
To answer whether Nova Scotians can eat a basic nutritious diet, we find out the monthly costs of the National Nutritious Food Basket (NNFB) by using participatory food costing.

The NNFB is a basket containing 67 food items that are minimally processed, easily found in grocery stores, and are eaten by most Canadians in amounts that make up a balanced diet.

We compared the cost of the NNFB and other basic expenses to incomes of various households through what we call "affordability scenarios". This is the seventh cycle of participatory food costing in Nova Scotia since 2002.

Nova Scotia has consistently had the highest rate of food insecurity of all Canadian provinces, reaching a peak in 2013 with at least 18.4% of Nova Scotians experiencing food insecurity.

Many households relying on minimum wage earnings or Income Assistance would face a potential deficit if they were to purchase a nutritious diet after meeting other basic needs.

Between 2002 and 2015 the monthly cost of a basic nutritious diet has increased by 63% for the reference household of four.

The food budget is the most flexible... the result is nutrition and health are being compromised in many Nova Scotian households.

Find the full report: http://foodarc.ca/projects/voices-for-food-security/resources-and-publications/
1. ADEQUATE INCOME
Current Income Assistance rates are inadequate.

The current minimum wage is not high enough to allow working households with children to purchase a nutritious diet.

A living wage and Guaranteed Income Supplement would protect low-income households from risk of food insecurity.

- Increase Income Assistance (IA) rates to a level that would allow all households to meet their basic needs.

- Establish complementary, integrated social policies such as publicly available childcare and affordable housing.

- Reduce the rate at which employment income is deducted from IA amounts for those who are working while receiving IA.

- Increase incentives for local businesses to employ Nova Scotians in full-time positions and offer benefits.

- Further investigate the feasibility and impact of implementing a living wage across Nova Scotia.

- Pilot and evaluate the impact of a guaranteed annual income in NS.

2. AFFORDABLE AND SUBSIDIZED HOUSING
Affordable and subsidized housing is necessary to ensure that low-income households can meet their basic nutritional needs.

- Increase the number of adequate, affordable, and safe housing units to reflect the number of household living below the low-income cut-off.

3. AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE
Childcare costs place low-income households raising young children at risk for food insecurity and compromised nutrition.

- Examine the efficacy of the provincial childcare subsidy.

- Increase the federal CCB beyond the current amount.

4. AFFORDABLE TRANSPORTATION
For low-income households, a lack of affordable transportation can contribute to household food insecurity.

- Invest in affordable and accessible community-appropriate public transit.

- Increase Income Assistance transportation allowances.

5. SUPPORTS FOR PEOPLE WITH UNIQUE COSTS
44% of people who rely on Income Assistance have a disability. People with disabilities and others with unique costs such as special diets are at a higher risk of food insecurity due to their additional essential costs of living.

- Ensure adequate supports for Nova Scotians with disabilities who work and who do not work.