

United Way Maritimes Impact Area



**Food
Security**

What is Food Security?

Food security occurs when people have barrier-free access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security is an experience unique to each person that may be influenced by various factors.

Food insecurity occurs when people are not able to access food due to shortages, physical barriers, unaffordability, or because the available food compromises people's dignity, self-respect, human rights, or cultural practices.

The **root causes** of food insecurity are directly linked to income. However, it's not just poverty that causes food insecurity – systemic racism, high food costs, lack of access to familiar cultural foods and lack of social network or language barriers also contribute. There are also many systemic factors that contribute to food insecurity.

Who experiences food insecurity?

In 2023, 25.5% of Canadians lived in food secure households, representing approximately 10 million people.

34% of low-income households in Canada experience food insecurity. It especially impacts households where social assistance is the primary source of income, those who are unemployed, people in lone-parent families, and children and youth.

Indigenous households, both on and off-reserve, experience food insecurity at much higher rates than the rest of the population. Racialized people also experience higher rates, especially those who are Black. This indicates that systemic issues are at play, influencing opportunities to access affordable, appropriate, safe and sufficient food.



United Way
Maritimes

Serving Central &
Southwestern NB,
PEI & Mainland NS



Local Statistics

New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Prince Edward Island
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 29.5% of households were food insecure in 2023• 8.2% of households were severely food insecure• 39.9% of children lived in food insecure households in 2023• Between 2023 and 2024, food bank use increased by 7.8%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 29.3% of households were food insecure in 2023• 8.4% of households were severely food insecure• 38% of children lived in food insecure households in 2023• Between 2023 and 2024, food bank use increased by 21.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 24.6% of households were food insecure in 2023• 8% of households were severely food insecure• 31.2% of children lived in food insecure households in 2023• Between 2023 and 2024, food bank use increased by 29%

United Way Maritimes Impact

United Way Maritimes will address food insecurity through community investments, capacity building, delivery of programs, and thought leadership activities to achieve the following outcomes:

- Increased access to food and other essentials to fulfill immediate needs.
- Increased ability to navigate/withstand changes to food access and affordability.
- Increased access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food and essentials across our region.

What might this look like?

Immediate Needs	Intervention & Prevention	Addressing Root Causes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emergency food or gift cards• Meal delivery programs• Before & after school programs• Low-cost community food markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community gardens & kitchens providing access to fresh, culturally appropriate and affordable food• Food skills & literacy programs• Programs teaching Indigenous food systems traditional land stewardship practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advocacy for policy interventions that improve the incomes of low-income households• Anti-racism & DEI work• Supporting increased collaboration efforts across the sector

Sources for this document can be found at www.unitedwayhalifax.ca/impact-area-sources/