

Household Food Insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador, 2021

Objective

To determine the extent of food insecurity in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) compared to other Canadian provinces.

Practice Points

- Household food insecurity refers to the inadequate or insecure access to food because of financial constraints. It denotes pervasive material deprivation. It is most prevalent in single-parent families, renters and among individuals who identify as Indigenous or black.
- In Ontario, compared with total annual health/drug costs in food-secure households, these adjusted annual costs were 23% higher in households with marginal food insecurity, 49% higher in those with moderate food insecurity, and 121% higher in those with severe food insecurity (Tarasuk et al., CMAJ, 2015). Whether this is cause or effect is uncertain.
- In 2017–18, in Canada (CA), 12.7% of households experienced some level of food insecurity in the previous 12 months.
- In NL, reductions in food insecurity among social assistance recipients from 2007–12 correlate with the increase in social assistance benefits that accompanied the 2006 poverty reduction strategy.
- In 2017/18 the prevalence of food insecurity in NL was second highest among the Canadian provinces.

Data

Statistics Canada Canadian Community Health Survey conducted in 2017–18 in 103,500 households reported by Tarasuk V. Miller A. <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

Data Source: Tarasuk V, Li T, Fafard St-Germain AA. (2022) Household food insecurity in Canada, 2021. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from <https://proof.utoronto.ca>

Results

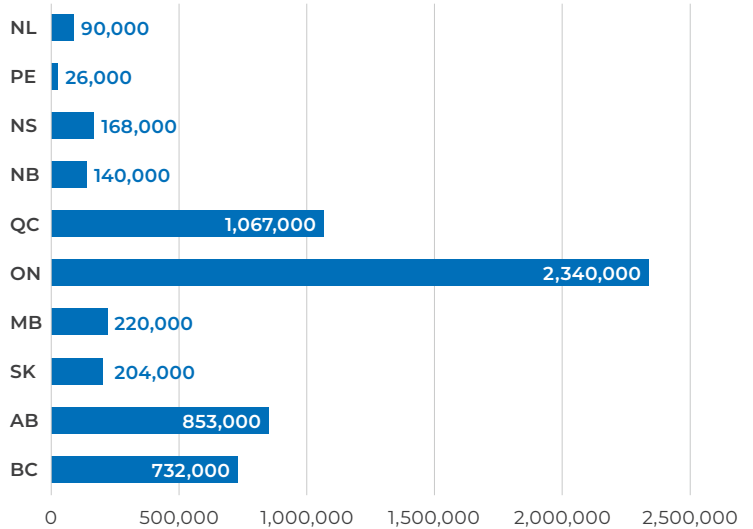
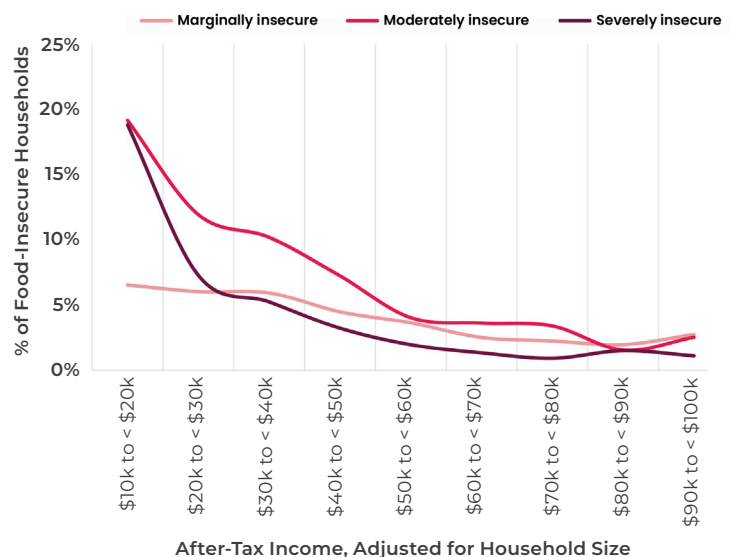


Figure 1. Number of People Living in Food-Insecure Households by Province, 2021

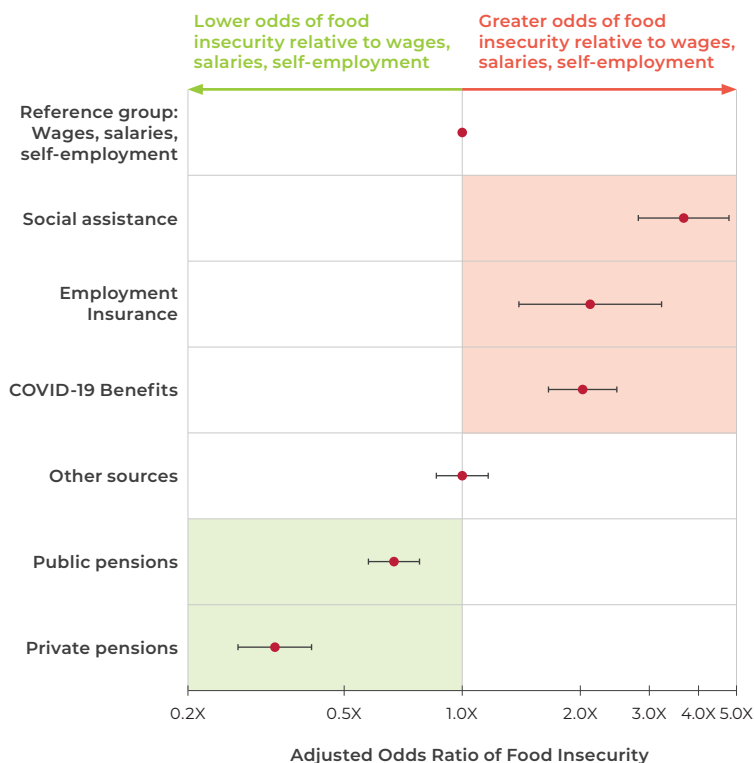
- The prevalence of food insecurity differed markedly by province ranging from 13.1% in Quebec (QC) to 20.3% in Alberta (AB).
- The prevalence of food insecurity in NL was 17.9%, ranking 4th highest of the Canadian provinces and similar to the rates for Manitoba (17.8%) and Nova Scotia (17.7%).



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2020.

Figure 2. Food Insecurity in Canada by Household Income

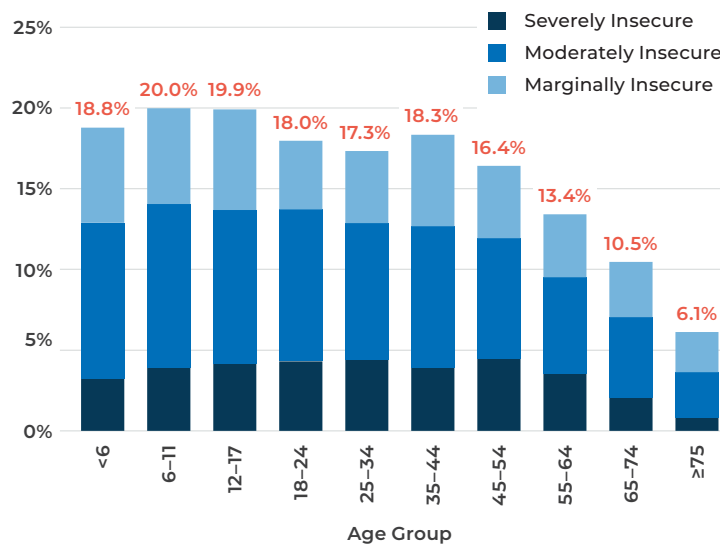
- Household food insecurity is a measure of material deprivation, tightly linked to indicators of social and economic disadvantage.
- Household income is a robust predictor of food insecurity.



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2020.

Figure 3. Adjusted Odds Ratios of Food Insecurity in Relation to Main Source of Income (Adjusted for Socio-Demographic and Economic Characteristics)

- Multivariable analysis shows the elevated vulnerability of food insecurity associated with public income support programs, aside from public pensions.
- Being outside the workforce comes with heightened food insecurity only if you are not a senior.
- Female lone parent households had the highest rate of food insecurity at 38.1%, followed by male lone parent households at 20.8%, and unattached individuals living alone at 20.3%.
- When analyzed by racial/cultural identity the highest percent of individuals living in food-insecure households was found in Indigenous Peoples at 30.7%.



Data Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Income Survey (CIS) 2020.

Figure 4. Percentage of Individuals Living in Food-Insecure Households in Canada by Age Group, 2021

- The prevalence of household food insecurity among children and young adults is more than triple the prevalence for adults 75 years and older.
- The proportion of children under 18 who lived in food-insecure households in NL was 26.4%, the highest rate among the 10 provinces.

Conclusions

1. Tackling the conditions that give rise to food insecurity means reevaluating the income supports and protections that are currently provided to very low income, working-aged Canadians and their families.
2. This means addressing the vulnerability of households reliant on employment incomes but still unable to make ends meet and ensuring that working-aged adults not in the workforce also have sufficient incomes to meet basic needs.