

# Differences in food insecurity among post-secondary students and non-students of similar age in Canada

Tim Li. "Differences in food insecurity among post-secondary students and non-students of similar age in Canada."  
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## Context

Food insecurity is defined as inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints. This study compares the risk of food insecurity among post-secondary students and similar-age young adults not attending school. This research comes at a time of frequent campus surveys reporting high rates of food insecurity among post-secondary students. However, this study offers a new perspective by using population-representative data instead, finding that non-students were more vulnerable to food insecurity than their student counterparts.

## Key finding(s) from the research

Young adults not attending post-secondary education are more likely to be food-insecure than their post-secondary counterparts, pointing to a need for policies that support the incomes of young, working-age adults more broadly.

**Population(s) studied:** 11,679 young adults aged 19–30 living in the 10 provinces

**Research dataset(s) used:** 2018 Canadian Income Survey

## Policy implications for this research

While food insecurity among post-secondary students has garnered considerable media attention, policymakers should focus on interventions that also reach young adults not in school, given the elevated risk of food insecurity that they and their families face. The persistence of food insecurity in Canada reflects the insufficiency and instability of incomes from employment and government support to ensure Canadians can make ends meet. Although more research is needed to identify effective policies to reduce food insecurity among young adults, studies have shown that higher child benefits, improvements to social assistance, and receiving Employment Insurance during periods of unemployment reduce food insecurity.

**Policy area(s) this research can inform:** Education, training and learning; Government; Health; Income, pensions, spending and wealth

## Read the full article

Wang, Y., St-Germain, A.-A. F., & Tarasuk, V. (2023). Prevalence and sociodemographic correlates of food insecurity among post-secondary students and non-students of similar age in Canada. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 954. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-15756-y>.