



Social Determinants of Health

Food Security

May 2025

Quality of Care NL is proud to partner
with **Choosing Wisely Canada**



Who We Are



Quality of Care NL is an applied health and social systems research and evaluation program aimed at improving social and health outcomes in Newfoundland and Labrador.



Proud partner of Choosing Wisely Canada  **Choosing Wisely NL**

Food Security



Food security is the adequate and secure access to nutritious, safe, and culturally appropriate food. Food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to these types of food due to financial constraints.

Food insecurity is a serious public health problem. It can have significant implications for people's health and well-being beyond just poor nutrition and diet. Individuals who are food insecure may be at an increased risk for a variety of negative health outcomes (i.e., diabetes, obesity, heart disease, mental health disorders and other chronic conditions). Food insecurity can also make it difficult for individuals to manage existing health problems and can lead to worsening conditions.

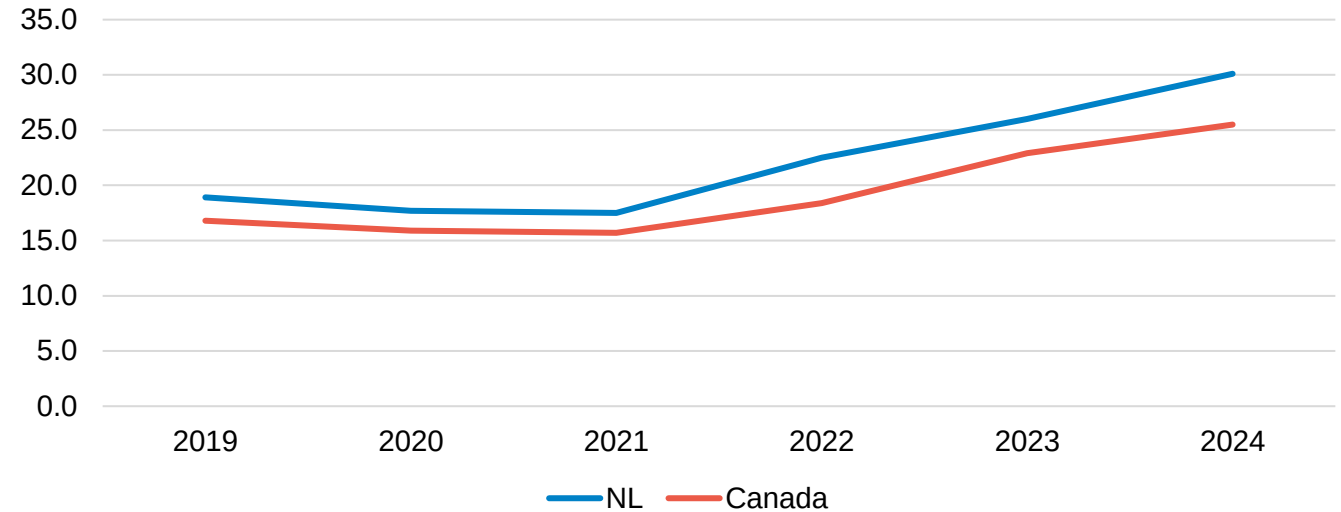


Canadian Income Survey

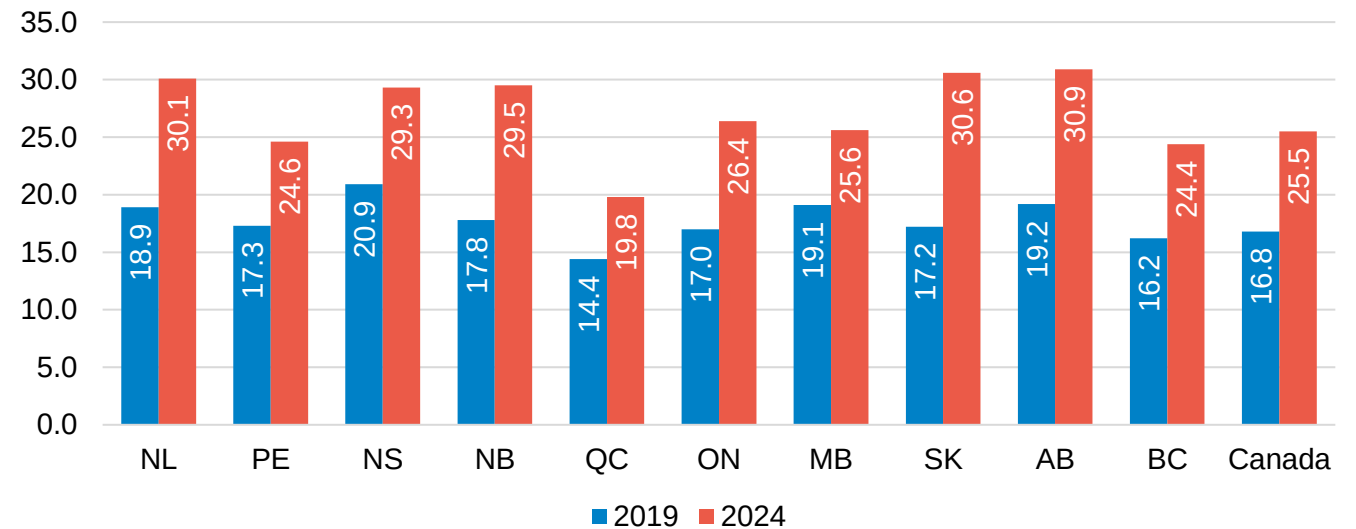
In Canada, food insecurity is measured through the Household Food Security Survey Module of the Canadian Income Survey (CIS). Households are classified into one of four categories:

- Food secure (no indication of any income-related problems of food access)
 - Marginally food insecure (worry about running out of food and/or limited food selection due to a lack of money for food)
 - Moderately food insecure (compromise in quality and/or quantity of food due to a lack of money for food)
 - Severely food insecure (miss meals, reduce food intake and, at the most extreme, go day(s) without food)
- Overall, from 2019 to 2024, household food insecurity has increased in NL and across Canada. Food insecurity has been higher in NL compared to Canada during this time.
 - From 2019 to 2024, the rate of food insecurity increased by 59.3% in NL (51.8% for Canada).
 - In 2024, NL ranked eighth for household food insecurity when compared to the other provinces (1=best and 10=worst).

Percentage of People Living in Food-Insecure Households in Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada, 2019 to 2024



Percentage of People Living in Food-Insecure Households by Province, 2019 to 2024



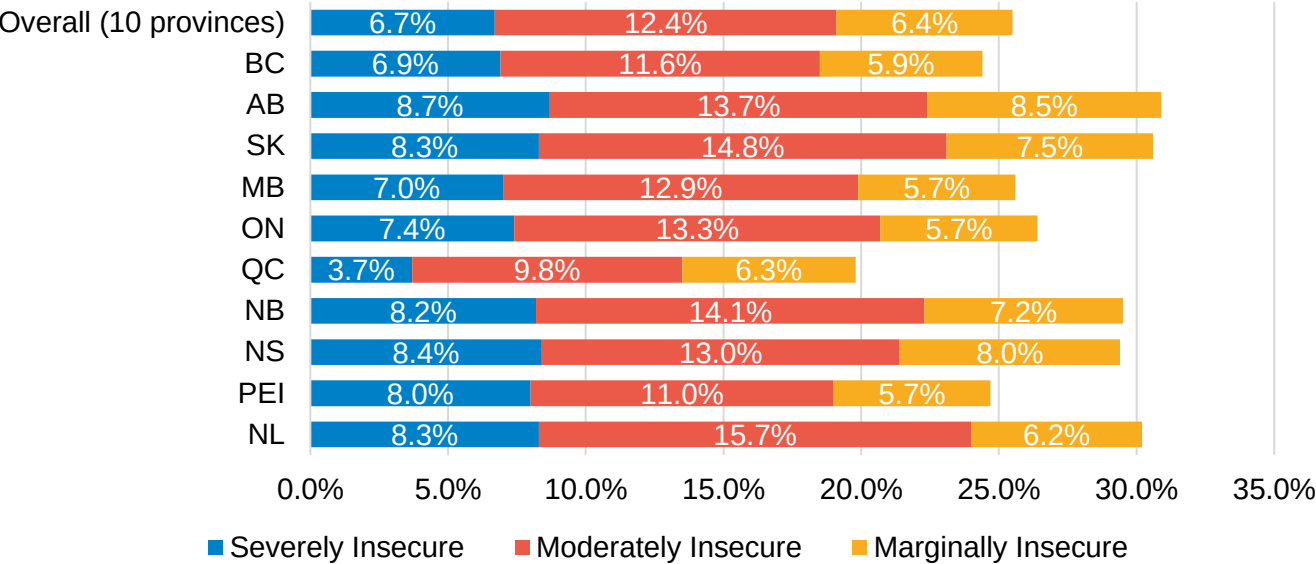
Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0835-01 Food Insecurity by selected demographic characteristics; Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2019 to 2024

Canadian Income Survey

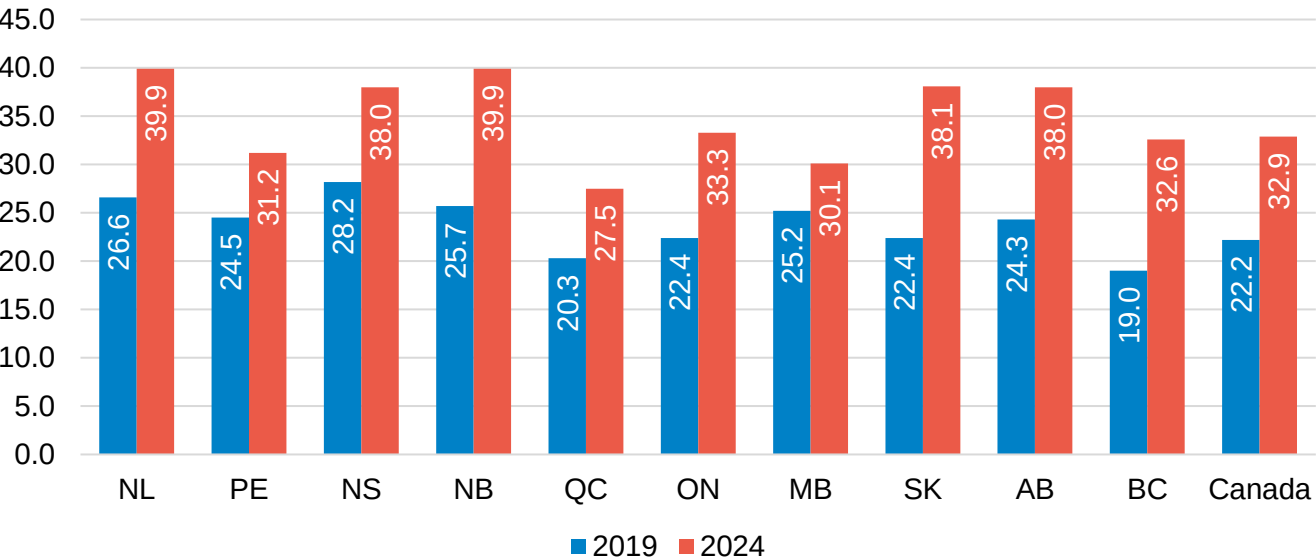
- In 2024, NL had the third highest rate of severe food insecurity among the Canadian Provinces (tied with SK).
- Overall, from 2019 to 2024, the percentage of children living in food-insecure households increased for all provinces.
- From 2019 to 2024, the rate of food insecurity in children under 18 years of age increased by 50.0% in NL (48.2% for Canada).
- In 2024, NL ranked tenth (tied with NB) for the proportion of children under 18 years of age living in food-insecure households (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0835-01 Food Insecurity by selected demographic characteristics; Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2019 to 2024

Household Food Insecurity in Canada by Province and Level of Insecurity, 2024



Percentage of Children under 18 Living in Food-Insecure Households by Province, 2019 to 2024



Cost of Nutritious Food Basket per Week in Newfoundland and Labrador by Region, 2016 to 2022

Region	2016	2017	2018	2021	2022	2023
Eastern	\$262	\$261	\$261	\$261	\$292	\$317
Eastern Urban	\$261	\$257	\$259	\$244	\$274	\$301
Eastern Rural	\$263	\$272	\$268	\$302	\$340	\$359
Central	\$261	\$263	\$260	\$288	\$324	\$344
Central Urban	\$258	\$251	\$254	\$246	\$282	\$307
Central Rural	\$263	\$268	\$262	\$306	\$342	\$361
Western	\$272	\$273	\$256	\$305	\$335	\$363
Western Urban	\$271	\$269	\$240	\$298	\$327	\$352
Western Rural	\$274	\$279	\$278	\$311	\$342	\$374
Labrador-Grenfell	\$275	\$276	\$278	\$314	\$361	\$386
Labrador (North Coast)	\$380	\$402	\$368	\$394	\$467	\$509
Labrador (South Coast)	\$296	\$308	\$310	\$363	\$413	\$427
Labrador (Central West)	\$257	\$256	\$260	\$289	\$324	\$359
Northern Peninsula Portion of LGH	\$267	\$258	\$269	\$325	\$385	\$388
Province	\$264	\$264	\$261	\$275	\$309	\$333

Notes:

1. The 2021, 2022 and 2023 Newfoundland & Labrador Nutritious Food Basket (NLNFB) consists of 61 foods from the 2019 Canada's Food Guide. The prices of specific amounts of these foods, combined with the nutrient needs of individuals and families determines the cost of the basket. The NLNFB has undergone revisions since 2018 to include different food items based on the updated Canada's food guide; therefore, calculating the change from 2018 to 2021 is not advised.
2. A change to one item in the basket, store selection and regional definition of North Coast and South Coast Labrador has resulted in adjustments to the 2021 estimates. These changes ensure consistency when comparing 2021 and 2022.

Source: Compiled by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) based on survey data from the Newfoundland & Labrador Nutritious Food Basket (NLNFB), 2016 to 2023

Newfoundland & Labrador Nutritious Food Basket

The Newfoundland and Labrador Nutritious Food Basket (NLNFB) consists of 61 foods from the 2019 Canada's Food Guide. The prices of specific amounts of these foods, combined with the nutrient needs of individuals and families determines the cost of the basket.

The basket is calculated based on a family of four, made up of a man and a woman (31-50 years), a boy (14-18 years) and a girl (4-8 years) and provides estimates for both urban and rural locations in Newfoundland and Labrador. Urban is defined as communities with a population of 5,000 and over. All other areas are defined as rural.

- Food costs have consistently been highest in the Labrador-Grenfell region (with the highest being on the North Coast of Labrador) of the province.
- From 2021 to 2023, the cost of a nutritious food basket has increased by 21% in NL.
 - 21% in Eastern
 - 19% in Central
 - 19% in Western
 - 23% in Labrador-Grenfell

Food Banks Canada

Report: HungerCount 2024

Since 1997, Food Banks Canada has conducted the HungerCount, a cross-sectional, census-type survey of most food bank agencies, organizations and programs. The HungerCount provides a point-in-time snapshot of food bank use in Canada.

According to survey respondents, the top three reasons people accessed a food bank in March 2024 were:

1. Cost of Food
 2. Cost of Housing
 3. Low Wages/Delayed Wages
- While food bank usage in NL decreased by almost 8% from 2023 to 2024, overall usage from 2019 to 2024 has increased by 33% in NL.

Source: Food Banks Canada. (2024). HungerCount 2024. Buckling Under the Strain <https://foodbankscanada.ca>

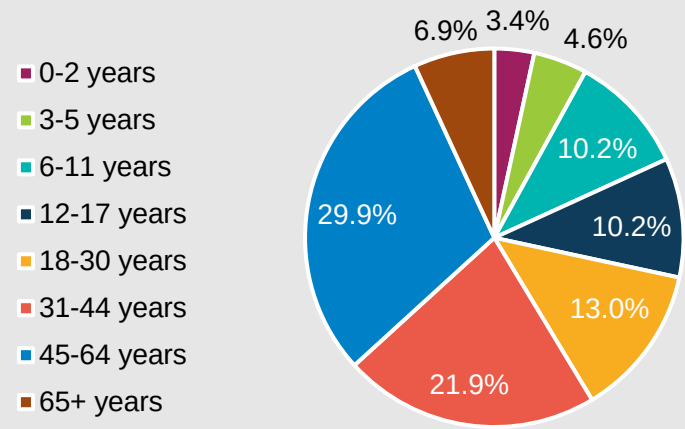
Food Bank Visits and Age Distribution of Users by Province, March 2024

Region	Total Visits, March 2024	Total Visits (children), March 2024	% change in total visits (2023-24)	% change in total visits (2019-24)	Age Category Served as % of total		
					<18 years	18-64 years	65+ years
NL	14,236	4,139	-7.7	33.0	28.4	64.7	6.9
PEI	5,435	1,844	29.0	83.7	34.0	61.0	5.0
NS	39,360	11,722	21.1	53.6	32.4	61.2	6.4
NB	32,167	11,074	7.8	44.5	33.6	60.8	5.6
QC	721,318	254,668	5.7	109.0	36.5	56.0	7.5
ON	736,335	218,308	8.1	116.8	30.8	60.9	8.3
MB	55,487	26,251	-3.3	-	39.6	55.0	5.4
SK	52,877	20,473	-5.2	42.1	38.9	56.4	4.7
AB	172,832	61,379	-0.85	92.4	35.3	60.0	4.7
BC	225,605	70,073	15.2	80.9	30.1	58.9	11.0
Canada	2,059,636	681,450	6.0	90.0	33.2	59.1	7.7

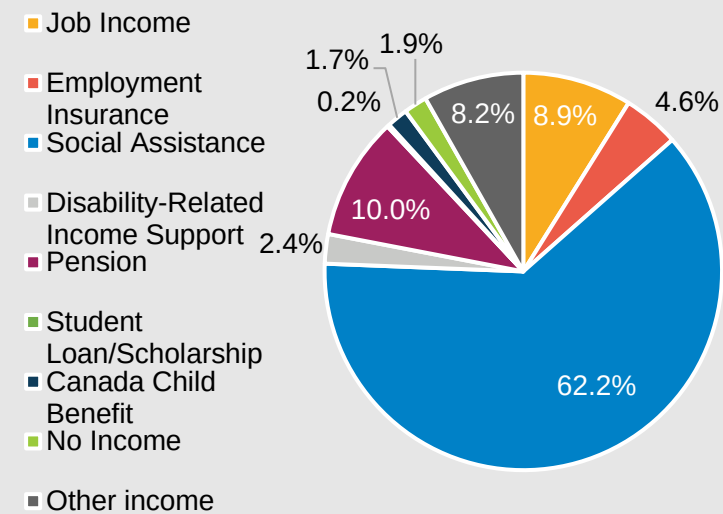
Characteristics of Food Bank Clients by Province, March 2024

Region	Household Type		Source of Income			Housing Type		
	% single-parent families	% single people	% social assistance	% job income	% pension income	% rental market tenants	% social housing tenants	% home-owners
NL	18.4	53.9	62.2	8.9	10.0	59.6	21.6	13.7
PEI	14.1	43.0	16.7	37.4	3.1	67.6	19.0	7.2
NS	18.0	45.8	30.4	21.5	8.7	70.4	7.1	12.2
NB	16.4	47.9	39.3	17.3	9.8	65.9	13.6	13.9
QC	19.5	35.7	43.0	20.4	10.9	66.4	15.3	7.4
ON	15.6	45.0	18.9	13.4	8.1	72.5	12.4	5.2
MB	15.3	35.5	30.6	18.1	7.0	67.6	22.7	9.7
SK	23.5	39.3	37.4	17.2	6.8	73.6	11.1	6.6
AB	20.1	38.3	16.6	25.5	7.0	71.2	6.8	9.6
BC	14.0	48.8	17.4	23.1	12.8	67.3	6.4	7.3
Canada	17.3	41.9	27.7	18.1	9.2	69.5	12.8	7.1

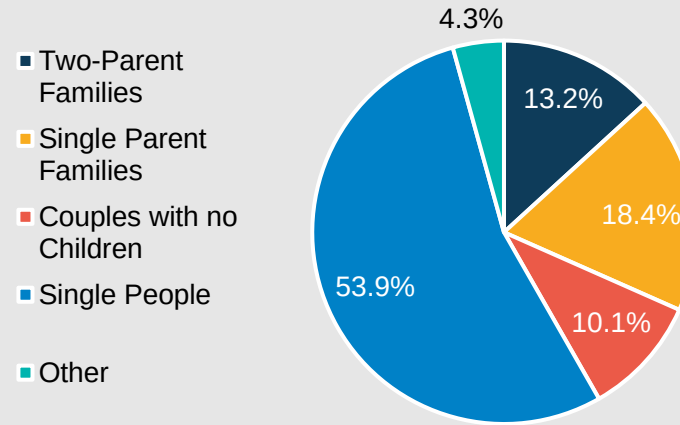
Age Categories Served as a % of Total, by Age Group, March 2024



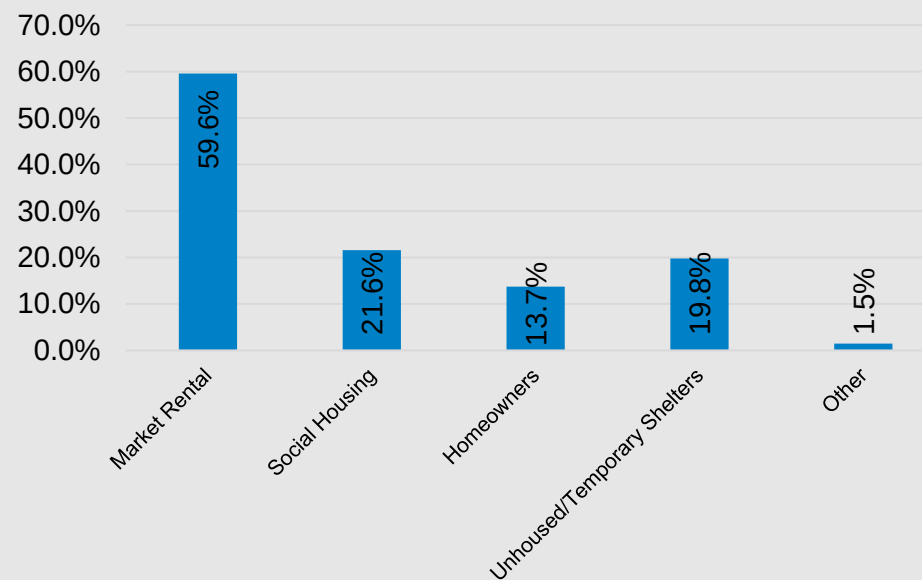
Primary Source of Income, March 2024



Household Type, March 2024



Housing Type, March 2024



Food Banks Canada Report: HungerCount 2024

Newfoundland and Labrador Food Bank User Statistics

- 28.4% of food bank clients in NL are children (< 18 years) and 6.9% are seniors (65+ years).
- Single-person households account for 53.9% of food bank clients in NL (the highest rate amongst Canadian provinces).
- 62.2% of food bank clients in NL were receiving social assistance (the highest rate amongst the Canadian provinces) and 18.9% were either employed or receiving a pension.
- Renters and social housing tenants make up approximately 74% of food bank clients in NL.



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