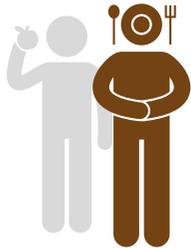


FACT SHEET #10

RACIALIZED POVERTY IN FOOD & WATER SECURITY

How are racialized people disadvantaged in food and water security?



Ontario is worst off in Canada- as of 2011, the highest levels of food insecurity in Canada were reported for Toronto (10.1%) and North Ontario (9.7%).

- **Social Assistance:** As of 2011, 70% of households in Ontario whose major source of income was social assistance were food insecure.
- **Income:** 20.2% of households living below the low-income cut off in Ottawa report being moderately to severely food insecure, compared to 3.5% of those above the LICO.
- **School:** Household food insecurity affects one in six Canadian children under 18, but unlike the US and many other industrialized nations, Canada does not have a national school food program.
- **Recent Immigration:** In 2011–2012, almost 1.1 million Canadian households experienced food insecurity; it was higher among recent immigrants (19.6%) who are predominantly people of colour, compared to non-recent immigrants (11.8%) and the Canadian-born population (12.4%).
- **Social/Structural Determinants:** Three main correlates of food insecurity were found for Latin American immigrants in Toronto: social assistance as the main income, use of food banks, and limited literacy in English.
- **Culturally Appropriate:** Indigenous peoples and people of colour typically find they cannot access culturally safe and relevant foods that are more suited to their health and well-being in public institutions and food security programs. They are seen as a luxury rather than a necessity.

- **Immigrants:** Immigrants in Canada are two times more likely to be food insecure and tend to suffer declining health after they arrive.

AN INDIGENOUS FOCUS

- Between 2004 and 2014, two-thirds of First Nations peoples in Canada lived under at least one water advisory (a public health notice that the water is contaminated).

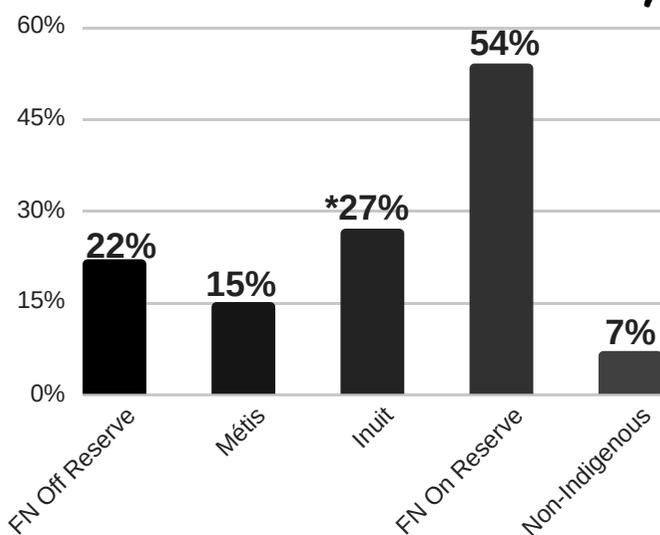
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In Ontario, 46 long-term drinking water advisories were in place in 25 Indigenous communities as of 2018.

- 90% of the population of Grassy Narrows and Wabaseemoong First Nations showed signs of exposure to mercury from the Wabigoon-English River system.
- Indigenous households experience higher likelihood of food insecurity. 5.1% of Indigenous households experience marginal food insecurity, 14.8% experience moderate food insecurity and 8.3% experience severe food insecurity.
- 20% of Indigenous adults in Toronto living in a household with at least one child indicated often not having enough to eat
- In 2011, an estimated 29% of Indigenous People aged 18 or older lived in food-insecure households.
- Access to and consumption of traditional foods are important methods for alleviating food insecurity and improving health among Indigenous Peoples. 74% of Indigenous adults in Toronto would prefer eating more traditional or country food than what they currently eat.



Percentage of households in Canada with moderate to severe food insecurity (2007-2010), as per 2013 and 2015 reports



*Other surveys suggest that rates of food insecurity in Inuit households may be even higher, reaching over 62%.

Quick Notes

- When we refer to peoples of colour we speak of Canadians of non-European background or heritage - both people of colour who are Canadian-born as well as those who are born elsewhere.
- When we refer to Indigenous Peoples, we speak of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis persons.
- In Toronto, 62% of all persons living in poverty are from racialized groups.
- 52% of Canada's racialized people living in poverty reside in Ontario.
- Households that fall below Canada's low income cut-off (LICO) or low income measure (LIM), spend a much larger percent of their income on basic necessities like food and shelter than the average family; this is how we measure poverty.
- Systemic racism is often caused by hidden institutional biases in policies, practices and processes that privilege or disadvantage certain groups of people. It can be the result of doing things the way they have always been done without considering how they affect particular groups differently.

Food security means that all people in society have access to food they can afford and that is: healthy and safe; enough for their families; from local stores (instead of food banks and shelters); grown in ways that are safe for the environment; culturally appropriate, familiar and suitable.

Water security can be defined as the ability to access sufficient quantities of clean water to maintain adequate standards of food and goods production, proper sanitation, and sustainable health and well-being.



WHAT'S BEING DONE?

Afri-Can Food Basket is a community-based, not-for-profit cooperative community development movement that is committed to meeting the nutrition, health and employment needs of members of the African Canadian community, in particular those who are economically and socially vulnerable.
[www.africanfoodbasket.com /](http://www.africanfoodbasket.com/)
info@africanfoodbasket.ca

Access Alliance works with food banks and advocates to increase newcomer access to food banks and to develop culturally appropriate service delivery models.
[www.accessalliance.ca /](http://www.accessalliance.ca/)
communications@accessalliance.ca

Foodshare suggests many policy changes and actions to promote food security such as setting basic minimum income standards and policies that promote equality in work, and making food a basic human right.
[www.foodshare.net /](http://www.foodshare.net/) info@foodshare.net