

# A Look at Food Insecurity Among Children in Newfoundland and Labrador

## Objective

To determine the extent of food insecurity and food bank usage for persons <18 years old in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) compared to other Canadian provinces.

## Practice Points

1. 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.
2. Food insecurity is a serious problem. It can have serious implications on the health and well-being of people beyond poor nutrition and diet.
3. In Canada (CA), food insecurity is measured through the Household Food Security Survey Module of the Canadian Income Survey (CIS). Households are classified into 1 of 4 categories: food secure,

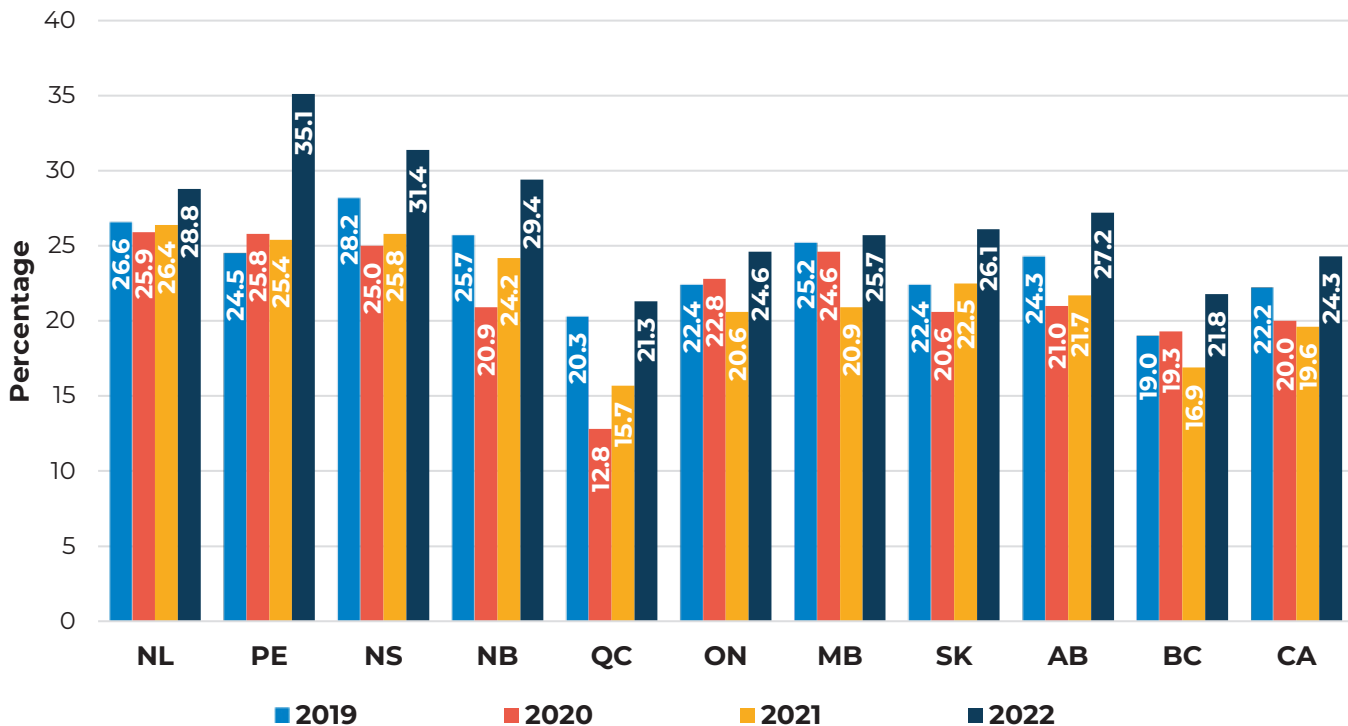
marginally food insecure, moderately food insecure, and severely food insecure.

4. The HungerCount (conducted by Food Banks Canada) is a cross-sectional, census-type survey of most food bank agencies, organizations, and programs within and outside of the Food Banks Canada network. It provides a point-in-time snapshot of food bank use in CA.

## Methods

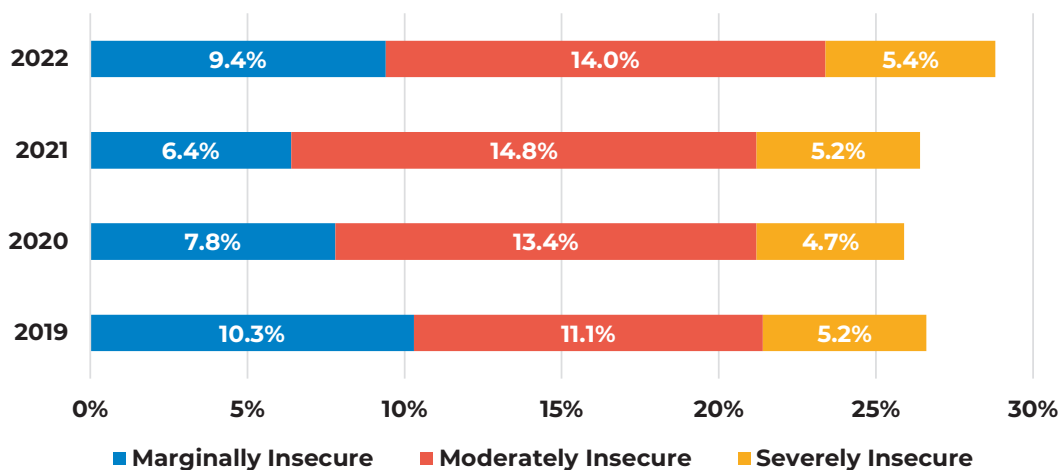
1. Data on food insecurity for persons <18 years old was obtained from Statistics Canada. Food insecurity for persons <18 years old was compared between provinces and over time (2019–2022).
2. Data on food bank usage was obtained from the HungerCount reports created by Food Banks Canada. Food bank visits by children and age distribution of users were compared between provinces.

## Results



Source: Food Insecurity by Selected Demographic Characteristics, Table 13-10-0835-01, Statistics CA, Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2019–2022

Figure 1. Percentage of Children Aged <18 Years Old Living in Food-Insecure Households by Province, 2019–2022



Source: Food Insecurity by Selected Demographic Characteristics, Table 13-10-0835-01, Statistics CA, Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2019–2022

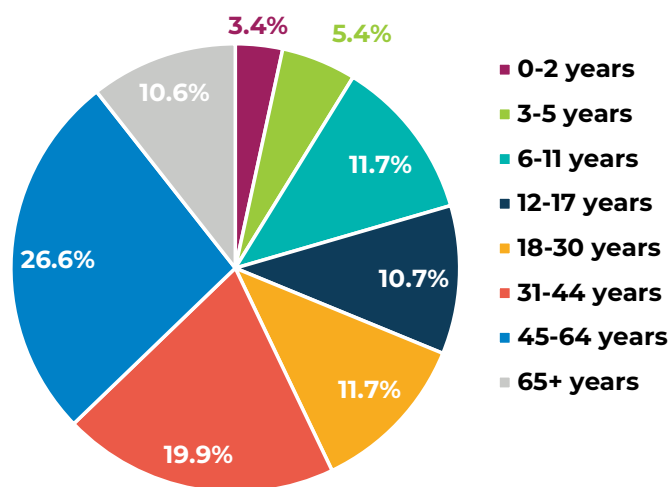
Figure 2. Percentage of Children Aged <18 Years Old Living in Food-Insecure Households in NL by Severity, 2019–2022

- Prevalence of children living in food-insecure households differs across provinces and over time.
- From 2019 to 2022, the prevalence of children living in food-insecure households increased in each province.
- In 2022, NL ranked seventh (1=best and 10=worst) among the Canadian provinces for the prevalence of children living in food-insecure households.
- Each year, from 2019 to 2022, over 25% of children in NL were living in food-insecure households.
- In NL, the percentage of children living in moderately or severely food-insecure households has increased from 16.3% in 2019 to 19.4% in 2022.

Table 1. Food Bank Visits for Persons Aged <18 Years and Age Distribution of Users by Province, Mar 2021–Mar 2023

Region	Total Visits (Children) Mar 2023	Total Visits (Children) Mar 2022	Total Visits (Children) Mar 2021	% Change in Total Visits (Children) 2021–2023	Age Category Served as % of Total (2023)		
					<18 Years	18–64 Years	65+ Years
BC	62,481	52,312	40,717	53.3	30.9	59.4	9.7
AB	63,729	57,750	44,586	42.9	35.1	59.5	5.4
SK	22,193	17,747	12,995	70.8	40.3	55.1	4.6
MB	20,794	16,858	24,297	-14.4	42.3	52.9	4.8
ON	202,914	147,816	130,970	54.9	30.6	60.8	8.6
QC	240,325	169,679	160,288	49.9	35.7	55.7	8.6
NB	10,322	7,363	6,544	57.7	34.0	60.3	5.7
NS	10,039	8,733	7,368	36.3	31.4	62.0	6.6
PE	1,420	1,148	1,122	26.6	33.6	59.5	6.9
NL	<b>5,305</b>	<b>4,225</b>	<b>3,530</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>58.2</b>	<b>10.6</b>
CA	642,257	485,041	434,281	42.9	33.1	58.9	8.0

Source(s): Food Banks CA (2023). HungerCount 2023: When is it Enough?; Food Banks CA. (2022). HungerCount 2022: From a Storm to a Hurricane; Food Banks CA. (2021). HungerCount 2021: A Tale of Two Trends; <https://hungercount.foodbankscanada.ca/>



Source(s): Food Banks CA (2023). HungerCount 2023: When is it Enough?; Food Banks CA. (2022). HungerCount 2022: From a Storm to a Hurricane; Food Banks CA. (2021). HungerCount 2021: A Tale of Two Trends; <https://hungercount.foodbankscanada.ca/>

**Figure 3. NL Food Bank User Statistics: Age Categories Served as a Percentage of Total, by Age Group, Mar 2023**

- NL had a 50% increase in food bank usage by children (<18 years old) from Mar 2021 to Mar 2023 – the fifth highest increase among the Canadian provinces.
- In Mar 2023, approximately 1 in 3 food bank clients in NL were children (31.2%).
- In Mar 2023, 8.8% of food bank clients in NL were aged five years and under.

## Conclusions

1. In NL, approximately 1 in 3–4 children live in food-insecure households.
2. From 2019 to 2022, the percentage of children living in moderately or severely food-insecure households in NL increased by nearly 20%.
3. In 2022, there were approximately 24,000 children under 18 years of age living in food-insecure households in NL – up from approximately 22,000 in 2021.
4. Over a 2-year period (2021 to 2023), food bank usage by children (<18 years) increased by 50% in NL.
5. Approximately 1 in 3 food bank clients in NL are <18 years of age and 1 in 11 are ≤5 years of age.