



NOVA SCOTIA'S INSOLVENCY INDUSTRY

A PATHWAY TO FINANCIAL RECOVERY & RESILIENCE

The insolvency industry in Nova Scotia enables individuals facing financial difficulties to make a fresh start and offers struggling companies the opportunity for financial rehabilitation.

Matters related to bankruptcy and insolvency are governed federally, primarily, by the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act (BIA) and the Companies' Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA). These two acts provide legal means for individuals and companies struggling with debt repayment to receive temporary protection from their creditors, the possibility to be discharged from their debt, and the fair and orderly distribution of available money from realized assets to creditors, affecting the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Nova Scotians every year by:

***Supporting Distressed Businesses:** The insolvency industry plays a critical role in helping companies that provide essential goods and services, as well as those that support substantial employment, to continue operating — contributing to the stability and resilience of the broader economy¹. Studies suggest that when creditor rights are protected in insolvency systems, it leads to lower borrowing costs, increased access to credit, better creditor recovery, and job preservation, ultimately benefiting the economy².*

***Providing Relief for Debt-Burdened Consumers:** Financial comfort and preparedness are key aspects of an individual's overall well-being. Just as anyone experiencing a health crisis would seek help, the same is true for those in financial distress. Once an individual is in severe financial difficulty, for whatever reason, it is in everyone's interest — theirs, their lenders' and their loved ones — that they seek professional debt advice.*

ROLE OF LICENSED INSOLVENCY TRUSTEES

Licensed Insolvency Trustees (LITs) play a crucial role in assisting Nova Scotia consumers and businesses facing financial distress as the most educated, trained and qualified debt-relief professionals in Canada. Amid ongoing economic uncertainty, many Nova Scotians are also struggling under the weight of the rising cost of living and interest rates that, while recently lowered, remain historically elevated — leading more individuals to shoulder unmanageable debt. There are 75 LITs licensed to practice across Nova Scotia, providing tailored advice and debt solutions to help these individuals and businesses navigate provincial nuances in insolvency law and make informed decisions about their debt.

¹ Century Services Inc. v. Canada (Attorney-General), 210 SCC 60 (CanLii), [2010] 3 S.C.R. 379 at paragraph 18.

² [The World Bank, Resolving Insolvency](#)

SUPPORTING DEBTORS WITH TRUSTED GUIDANCE

Licensed Insolvency Trustees (LITs) do more than deliver formal debt solutions — they are trusted professionals who take the time to explain options, answer questions, and guide individuals through what can often be an overwhelming and emotional process. With a focus on education, empowerment, and compassion, LITs provide judgment-free support to help Nova Scotians understand their rights, make informed decisions, and take meaningful steps toward long-term financial recovery and peace of mind.

Whether an individual is overwhelmed by debt or simply unsure of their debt-relief options, Licensed Insolvency Trustees can help by:









- ✓ **Offering free initial consultations** with no pressure or obligation.
- ✓ **Clearly explaining all debt-relief options**, which may include reworking a budget, consolidating debts, selling assets, or filing a consumer proposal or bankruptcy.
- ✓ **Stopping collection calls** and helping reduce the stress of dealing with creditors.
- ✓ **Helping individuals act early**, before financial challenges escalate further.

Licensed Insolvency Trustees should be the first point of contact for those experiencing serious financial difficulties and in need of trustworthy guidance.

UNIQUELY POSITIONED TO HELP

Nova Scotians can feel confident in choosing a Licensed Insolvency Trustee (LIT), knowing they are turning to a highly qualified professional with the knowledge, experience, and skills to help them make informed decisions about managing their debt. LITs are the only debt-relief professionals in Canada who are federally regulated and legally and ethically required to provide accurate, unbiased advice on all available debt-relief options.

Licensed Insolvency Trustees are the **ONLY** debt-relief professionals in Canada who are:

-  **Federally regulated** and licensed by the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB).
-  Authorized to administer government-regulated insolvency proceedings such as **consumer proposals and bankruptcies**.
-  Able to offer solutions that use the BIA stay of proceedings to **protect debtors, their income and property** from creditor enforcement.
-  Required to offer the choice of **in-person services** or videoconference.
-  Required by their Code of Ethics to **balance the interests of debtors with the interests of creditors**, ensuring fair and transparent negotiations.
-  Legally required to **undertake a full assessment** of the debtor's financial situation and **provide unbiased advice on all debt-relief options**.
-  Able to negotiate binding agreements with creditors and **offer legal protection from creditor actions, like collection calls, and wage garnishments**.
-  Subject to a **federally regulated fee structure** for consumer insolvencies to ensure transparency, consistency, and fairness.

Additionally, Licensed Insolvency Trustees:

☞ Generally offer a **free initial consultation** to provide individuals with valuable advice with no obligation.

🎓 Require **extensive training with mandatory professional development**, and RCMP background checks are required to obtain/maintain a license to practice.

📖 Possess solid accounting expertise and **extensive knowledge of governing legislation** and are empowered to take various actions adapted to the circumstances, whether for consumers or businesses.

FEDERAL REGULATION & OVERSIGHT

As the only federally regulated debt relief professionals in Canada, Licensed Insolvency Trustees (LITs) are subject to ongoing oversight by the Office of Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB) via regular reviews, audits and inspections to ensure standards of practice, adherence to the law, and a comprehensive Code of Ethics.

The OSB licenses and regulates the insolvency profession; supervises the administration of estates in bankruptcy, commercial reorganizations, consumer proposals and receiverships; maintains a public record of BIA and CCAA filings; records and investigates complaints from debtors and creditors regarding the insolvency process; and ensures compliance through maintenance and enforcement of the regulatory framework.

In addition to federal oversight, most LITs are members of the Canadian Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals (CAIRP) – the national professional association that promotes high standards, education and ethics in the insolvency field. All CAIRP members have earned the Chartered Insolvency and Restructuring Professional (CIRP) designation, one of the highest distinctions in the insolvency and restructuring profession. CAIRP members must adhere to strict rules of Professional Conduct and Standards of Provincial Practice and undertake annual professional development.

Both CAIRP and the OSB prioritize transparency and accountability by ensuring that their complaints processes are easily accessible on their official websites. The OSB also maintains a map-based directory of [LITs and LIT firms](#), while CAIRP provides a [directory](#) of all active CIRP-designated LITs and [member firms](#). LIT services are available across the province, even in remote locations.



CONSUMER INSOLVENCY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Against the backdrop of economic uncertainty, Nova Scotians are struggling with the soaring cost of living, persistent debt-carrying costs, and looming mortgage renewals. Many are on the brink of insolvency or grappling with an overwhelming debt burden.

In 2024, over 4,300³ Nova Scotians filed for insolvency – that amounts to about 12 Nova Scotians each day requiring debt-relief support from LITs across the province. Consumer insolvencies rose 1.6%⁴ year-over-year, marking a modest increase and continuing an upward trend observed in 2023⁵.

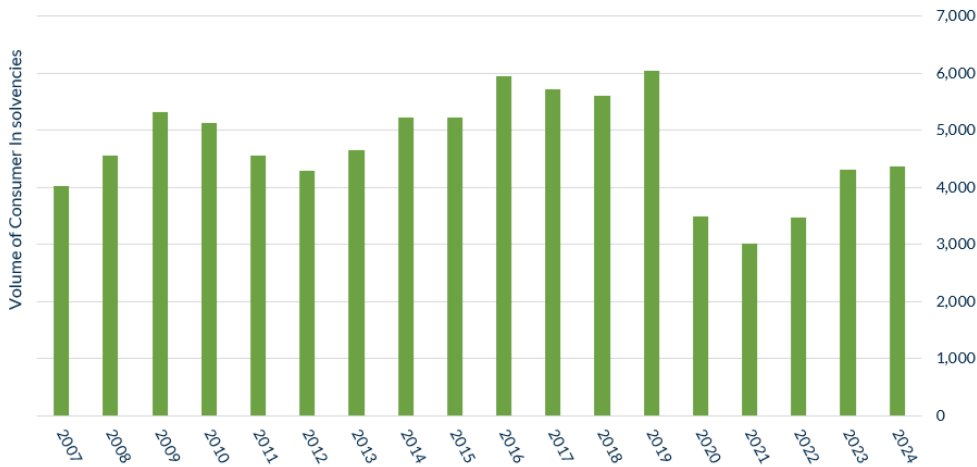
2024 CONSUMER INSOLVENCIES IN NOVA SCOTIA⁶

- Over 4,300 Nova Scotians filed for insolvency last year including:
- 3,142 consumer proposals, up 0.8% over the previous year.
 - 1,226 consumer bankruptcies, up 3.6% over the previous year.

2024 CONSUMER INSOLVENCIES IN CANADA⁷

- More than 137,000 Canadians filed for insolvency last year including:
- 108,255 consumer proposals, up 11.6% over the previous year.
 - 29,040 consumer bankruptcies, up 10.8% over the previous year.

CONSUMER INSOLVENCIES FILED ANNUALLY IN NOVA SCOTIA



Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy

³ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024
⁴ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024
⁵ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2023
⁶ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024
⁷ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024



Q4 2024 PROVINCIAL DELINQUENCY RATES

- 9.28% increase in delinquency rate for non-mortgage balances.
- In Halifax, delinquency rates surged 21.37%.
- 0.28% of Atlantic Canada mortgages in arrears, well above the national average of 0.22%.



TOP 5 REASONS FOR NOVA SCOTIANS' FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

- 69% Financial Management
- 44% Loss of Income
- 25% Medical Reasons
- 14% Relationship Breakdown
- 12% COVID-19 Pandemic

NOVA SCOTIA CONSUMER INSIGHTS: DELINQUENCY RATES

Nova Scotians experienced a concerning surge in financial strain in the fourth quarter of last year, as reflected by the delinquency rate for non-mortgage balances, which escalated by 9.28% compared to the previous year, reaching a delinquency rate of 1.66%. In Halifax, delinquency rates surged 21.37% to 1.53%⁸. At the same time, the average debt of Nova Scotians grew 2.45% in Q4 2024 to \$21,349.

Looming mortgage renewals in the province could further impact the financial pressures faced by Nova Scotians, particularly in the realm of housing expenses. Across Canada, about 0.22% of mortgages are in arrears, meaning they are three months or more behind on payments. Atlantic Canada is above the national average at 0.28%⁹.

PROFILE OF A NOVA SCOTIA DEBTOR

The typical profile of a Nova Scotia debtor, based on insolvency filings, reveals interesting insights into the demographics of those facing financial challenges. The average age of debtors is 47 years, with an average household size of 2 people. Notably, 26% of these debtors have had a previous bankruptcy, indicating recurring financial difficulties for some individuals. Gender distribution among insolvency filers is skewed towards females, with 55% female and 45% male. Geographically, most insolvency filings originate from urban areas, accounting for 71% of cases, while rural areas contribute to the remaining 29%. In terms of marital status, those who are single constitute the largest group among debtors at 39% followed by those who are married or in a common-law relationship at 35%. Divorced or separated individuals make up 21% of insolvency filers, while widowed individuals represent 4% of the total¹⁰.

Nearly seven in 10 (69%) Nova Scotians who encounter financial difficulties attribute their situation to inadequate financial management. Loss of income follows at 44%, often due to job instability. Medical reasons contribute significantly at 25%, while relationship breakdowns and the COVID-19 pandemic are mentioned by 14% and 12% respectively. These complexities underscore the necessity for the expertise of LITs, who can provide guidance on debt management, budgeting, and navigating financial crises. LITs offer vital support in developing strategies to overcome these challenges and achieve financial stability for severely indebted Nova Scotians.

⁸ Equifax, Q4 2024 Market Pulse Consumer Credit Trends Report

⁹ Canadian Bankers Association, Number of residential mortgages in arrears as of December 2024

¹⁰ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB), Canadian Consumer Debtor Profile - 2021

BUSINESS INSOLVENCY IN NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia businesses continue to grapple with an array of financial obstacles, as they face high operational costs, supply chain disruptions, and an uncertain economic environment. Despite efforts to adapt, many are struggling to contend with rising input and wage costs, as well as ongoing debt servicing pressures. The challenges facing businesses are starkly reflected in the surge of insolvency filings, with 60 businesses in Nova Scotia seeking relief in 2024 alone. This marks a substantial increase of 42.9% compared to the previous year¹¹.

2024 KEY BUSINESS INSOLVENCY STATS IN NOVA SCOTIA¹²:

60 Nova Scotia businesses filed for insolvency last year including:

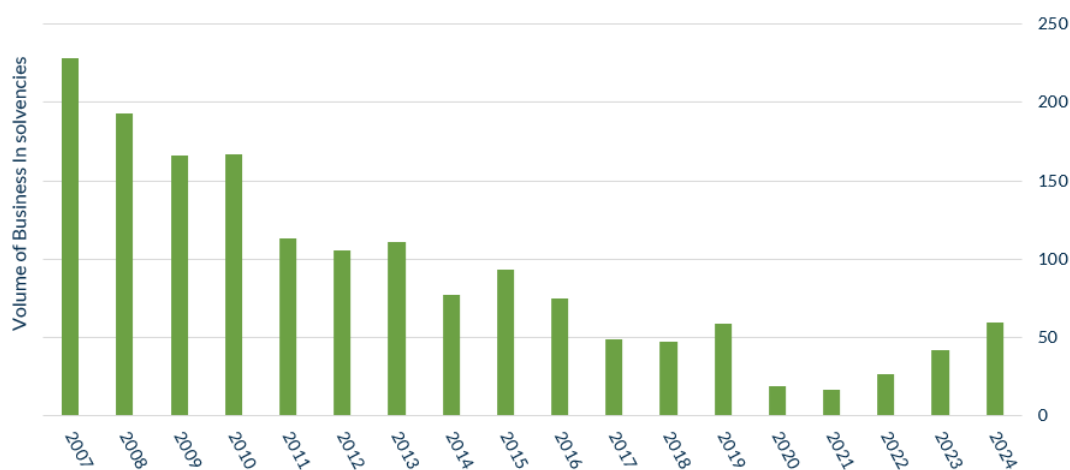
- 43 bankruptcies, up 53.6% over the previous year.
- 17 proposals, up 21.4% over the previous year.
- 2 CCAA proceedings, consistent with the previous year.

2024 KEY BUSINESS INSOLVENCY STATS IN CANADA¹³:

Over 6,100 Canadian businesses filed for insolvency last year including:

- 4,771 bankruptcies, up 28.9% over the previous year.
- 1,417 proposals, up 27.9% over the previous year.
- 74 CCAA proceedings, 10 more than the previous year.
- Construction, Transportation and Warehousing, and Accommodation and Food Services sectors registered the biggest increases in the number of insolvencies.

BUSINESS INSOLVENCIES FILED ANNUALLY IN NOVA SCOTIA



Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy

¹¹ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB). Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024

¹² Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB). Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024

¹³ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB). Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024



2024 BUSINESS EXITS vs INSOLVENCIES

- 340 businesses exited on average each month – up 5.1% over 2023.
- About 4 businesses filed for insolvency each month on average.
- Business owners who opt to shut down operations without formally filing for insolvency risk missing out on the professional guidance provided by LITs.

NOVA SCOTIA BUSINESS INSOLVENCY INSIGHTS:

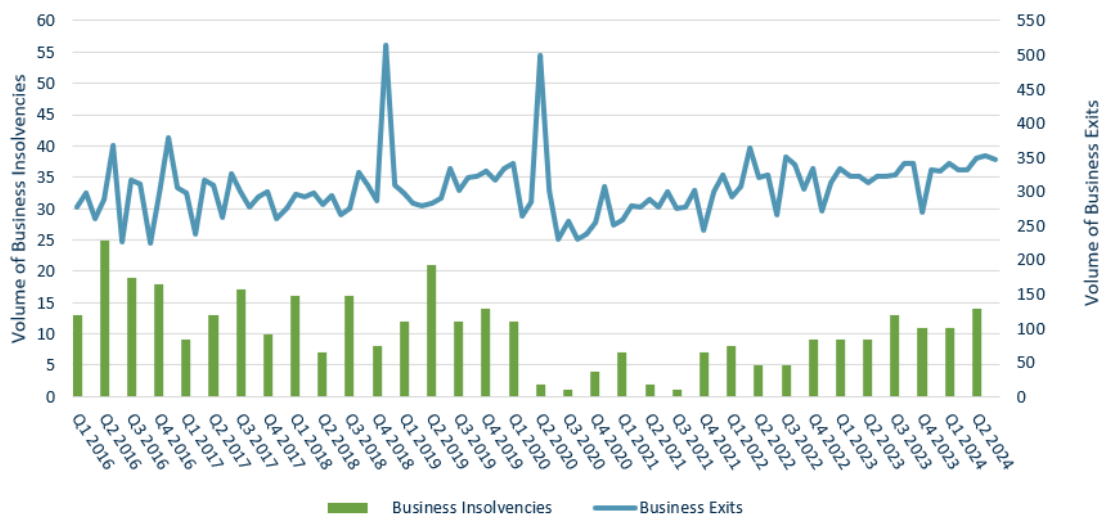
BUSINESS EXITS ON THE RISE

Business insolvency statistics only reveal part of the financial challenges faced by Nova Scotia businesses. From January to July 2024, an average of approximately 340¹⁴ businesses exited the market each month in Nova Scotia, compared to just about four¹⁵ that filed for insolvency. Many of these exits are likely driven by financial difficulties. National data from 2010 to 2019 shows that 44.5% of businesses that exited were highly leveraged, 42.4% had weak liquidity, and 47.8% had low profitability¹⁶.

The average monthly number of business exits was 5.1% higher from January to July 2024 than during the same period in 2023. Nationally, the industries with the highest average monthly business exits included professional, scientific and technical services; construction; transportation and warehousing; and retail trade¹⁷.

Many business owners experiencing financial difficulties often choose to shut down operations and walk away, rather than filing for insolvency or seeking restructuring advice. In doing so, they may miss out on professional guidance that could help preserve their business. Licensed Insolvency Trustees are uniquely qualified to provide tailored advice based on a business's size, structure, and assets.

BUSINESS INSOLVENCIES & EXITS IN NOVA SCOTIA



Sources: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy, Statistics Canada

¹⁴ Statistics Canada. Experimental estimates for business openings and closures for Canada

¹⁵ Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (OSB). Insolvency Statistics in Canada – Fourth quarter of 2024

¹⁶ Statistics Canada. A profile of corporate exits and insolvencies

¹⁷ Statistics Canada. Experimental estimates for business openings and closures for Canada



CAIRP & NSAIRP

CHAMPIONING NOVA SCOTIA'S INSOLVENCY AND RESTRUCTURING INDUSTRY

The Canadian Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals (CAIRP) is a national voice on insolvency matters throughout Canada, and the national professional association representing nearly 1,400 members and associates across the country, including Nova Scotia. Aligned with CAIRP's overarching mission, the Nova Scotia Association of Insolvency and Restructuring Professionals (NSAIRP) advocates on behalf of its members on issues of local and provincial interest, championing fairness, excellence and effectiveness in insolvency and restructuring matters throughout Nova Scotia, positioning its members as the leading professionals and advocates in the field. NSAIRP is also committed to providing dedicated support and fostering professional development for its Nova Scotia-based members.

Advocating for a fair, transparent and effective insolvency and restructuring system for Nova Scotians and our members in the province.

ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF THE PUBLIC AND MEMBERS

CAIRP stands as the foremost authority for the education, standards, and advocacy of insolvency and restructuring professionals. The association advocates for a fair, transparent and effective insolvency and restructuring system throughout Canada, enforcing CAIRP's Rules of Professional Conduct and Standards of Professional Practice, maintaining rigorous certification standards, and providing innovative education for aspiring insolvency and restructuring professionals.

A Chartered Insolvency and Restructuring Professional (CIRP) is the most highly trained and educated debt professional in Canada and must abide by the highest standards of the profession. Members of CAIRP have earned the CIRP designation, and most are licensed insolvency trustees. To maintain their designation, CAIRP members must adhere to strict rules of Professional Conduct and Standards of Practice and undertake annual professional development.

Associated links

- [CAIRP \(CAIRP.ca\)](https://www.cairp.ca)
 - [Find a CIRP designated LIT](#)
 - [CAIRP Member LIT Firm](#)
- [NSAIRP \(NSAIRP.ca\)](https://www.nsaip.ca)
- [Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy](#)
 - [Find an LIT or LIT Firm](#)
 - [Debt Solutions Portal](#)