



community food centres
CANADA good food is just the beginning

FEDERAL
ELECTION 2021

Food insecurity in Canada backgrounder

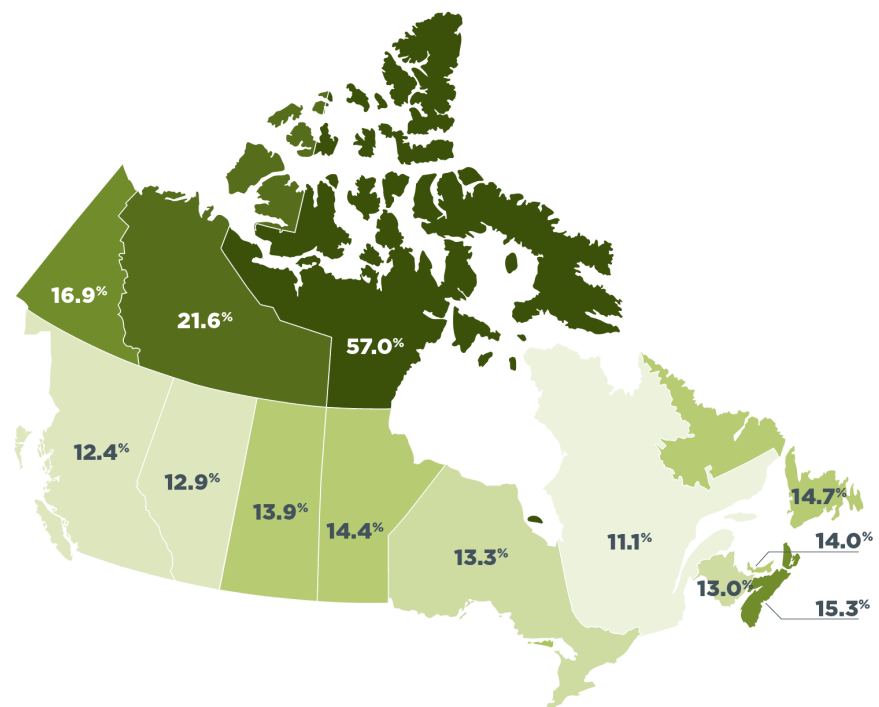
Even before COVID, 4.4 million Canadians experienced food insecurity, meaning they lacked the money to put good food on the table for themselves and their families. The economic impacts of the pandemic increased food insecurity by 39%, affecting 1 in 7 people in Canada.

Food insecurity doesn't affect everyone equally. Racialized and Indigenous Canadians have much higher rates of food insecurity than non-racialized people.

Food insecurity affects:

- 76% of Inuit people over the age of 15
- 48% of First Nations people
- 28.9% of Black people
- 11.1% of white people

Food insecurity rates also vary widely across the country. For example, 57% of people in Nunavut experience food insecurity, compared to the national average of 12.7%.





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Community Food Centres Canada's [Beyond Hunger](#) report shows that food insecurity affects all aspects of people's lives. The nearly 600 people living with food insecurity we surveyed for this report told us that:

- **Food insecurity makes people sick.** 81% of people we surveyed noted that food insecurity has negatively impacted their physical health, and 79% noted it negatively impacted their mental health. Research confirms that healthcare costs are more than twice as high for people who are severely food insecure.
- **Food insecurity leads to social isolation.** 58% of respondents told us that food insecurity led them to be socially isolated. Research confirms that people living on low incomes are six times more likely to be socially isolated.
- **Food insecurity breaks down relationships with loved ones and leaves a lasting mark on children's health and well-being.** 64% of the people we surveyed said their connections with loved ones had been affected by lack of access to food. 59% of respondents with children felt it had negatively affected their kids. Studies have shown that food insecurity leaves children with mental-health issues that can last a lifetime.
- **Food insecurity impedes cultural participation.** 46% of the people we surveyed said food insecurity limited their ability to express, share, or celebrate their culture
- **Food insecurity hinders people's ability to find and keep a job, or find meaning and purpose in life.** 57% of the people we surveyed said that finding and maintaining paid work was more difficult because of food insecurity, and 53% said it made it harder to move their lives forward.

Food is the first basic need that people will cut. 36% of Beyond Hunger respondents said they would cut food before other basic expenses like transportation, medicine, utilities, or housing.



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The real issue

Food is not the solution to food insecurity. Income is.

Only one in 5 food-insecure Canadians uses a food bank, and research shows food banks are not an adequate solution to food insecurity.

Canadian research has shown that increasing incomes does reduce food insecurity. For example, the Canada Child Benefit reduced severe food insecurity in families with children by 30%.

What can the federal government do?

More than any other level of government, the federal government has the money to increase incomes and make life more affordable for people across Canada. It's a matter of political will.

During this federal election, Community Food Centres Canada is calling on candidates from every political party to make a commitment to:

- **Set a target to reduce food insecurity.**
- **Invest in income policies** that will help Canadians put food on the table. This includes putting more money in the pockets of people with disabilities and single adults and improvements to Employment Insurance.
- **Invest in social programs** that make life more affordable for low-income Canadians, such as affordable housing, child care, and pharmacare.
- **Ensure poverty and food-security policies are equitable** and benefit the populations most affected by food insecurity, including Indigenous and Black people.