

The disadvantage in food insecurity faced by high-risk groups remained unchanged between 2005 and 2018

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Datasets used

Canadian Community Household Survey

Policy areas this research can inform

Children and youth

Families, households and marital status

Government

Income, pensions, spending and wealth

Population and demography

Context

Food insecurity involves uncertain or inadequate access to food due to financial constraints. This paper investigates whether the political prioritization of poverty reduction by Canada's higher-level governments since the early 2000s reduced food insecurity among high-risk households. The researchers compared the differences in food insecurity for high-risk groups based on household composition and main source of income over time, while controlling for other sociodemographic characteristics and local circumstances.

Key finding

The disadvantage in food insecurity faced by couples with children, single persons, and single parents (compared to couples without children) and by households relying on non-pension-related government transfers (compared to households relying on employment incomes) remained unchanged in Canada and its four largest provinces individually between 2005 and 2018.

Policy implications

The lack of change in food insecurity disadvantage, despite reduction in income poverty disadvantage among these high-risk groups documented in other studies, underscores the importance of using a comprehensive set of indicators to monitor progress on poverty reduction, including outcome-based measures of material well-being such as household food insecurity. Our findings suggest that more concerted efforts are needed to make meaningful progress for high-risk groups, requiring significantly larger and sustained investments at higher levels of government.

Read the full article here

Notten, G., Liu, L., & Tarasuk, V. (2025). Poverty reduction politics and food insecurity: Better for high-risk groups? *Canadian Public Policy*, 51(2), 150–164. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2024-028>

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