

Food Banks Canada Inaugural Poverty Report Cards: How Did Newfoundland and Labrador Fare?

Objective

To compare Newfoundland and Labrador's (NL) Poverty Report Card with those of other Canadian provinces.

Practice Points

- Poverty is defined as a condition in which individuals are deprived of the resources, means, choices, and power necessary to acquire and maintain a basic level of living standards and to facilitate integration and participation in society. It can lead to poor physical, emotional, and behavioural health.
- On 21 Aug 2018, the Government of Canada (CA) released Opportunity for All – CA's First Poverty Reduction Strategy with a vision of reducing and eradicating poverty in CA.
- In September 2023, Food Banks Canada released its inaugural Comprehensive Poverty Report and corresponding Poverty Report Cards to determine how well poverty reduction efforts are going in the provincial, territorial, and federal governments. Provinces are graded (from A to F) based on how they compare with each other on experiences of poverty, measurements of poverty, a standard of living, and government progress on passing anti-poverty legislation.

Methods

- Grades for each section and indicator were obtained from the Food Banks Canada report and comparisons were made between NL and CA.
- Grades for each section were also compared by province.

Results

Table 1. Poverty Report Card Grades by Section for NL and CA

Section & Indicators	NL		CA	
	Data	Grade	Data	Grade
Section 1: Experience of Poverty				
People feeling worse off compared to last year	42.6%	C-	42.6%	C-
People paying more than 30% of income on housing	30.9%	B-	36.4%	D+
People having trouble accessing health care	14.0%	C-	18.9%	D
Government support recipients who say rates are insufficient to keep up with cost of living	55.1%	F	45.9%	D
Percent of income spent on fixed costs beyond housing ¹	63.9%	F	56.3%	C-
Section 2: Poverty Measures				
Poverty rate (Market Basket Measure (MBM))	8.1%	D-	7.4%	D+
Social assistance as a percent of the poverty line (singles)	46%	D	-	-
Disability assistance as a percent of the poverty line	77%	B	-	-
Unemployment rate	10.3% ²	F	5.0%	D+
Food insecurity rate	22.5% ²	F	18.4%	C
Section 3: Material Deprivation				
Severely inadequate standard of living	11.3%	D+	12.3%	D+
Inadequate standard of living	31.2%	F	29.1%	D-
Section 4: Legislative Progress				
Legislative progress	N/A	F	N/A	D

¹These fixed costs include things such as groceries, utilities, internet, and transport.

²This is the highest rate among the provinces.

Source: Food Banks Canada. (2023). 2023 Poverty Report Cards. <https://foodbankscanada.ca/poverty-index/>

Table 2: Poverty Report Card Grades by Section and Province

Region	Overall Grade	Section 1 Grade: Experience Poverty	Section 2 Grade: Poverty Measures	Section 3 Grade: Material Deprivation	Section 4 Grade: Legislative Progress
NL	D-	D+	D-	D-	F
PE	C-	C-	D	A-	D
NS	F	D	F	F	F
NB	D-	D-	D-	F	D
QC	B-	C	B+	D+	F
ON	D-	D	D	D-	C
MB	C-	C-	D-	C	C
SK	D	D-	D-	C-	D
AB	D	D	D	D-	C
BC	D+	D-	D+	D+	C
CA	D+	D+	C-	D	D

Source: Food Banks Canada. (2023). 2023 Poverty Report Cards. <https://foodbankscanada.ca/poverty-index/>

- NL received an F on 6 of 13 indicators listed in the report card.
- Compared to CA, NL received a higher grade for two indicators:
 - NL had a lower percentage of people paying more than 30% of income on housing.
 - NL had a lower percentage of people who had trouble accessing health care.
- NL received an overall grade of D- (tied for second worst with NB and ON).

Conclusions

1. NL received a failing grade for the following indicators:
 - ◇ sufficiency of government support
 - ◇ percentage of income spent on fixed costs besides housing
 - ◇ unemployment rate (NL has the highest rate among the provinces)
 - ◇ food insecurity rate (NL has the highest rate among the provinces)
 - ◇ inadequate standard of living
 - ◇ legislative progress (due to lack of actions taken by the provincial government)