



Environmental Justice and Food Security

Food insecurity is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial or physical constraints. It is a key determinant of overall health. The impacts of climate change are reverberating down the food system and supply chains, and exacerbating the food insecurity crisis. Under-resourced communities are the first and hardest hit.

Climate Change Threats

- **Wildfires:** More frequent and more intense fires cause destruction of crops, livestock and harvested food sources.
- **Floods and Intense Rain:** Contributes to soil erosion and stresses food transport routes. Increased risk of contaminated run-off to drinking water and irrigation sources.
- **Extreme Temperatures:** Increased heat risk to outdoor agricultural workers. Elevated range and distribution of weeds, pests, parasites and fungi that thrive under warmer temperatures and increased CO2 levels.
- **Snow, Ice and Permafrost:** Shorter ice cover season and reduced ice thickness affects the reliability of traditional ice-based hunting routes and the safety of ice-based travel for northern communities.

Under-resourced communities experience:

- Higher incidence of food deserts in urban communities: areas where fast-food chains, convenience stores and liquor stores outnumber fresh-food vendors.
- Reduced access to nutritious food in rural and remote communities due to the effects of pollution and climate change on locally-sourced food supplies and food transport routes.
- Decreasing ability for Indigenous communities to rely on traditional and culturally significant food systems.
- Higher siting of "sacrifice zones", where local water and locally grown food is unsafe for consumption.
- Unequal access to critical mitigation programs designed to address the worst effects of climate change on the food system.

Reports



[World Health Organization - UN Food Summit](#)

Globally, food systems are responsible for 30% of Greenhouse gas emissions, 80% of deforestation, 70% of freshwater use, and the single greatest cause of terrestrial biodiversity loss and land degradation. Despite having sufficient food to feed 10 billion people with over 30% of food lost or wasted each year, many cannot afford healthy diets.



[Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada](#)

Climate change related events such as wildfires, floods and intense storms are anticipated to continue to intensify into the future and will exacerbate current issues facing Canada's agriculture and food systems.



[IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land](#)

Observed climate change is already affecting food security through increasing temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, and greater frequency of some extreme events. Climate extremes have immediate and long-term impacts on livelihoods of poor and vulnerable communities, contributing to greater risks of food insecurity.



[United Nations Food Insecurity Report](#)

Projections now show the world is **not** on track to achieve sustainable development goals by 2030 and most indicators are also not on track to meet global nutrition targets. The food security and nutritional status of the most vulnerable population groups is likely to deteriorate further due to the health and socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Food Insecurity by the Numbers

Food Insecurity by Demographics

Statistics Canada - Table 13-10-0835-01

Tracks percentage of persons experiencing food insecurity by characteristics such as age, sex, visible minority and Indigenous identification.

Geography	Canada ³ (map)			
Household food security status	Food insecure ⁴		Food insecure, moderate or severe	
Statistics	Percentage of persons		Percentage of persons	
Demographic characteristics	2020	2021	2020	2021
	Percent			
All persons	15.7 ^B	18.4 ^A	11.2 ^B	12.9 ^B
Persons under 18 years	19.6 ^B	24.3 ^B	13.6 ^B	16.8 ^C
Persons 18 to 24 years	18.0 ^C	19.8 ^C	13.7 ^C	13.6 ^C
Persons 25 to 34 years	17.3 ^B	19.9 ^B	12.9 ^C	14.8 ^C
Persons 35 to 44 years	18.3 ^B	21.2 ^B	12.7 ^C	14.8 ^C
Persons 45 to 54 years	16.4 ^B	19.1 ^B	11.9 ^C	13.7 ^C
Persons 55 to 64 years	13.4 ^B	15.4 ^B	9.5 ^C	11.0 ^C
Persons 65 years and over	8.7 ^B	10.3 ^B	5.7 ^C	6.3 ^C
Males	15.3 ^B	18.2 ^B	10.8 ^B	12.7 ^B
Females	16.1 ^B	18.7 ^B	11.5 ^B	13.1 ^B
Visible minority population ⁵	20.7 ^C	24.5 ^B	14.6 ^C	16.8 ^C
Indigenous population aged 16 years and over ⁶	27.9 ^C	30.9 ^C	21.9 ^C	24.1 ^C
Recent immigrants (10 years or less) aged 16 years and over ⁷	24.3 ^C	26.2 ^C	17.8 ^D	16.8 ^D

Symbol legend:

- A data quality: excellent
- B data quality: very good
- C data quality: good
- D data quality: acceptable

"Poverty, social exclusion and discrimination often undermine people's access to food, not only in developing countries but also in some of the most economically developed countries where there is an abundance of food" - **United Nations, OHCHR, *The Right to Adequate Food***

"Emerging food justice and food sovereignty issues thus include the imperatives of climate change and its effects on agricultural production and food security, with the expectation that those global citizens who are already materially worse off, will experience the most ravaging effects and negative impacts on food security and agricultural livelihoods" - **Kristin Reynolds, *Food, agriculture, and environmental justice***

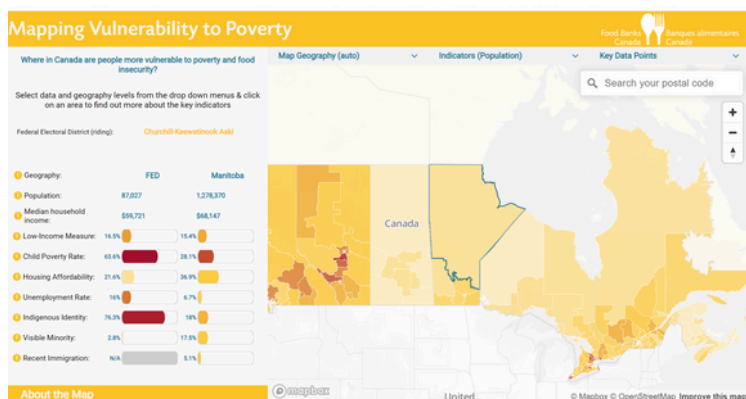




Mapping Food Insecurity in Canada

Food Banks Canada: Mapping Vulnerability to Poverty and Food Insecurity

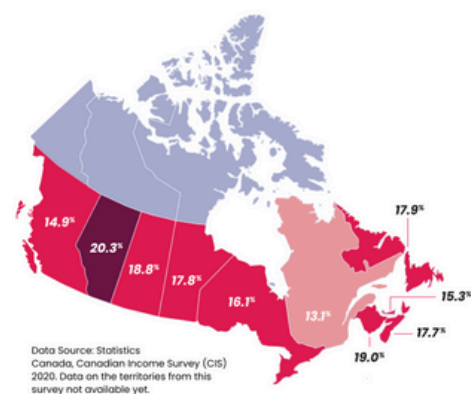
<https://map.foodbankscanada.ca>



Food Insecurity Across the Provinces

Map of prevalence of households food insecurity by province, 2021

Prevalence of Household Food Insecurity by Province, 2021



From *Household Food Insecurity in Canada, 2021* by Tarasuk, Li, & Fafard St-Germain, 2022.

Map courtesy of PROOF: 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).

