challenge experienced across the country and helped define the scope of the problem. This will continue to be refined with ongoing discussions and RFP responses.

Through the program, a comprehensive strategy to increase cell coverage will involve working with telecommunications companies and government partners.

[Click here for the full site and more information.](#)

“Having reliable cell service is essential for Nova Scotians. It’s a matter of safety, and it’s something we all count on constantly. The current situation needs to be addressed, and we are the first government in 30 years to address this critical issue.”

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is this project?

A. Build Nova Scotia is establishing the [Cellular for Nova Scotia Program](#) to expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks throughout the province. Through the program, a comprehensive strategy will improve cell coverage for both civic addresses and major roadways. It will involve working collaboratively with all partners in the telecommunications industry and across government.

Q. What is the \$47.3 million in funding that was announced?

A. Government is investing \$47.3 million to start the new Cellular for Nova Scotia Program to expand telecommunications infrastructure and communications networks throughout the province.

This investment is based on an initial understanding/analysis of the anticipated cost however responses to the RFPs will better determine exact costs. Build Nova Scotia will look to maximize investments from and leverage key partnerships with the Federal Government, municipalities, and the private sector.

Q. Is there anything planned to improve communications emergency services in this program?

A. Yes. A separate \$3.3 million is being invested to build four new trunked mobile radio 2 (TMR2) towers to expand radio coverage for first responders in West Bay Road/Marble Mountain, Pleasant Bay in Inverness County, Framboise, Richmond County and Greenfield in Queen's County.

These areas were identified as strategic locations that would play a role in the expansion of rural coverage for the TMR2 Public Safety Radio network. This could also help improve cell coverage access if telecommunications providers attach their equipment to extend coverage

Q. What are you looking for from this initial RFP?

A. The Cellular for Nova Scotia Program includes a phased approach. The [first RFP](#) seeks proposals for innovative ways cellular coverage can be improved using current government infrastructure or existing privately owned towers in a fast and cost-effective manner.

The focus on phase 1 (RFP 1) is seeking more immediate innovative solutions to

Q. Will I have access? What will this provide?

A. The strategy will include closing the gaps and reducing the underserved areas as quickly as possible. That said, filling those gaps will involve installing significant amounts of additional telecommunications equipment throughout the province, which will take time. The initial RFP is anticipated to close late this fall.

Build Nova Scotia recognizes that implementation periods will vary with the scope and complexity of the proposed projects. The goal is to have these initial projects substantially completed by December 31, 2024.

To view the full list of FAQs, visit [here](#).



Satellite Internet Service Rebate Reminder

A reminder that our Satellite Internet Service Rebate Program is still active, and you could be eligible for a one-time rebate of up to \$1000 on select satellite internet hardware and installation solutions. Please note if you are in a [current project area for high-speed internet](#) that is not yet complete, those projects continue to advance and you can switch from satellite to wired/fibre/fixed wireless once access is available.

For more information on the rebate, and how you can apply, click the link [here](#).

For a quick overview guide on the program, click the link [here](#).

As of September 2023, 87,035 homes and businesses have been connected through the [Internet for Nova Scotia Initiative](#) since it was established in 2018 and have access either through traditional Initiative projects or the Satellite Internet Service Rebate Program. To date, we have 96.2% coverage with access to connections continuing to happen.

Build Nova Scotia Website



If you have questions, please contact us at satellite@buildns.ca or by calling [1-800-298-2854](tel:1-800-298-2854).

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