

# Household Food Insecurity in Canada

# 2022



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**PROOF** | FOOD INSECURITY  
POLICY RESEARCH



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## About this report

PROOF is a research program at the University of Toronto, launched in 2011 with funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to identify effective policy interventions to address household food insecurity. Learn more: <https://proof.utoronto.ca/>

*Household Food Insecurity in Canada 2022* is PROOF's seventh report on the state of household food insecurity, using data collected by Statistics Canada.

Building on the extensive work of Health Canada and Statistics Canada, PROOF started this series in 2013 to improve the accessibility of food insecurity statistics and to provide a tool for describing the problem, monitoring trends, and identifying priorities for interventions.

With the inclusion of food insecurity as a key indicator on Canada's Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2018, food insecurity is now monitored annually across Canada through Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey (CIS) and reported on the Official Poverty Dashboard.

Statistics Canada released food insecurity statistics based on the same data in May 2023. This report differs from their reporting by focusing primarily on household-level rather than individual-level statistics. It provides an in-depth exploration of food insecurity with additional descriptions and analyses of sociodemographic and economic characteristics and year-to-year change.

## Acknowledgements

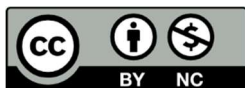
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# Executive Summary

**Drawing on data for 55,000 households from Statistics Canada's Canadian Income Survey (CIS) conducted in 2022, we found that from 2021 to 2022, the prevalence of household food insecurity in the ten provinces rose from 15.9% to 17.8%.** In 2022, 2.7 million households, or 6.9 million people, including almost 1.8 million children under the age of 18, lived in households who experienced some level of food insecurity in the previous 12 months.

**Almost 1 in 5 households were food-insecure in 2022.**



This increase follows three years of relatively stable levels of household food insecurity from 2019 to 2021 and brings the prevalence to the highest recorded in Canada's 17-year history of monitoring. These estimates do not even include people living in the territories or on First Nations reserves, who are known to experience high vulnerability to food insecurity.

The increase amounts to 312,000 more food-insecure households in 2022 than in 2021, most of whom are households with children under 18, homeowners with mortgages, and households in Ontario.

The prevalence of household food insecurity in Canada matters because food insecurity is such a potent social determinant of health. People living in food-insecure households are much more likely than others to suffer from chronic physical and mental health problems and infectious and non-communicable diseases. They also have greater needs for health care services, higher rates of hospitalization, and elevated risk of dying prematurely.

**Household food insecurity is a marker of material deprivation, tightly linked to low income, limited assets, debt, and other indicators of social and economic disadvantage.**

We continue to see the same patterns of vulnerability to food insecurity as in previous reports; low-income households, renters (and to a lesser extent homeowners with mortgages), households led by female lone parents, and households reliant on social assistance or Employment Insurance in the prior year are most likely to be food insecure. However, over half (60.2%) of food-insecure households were reliant on employment incomes.

Household food insecurity is racialized. Over a third (39.2%) of Black people, a third (33.4%) of off-reserve Indigenous Peoples, and over a quarter (29.2%) of Filipino people in the ten provinces were living in food-insecure households in 2022, compared to 15.3% of white people.

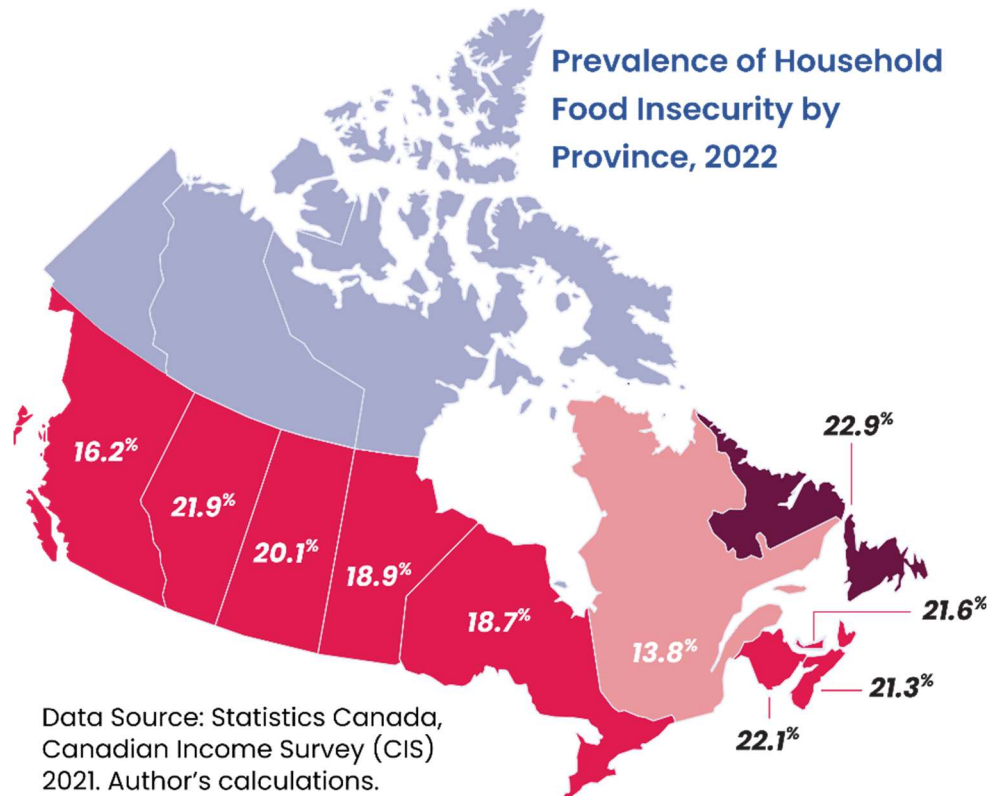
**70% of household relying on social assistance in the prior year were food-insecure.**

**47% of households relying on Employment Insurance in the prior year were food-insecure.**

**28% of renter households were food-insecure.**

**41% of female lone-parent led households were food-insecure.**

**The prevalence of food insecurity differs markedly across the provinces, ranging from 13.8% in Quebec to 22.9% in Newfoundland and Labrador.**



The high prevalence of household food insecurity across Canada and the patterns of vulnerability documented in this report continue to highlight the need for more effective, evidence-based policy responses by federal and provincial governments.

In order for policies to have meaningful impact on reducing food insecurity, they must address the root cause: the inadequacy of household resources to meet basic needs or to endure shocks to household budgets, like a sudden loss of income or rise in costs of living.

In addition to addressing the vulnerability associated with relying on social assistance and Employment Insurance, there is also a need to improve the quality and stability of employment and the efficacy of income supports for vulnerable workers because most food-insecure households rely on employment incomes.

**Food insecurity has been a longstanding problem in Canada, and it has now gotten worse. More action to reconcile wages, social assistance, and other income supports with the actual costs of living is needed to meaningfully address household food insecurity.**