

A Look at Poverty, Food Insecurity and Financial Well-Being by Sex/Gender in Newfoundland and Labrador

Objective

To examine the impact of sex/gender on poverty, food insecurity and financial well-being in Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) compared to other Canadian provinces.

Practice Points

1. Poverty leads to poor physical, emotional, and behavioural health. In Canada, the Market Basket Measure (MBM) is the official measure of poverty.
2. The MBM is based on the cost of a specific basket of goods and services (including food, clothing, shelter, transportation and other necessities) representing a modest, basic standard of living.
3. The Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure (NLMBM) is produced by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA) and has the same definition and similar methodology as the MBM but it uses income tax data, rather than survey data, to determine if households or families are in low income. The MBM and NLMBM values for the province differ slightly for each year because of this distinction.
4. 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 health problem. It can have serious implications for people's health and well-being beyond just poor nutrition and diet.
5. Financial well-being is based on a household's own assessment of its ability to meet its financial needs in terms of transportation, housing, food, clothing, and other necessary expenses. Being unable to meet financial needs can impact a person's mental and physical health and also their relationships with others.
6. Quality of Care NL acknowledges that gender expression exists on a spectrum and not as a binary. Due to limited data availability on gender as well as privacy concerns, this sex/gender-based analysis is limited to male/female or men/women. Please note, the use of the terms sex, gender, male/female and men/women in this analysis correspond with the original data sources.

Methods

1. Data on low income prevalence was obtained from Statistics Canada and from the NLSA (Community Accounts; Department of Finance).
2. Low income prevalence (based on the MBM) was compared over time for NL and Canada by sex (2015-2022) and between provinces by sex (2022).
3. Low income prevalence and extreme low income prevalence (based on the NLMBM) was compared for males and females in NL (2014-2021).
4. Data on food insecurity was obtained from Statistics Canada and compared over time in NL and Canada by sex (2019-2023) and between provinces by sex (2023).
5. Data on financial well-being was obtained from Statistics Canada. Financial well-being was categorized into very difficult or difficult to meet financial needs, neither difficult nor easy to meet financial needs and easy or very easy to meet financial needs. Financial well-being was compared over time for NL and Canada by gender (Q3 2021-Q3 2023) and between provinces by gender (Q3 2023).

Results

Market Basket Measure

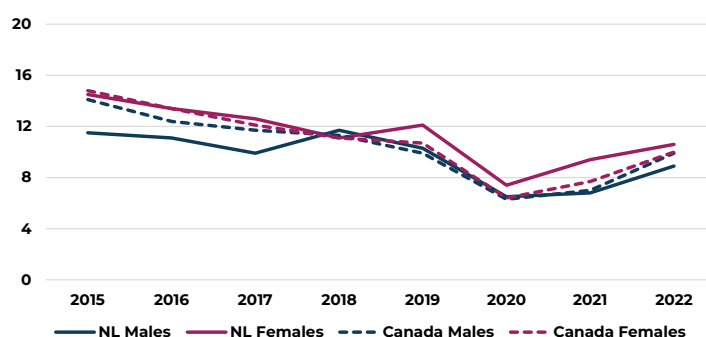


Figure 1. MBM – Low Income Prevalence for All Persons in NL and Canada by Sex (%), 2015-2022

- Overall, from 2015 to 2020, low income prevalence decreased for both males and females in NL and Canada. Since 2020, low income prevalence has increased for all groups.

- From 2015 to 2022, low income prevalence was higher for females compared to males in both NL and Canada (except for 2018). The gap in low income prevalence between males and females was larger in NL compared to Canada.

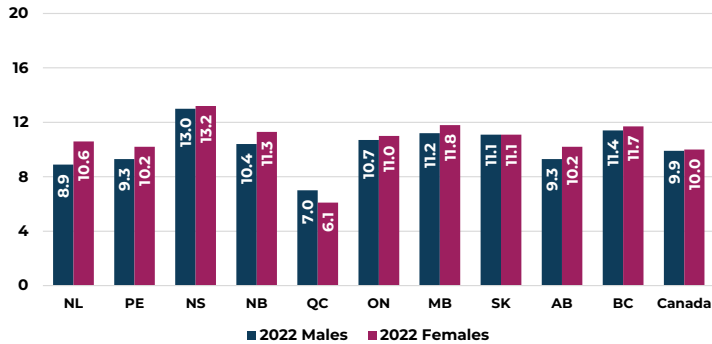


Figure 2. MBM – Low Income Prevalence for All Persons by Province and Sex, 2022

- In 2022, males in NL ranked second among the Canadian provinces for low income prevalence and females in NL ranked fourth (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 11-10-0135-02 Percentage of persons in low income by sex; Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2015-2022.

Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure

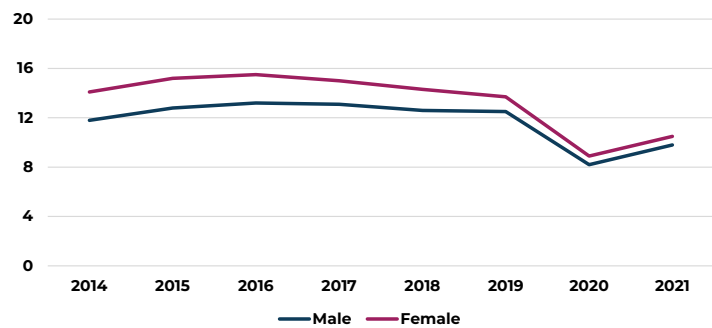


Figure 3. NLMBM – Low Income Prevalence for All Persons in NL by Sex (%), 2014-2021

- From 2016 to 2020, low income prevalence decreased for both males and females in NL but increased for both since 2020.

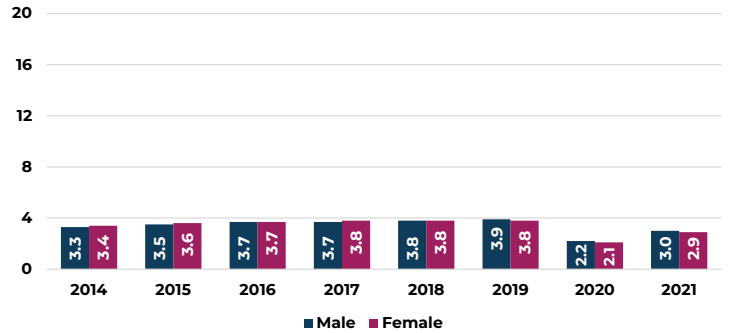


Figure 4. NLMBM – Extreme Low Income Prevalence for All Persons in NL by Sex (%), 2014-2021

- Extreme low income prevalence has remained fairly consistent for both males and females with the exception of a small decrease in 2020.
- While low income prevalence has been higher for females compared to males in NL, the proportion of extreme low income has been similar for both groups.

Source: Newfoundland and Labrador Market Basket Measure of Low Income. Statistics provided by Income Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, based on methodology developed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Statistics Agency (NLSA), 2014 to 2021 (see <https://www.communityaccounts.ca>).

Food Insecurity

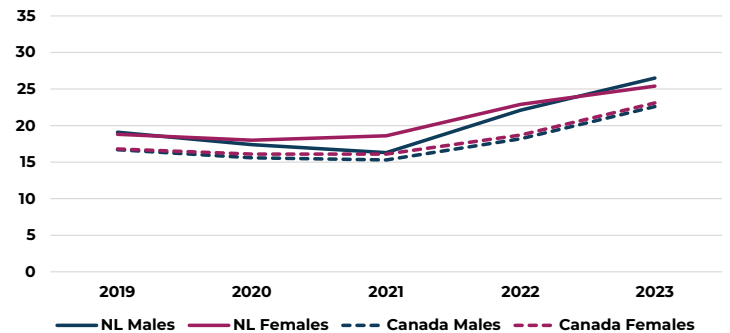


Figure 5. Percentage of People Living in Food-Insecure Households in NL and Canada by Sex, 2019-2023

- Overall, food insecurity rates have increased from 2019 to 2023 for males and females in NL and across Canada.

- From 2019 to 2023, food insecurity rates in NL increased by 39% for males and 35% for females (the Canadian rates were 35% and 38%, respectively).
- The prevalence of males and females living in food-insecure households is higher in NL compared to males and females across Canada.
- In 2023, the proportion of individuals living in food-insecure households was 17% higher for males in NL compared to males in Canada and 10% higher for females in NL compared to females in Canada.

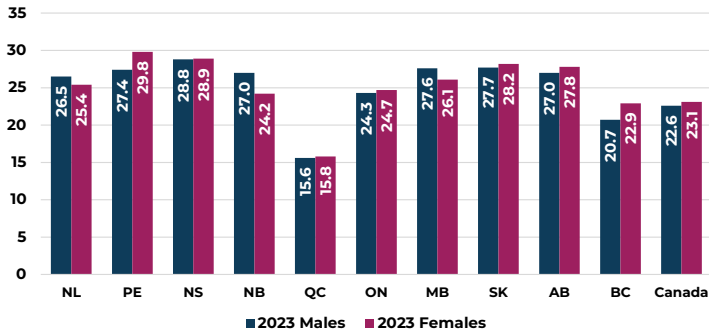
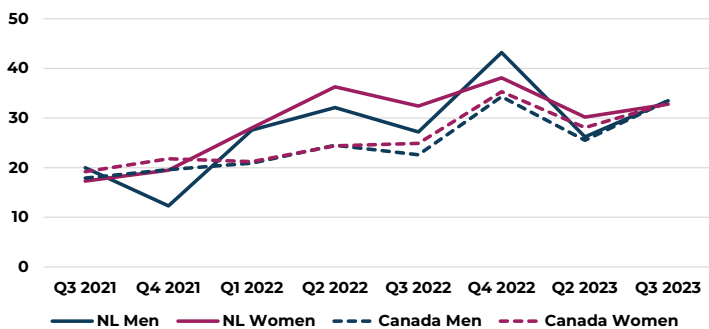


Figure 6. Percentage of People Living in Food-Insecure Households by Province and Sex, 2023

- In 2023, males in NL ranked fourth among the Canadian provinces for the proportion of individuals living in food-insecure households and females ranked fifth (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 13-10-0385-01 Food Insecurity by Selected Demographic Characteristics; Canadian Income Survey (CIS), 2019 to 2023.

Financial Well-Being



*Data not available for Q1 2023

Figure 7. Financial Well-Being (Very Difficult or Difficult to Meet Financial Needs) for those Aged ≥ 15 years in NL and Canada by Gender (%), Q3 2021 to Q3 2023

- Overall, from Q3 2021 to Q3 2023, the proportion of men and women living in a household that reported facing financial difficulty increased in both NL and across Canada.
- In NL, financial hardship increased by 68% for men and 90% for females from Q3 2021 to Q3 2023 (corresponding percentages for Canada were 87% for men and 72% for women).
- From Q1 2022 to Q4 2022, men and women in NL were at higher risk of living in a household that reported facing financial difficulty when compared to men and women across Canada. From Q2 2023 onwards, rates for men and women in NL were similar to rates for men and women across Canada.

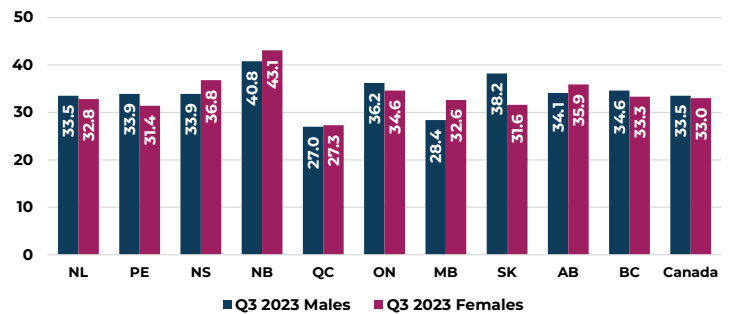


Figure 8. Financial Well-Being (Very Difficult or Difficult to Meet Financial Needs) for those Aged ≥ 15 years by Province and Gender (%), Q3 2023

- In Q3 2023, men in NL ranked third among the Canadian provinces for the proportion of men living in a household that reported facing financial difficulty. Women in NL ranked fifth (1=best and 10=worst).

Source: Statistics Canada. Table 45-10-0086-01 Difficulty meeting financial needs, by gender and province; Canadian Social Survey (CSS), Q3 2021 to Q3 2023.

Conclusions

1. In NL, low income prevalence was higher for females compared to males. Extreme low income prevalence was similar for both groups.
2. In 2022, approximately one in nine females in NL were living in poverty and one in 11 males in NL were living in poverty.
3. Males and females in NL are more likely to live in food-insecure households compared to males and females across Canada.
4. Men and women in both NL and across Canada are finding it increasingly difficult to meet their financial needs. In Q3 2023, rates were similar for all groups (NL men, NL women, Canada men, and Canada women) with approximately one in three persons reporting they were living in a household facing financial difficulty.