



**GOOD JOBS.  
LOWER COSTS.  
BETTER HEALTH CARE.**

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**Speech**



# 2026 Budget Speech

**Honourable Adrien Sala**  
**Minister of Finance**  
**March 24, 2026**

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishininewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk Nations.

We acknowledge that Manitoba is located on the National Homeland of the Red River Métis.

We acknowledge that northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

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This document is available on the internet at: [Manitoba.ca/Budget2026](https://Manitoba.ca/Budget2026)

Information available at this site includes:

- Manitoba Budget 2026 Speech
- Budget 2026
- Estimates of Expenditure for the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2027
- Budget in Brief

Available in alternate formats upon request.

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## Honouring Amanda Lathlin, MLA for The Pas-Kameesak

Honourable Speaker, before I share the details of this year's budget I want to take a moment to pay tribute to a member of the Legislative Assembly we lost too soon.

Amanda Lathlin served the people of The Pas-Kameesak since she was elected in 2015. She made history as the first First Nations woman elected to the Legislature, paving the way for many who sit here today.

In this chamber she was a strong voice for northern Manitoba. She passed important legislation to bring stronger services for sexual assault survivors in the north and to ensure women in Manitoba could take paid, compassionate leave for a miscarriage. She spoke the Cree language proudly into the recorded history of our province.

As a member of our government Amanda helped secure investments for The Pas and surrounding communities that continue in this year's budget. Expanded training programs for paramedics and health care aides at University College of the North. Over \$18 million in the First Nations delivery of Child and Family services. Millions in funding for family camps at Grand Rapids and youth programs at The Pas Family Resources Centre. A \$4.6 million investment in The Pas Correction Centre Healing Lodge. Investments into better ambulance services in the Fisher River Cree nation and over \$2 million for a new Bachelor of Indigenous Language Programming at UCN.

Honourable Speaker, I have the privilege today of announcing that Amanda's legacy will live on in a new health care clinic for The Pas opening in 2030.

Amanda was funny, compassionate and tough. She would tell it like it is. And love you as you are.

I invite all members of this Chamber and guests in the gallery to join me in honouring her.

Amanda Lathlin – a loving mother and grandmother to her girls, a fierce advocate for the north, a trailblazer in our province.

May she rest in peace.

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## Introduction

Thank you, Honourable Speaker.

And thank you to everyone who has joined us here today for our government's third budget.

C'est avec beaucoup d'humilité que nous vous accueillons à l'Assemblée législative et que nous nous engageons sur une voie positive pour le Manitoba, ensemble.

On behalf of the Manitoba government, we honour the sacredness and importance of this land, and of the ancestors that once walked where we are standing today. The Anishinewak, the Cree, the Dene, the Dakota, the Métis, the Inuit and the Anishinaabe nations who paved the way to what is now known as Manitoba – home to all treaty people.

Honourable Speaker, I present this budget at a moment of great economic opportunity.

Canada is looking to the Port of Churchill as an answer to the questions we face in this new world order.

It's an answer that has been here all along. A trade route known to the Cree, Dene and Inuit people for centuries. We are, after all, a maritime province with the Port of Churchill as our gateway to the arctic – and to the rest of the world.

At the same time, on the cusp of such great opportunity for tomorrow, families face very real challenges today.

Month after month, across the country, rising costs make it harder for the middle class to keep their heads above water. And for families living paycheck to paycheck, the fear of being underwater is constant.

The budget I am delivering today has immediate relief to address those rising costs with help for your mortgage payments, your rent, and help where it hurts the most – at the grocery store.

And I'm very proud to say that this budget helps those who need it most with progressive policies that support low-income Manitobans and help lift families out of poverty. And we're doing more for the middle class, to lower your everyday costs on things like housing, gas, and groceries.

Honourable Speaker, as deficits grow across the country, we are budgeting responsibly with the lowest deficit to GDP anywhere in Canada. We are making steady progress on our path to balance at the end of our first term while we deliver on what matters most to Manitobans: good jobs, lower costs, better health care.

As we return to fiscal balance, our government is committed to being transparent with Manitobans. For the first time since 2017, our public accounts received a clean audit opinion, but there is more work to do.

As part of Budget 2026, we will be reviewing and updating the reporting organizations included in the government reporting entity and getting ahead of forthcoming changes to accounting standards.

Our commitment to you, the great people of Manitoba, is a clean set of books, a balanced budget and a government you can trust.

# Better Health Care

While some things have changed since I delivered our government's first budget – one thing never will, and that's our commitment to rebuilding health care, so it's there when you need it.

There is no quick fix for seven years of cuts. But it's important to acknowledge how far we've come.

In the last two and a half years we have hired 4,054 net new health care staff, added 384 fully-staffed beds in our hospitals and opened 145 beds for seniors in personal care homes with more hours of direct care.

With 317 net new doctors, we've gone from the worst to the best in Canada when it comes to access to a family doctor, and we lead the country in access to same day care.

By the way, 90 of those new doctors are practicing in rural and northern Manitoba.

We've made it easier to see a doctor right away with same-day online booking at [medinav.ca](https://www.medinav.ca), two new Minor Injury and Illness clinics in Winnipeg and Brandon and extended hours at primary care clinics in four Winnipeg hospitals.

Rebuilding health care is what Manitobans elected us to do. But the work isn't done – and we won't take our foot off the gas.

Budget 2026 presses forward to lower ER wait times by taking two important steps.

First, we are creating new zones, adjacent to ERs, where patients with unique needs can be seen by specialists right away – immediately reducing the number of people waiting to see a doctor in the ER.

Second, we are adding beds in transitional care settings for patients who still need health care but are ready to leave the hospital – freeing up space in our hospitals for higher acuity patients who can now move through our ERs and into a bed faster.

We are starting with a cardiac care zone at St. Boniface Hospital, mental health care zones at HSC and St. Boniface, and 32 new transitional beds at Siloam Mission.

Two and a half years ago, we promised Manitobans that we would re-open ERs closed by the previous government. And today, new ERs at the Victoria Hospital and the Eriksdale Hospital are under construction.

We recognize that investing in seniors' care is a key component to lowering ER waits over the long term.

The previous government set us back but we're moving forward with construction underway at the Lac du Bonnet Personal Care Home. Construction on new Personal Care Homes in Transcona and the town of Arborg start this year.

Our fourth personal care home will be in Bridgwater with community consultations beginning this spring.

That's right – they built none in seven years. We'll build one for every year we are in government and we'll keep that commitment going.

The previous government dismantled the Cardiac Centre of Excellence at the St. Boniface Hospital – and now we're rebuilding it with a new \$22.1 million investment. "Heart Care Manitoba" will include a centralized care clinic, 18 more beds and a cardiologist in the ER to immediately assess patients experiencing chest pain.

We completed a record number of hip and knee surgeries at the Selkirk Hospital last year and now we are adding 200 more.

We are improving health care services for families in rural and northern communities with a new paramedic pathway and more funding to recruit doctors.

Honourable Speaker, around the world women's health care is underfunded and under attack. For years Manitoba was no different. We're changing that. Because women should not have to pay more to access fundamental health care. They should not have to shout to be heard. They should not have to put up with a government that would close the Mature Women's Centre.

Honourable Speaker...we're opening a new Menopause Clinic in South Winnipeg.

We've hired more lactation consultants and more midwives to help new moms.

We're saving women money every month with free birth control and free HRT.

We're making free menstrual products mandatory in workplaces.

We are investing in women's heart health and ovarian cancer research and we lowered the age for breast cancer screening.

And we will always defend a woman's right to choose and protect safe access to abortion.

This is the Manitoba I'm proud to raise my daughters in.

As we make these investments, we continue to listen to health care staff and the health care unions who represent them. You show up to the frontlines every day to face our society's greatest challenges: poverty, addiction, mental health, homelessness. And we recognize that even as we make positive changes together, change isn't easy, and it takes time.

We promise to listen, to work with you, and to keep you safe with permanent funding for Institutional Safety Officers and other important security measures. These changes aren't going anywhere.

It's some of those challenges we face that are at the heart of making health care better for all of us. We want all Manitobans to be safe and healthy – and that starts with housing.

This budget has funds to build another 215 social and affordable housing units and provide wraparound supports, like mental health and addictions treatment, to Manitobans moving from tents to supportive housing.

Ending chronic homelessness is the right thing to do – and it's an investment that will make our health care system stronger as more Manitobans find a path to stable, healthy lives.

The job of fixing health care is far from over, but Manitobans elected our team because we have the compassion and the determination to see it through.

# Lower Costs

Honourable Speaker, ask any Manitoban where they're feeling squeezed by high costs the most and they'll tell you – it's the grocery store.

Families are choosing to buy less fresh fruit and vegetables. They're clipping coupons, comparison shopping, and passing on the name brands they used to like better. They're doing all they can, but still falling behind – all while big grocery companies make record profits.

So what can little Manitoba do in the face of rising prices across the country, and big chains that are determined to drive down competition and raise your prices?

I'm here today to tell you that we're prepared to go further than any province has gone, and use every tool available to get your grocery prices down.

Honourable Speaker, we're going after the big grocery chains with everything we've got.

We're cracking down on the property controls that grocery companies use to freeze out competition so they can charge you more. We've already gotten rid of some and we're going to fight every single one that's left.

We're going after predatory pricing with new legislation that makes it illegal for big companies to use your private data to charge you more.

And we're moving forward with our first-in-Canada grocery study to find more ways to fight back against these shady and exploitative practices.

What else can we do to help you at the grocery store? We can step in as your government to directly lower your costs. It started when we froze the price of milk. And our next important step is to take the PST off all food at the grocery store.

From the rotisserie chicken at Costco to salads in the deli section at your local Co-op... starting July 1st, there will be no PST on any food sold in a grocery store in Manitoba.

We're stepping up with more relief for housing costs too.

For homeowners, we're increasing the Homeowners Affordability Tax Credit to \$1,700 – and asking the 1% who have been given so much by our province to give back a little bit more.

We're increasing support for renters too by increasing the Renters Affordability Tax Credit to \$675, and helping seniors with an increased top up to make it easier to feel secure on a fixed income. We're also looking at ways to get you rent relief sooner, so you don't have to wait until tax time.

For farmers and producers, we're saving you money yet again with a freeze on Crown Land leases for the third year in a row.

We are making transit free for kids and youth, saving families money and helping us on our path to net zero.

And when it comes to families with the lowest incomes, we're doing what no government has done before – making child care free in Manitoba for parents who need the most help.

That's not all. As Dr. Jim Silver will tell you, adult education is one of the most impactful ways to grow our economy and end poverty.

So we are increasing funding for adult literacy programs by \$2.5 million to help more Manitobans graduate and find a good job.

And we are keeping costs low for municipalities so they can keep costs low for you, with the third stable and predictable funding increase in a row. That means more for policing, including 12 more officers, and new public safety grants for communities and biz associations across the province. We're investing more in staff and emergency management systems to protect communities from wildfires, including a \$75 million investment in a state-of-the-art fire base in the Thompson area.

From the Northgate Trails in the Parkland region to free swimming lessons and a new track in The Pas. From wastewater projects in the Pembina Valley to funding for the fabulous NCCCAE in Flin Flon. From the expansion of the Gaynor Library in Selkirk – one of the busiest libraries in the province – to more sports and programs for kids in Steinbach, we're proud to be investing in communities across the province.

# Good Jobs

Honourable Speaker, Manitoba's economy is strong.

Wages are outpacing inflation. That means more money in your pocket.

The private sector continues to grow because we're setting the right conditions to do business.

That means more jobs for more Manitobans across the province.

That's right. Our record capital investment is spurring projects across the province. And our Manitoba Jobs Agreement will be built into the framework for every major project to ensure they're built with good Manitoba jobs.

That's how we built the floodway. That's how we built Manitoba Hydro. And that's how we'll keep building the schools, hospitals, roads and highways we need to grow.

Starting the design work for the Carberry overpass. Twinning Highway 1. Repaving Highway 2. Just to name a few.

We're putting skilled tradespeople to work and we're helping parents return to work, building 21 new child-care centres that will open over the next year. That's thousands of new spaces for families in West Kildonan, St. Boniface, River Heights, Burrows, Brandon, Portage la Prairie and many other neighbourhoods across the province.

And unlike the previous government who never planned for new schools at all, we're planning smart – adding more capacity to keep up as our communities grow.

And we're building these schools with playgrounds because that's what Manitoba families should expect from their government. And from now on – they can!

We are growing the critical mineral sector in Manitoba, creating good jobs and more opportunities for trade. We supported the first First Nations-owned mine in our province, and we protected hundreds of mining jobs in Thompson.

Honourable Speaker, I want to return to that great economic opportunity I spoke about at the start. Churchill.

Along the Hudson's Bay, under the beautiful northern lights. Home to polar bears and beluga whales.

This is our home. This is our moment. To create jobs for generations. To put Manitoba on the map. To finally become a have province.

Working with the Prime Minister – and in true partnership with Indigenous Nations – we are advancing a major Manitoba project.

Honourable Speaker, this new trade corridor will reach Europe and India faster than the Port of Vancouver.

We're building it with the Arctic Gateway Group, and a new \$10 million fund to unlock private sector investment.

We're building it with the latest research on sea ice and icebreakers. Not only is a year-round port possible, Honourable Speaker – our government will get it built.

And we'll do it right.

We'll protect our water and marine life, working in partnership with Indigenous Nations and the Town of Churchill, with support from environmental leaders like Oceans North and CPAWS.

We'll support the thriving tourism industry in Churchill, that draws thousands of visitors from all over the world to see what's so special about this place.

And to the people of Churchill – we'll protect your way of life, your family, and your community.

# Conclusion

Honourable Speaker, despite the challenges we face, we are still hopeful about our future here in Manitoba.

And we have every reason to be.

Sous notre gouvernement, nous serons à la hauteur des exigences d'une province véritablement bilingue. Le Secrétariat aux affaires francophones continue de travailler en étroite collaboration avec les entités publiques et les collectivités francophones, en mobilisant plus de trois millions de dollars de financement fédéral afin de renforcer les capacités en matière de bilinguisme et d'accroître l'offre de services gouvernementaux en français dans toute la province. Nous soutenons d'importants partenariats avec le ministère de la Justice du Manitoba, la Société Voyage Manitoba et l'Association des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba. Et nous sommes à l'écoute du nouveau Groupe de travail de l'Hôpital Sainte-Anne pour répondre aux besoins des collectivités francophones dans le sud-est du Manitoba.

The changes we need in health care are underway with more staff to see them through.

The relief you need from high costs is on the way.

The good jobs and opportunities we want for ourselves and our kids are here.

Looking across the country, there is no place I'd rather be today than Manitoba.

There's more work to do, but we'll get it done.

So let's keep working together. Because you can count on us to deliver on what matters to you and your family...

Good jobs. Lower costs. Better health care.