



# Nutritious Food Basket Survey Results

## Monitoring Local Food Affordability

The average monthly cost of eating well<sup>1</sup>

### SIMCOE

A family of four:  
**\$1,224.88**

Person living alone:  
**\$432.83**



Percentage of monthly income spent on food and rent

A family of four receiving  
Ontario Works  
**97%**



Individual receiving  
Ontario Works  
**170%**



A parent raising two children  
over age six receiving  
Ontario Works  
**93%**



Individual receiving  
Ontario Disability  
Support Program  
**99%**



### MUSKOKA

A family of four:  
**\$1,333.64**

Person living alone:  
**\$463.33**



Percentage of monthly income spent on food and rent

A family of four receiving  
Ontario Works  
**91%**



Individual receiving  
Ontario Works  
**137%**



A parent raising two children  
over age six receiving  
Ontario Works  
**86%**



Individual receiving  
Ontario Disability  
Support Program  
**79%**



Households and individuals receiving social assistance are unable to afford the cost of food, housing, and other basic necessities like transportation, phone and internet service, clothing, prescription medications, child care and school supplies. They are unable to afford a basic standard of living. Food access programs such as food banks, meal programs and community gardens are not the solution; more income is.

Learn more about the cost of food and other food/rent scenarios on our Economic Characteristics HealthSTATS dashboard: [smdhu.org/Health-Stats](http://smdhu.org/Health-Stats)



Year after year, the results show that it is very difficult for some individuals and families to afford rent and put nutritious food on the table. For many it is impossible.



When money is tight and bills are due, money for food often gets spent on other basic needs.

\* For the purpose of this infographic Simcoe refers to the County of Simcoe, including the Cities of Orillia and Barrie, and Muskoka refers to the District Municipality of Muskoka.



# Household Food Insecurity is a **Serious Public Health Issue**

**Household food insecurity** is the inadequate or insecure access to food due to lack of income. The number of households affected in Canada is at a new record high.

**The percentage of people affected in our area is worsening.**

**60,000** (26%)  
households in Simcoe Muskoka  
are experiencing food insecurity<sup>2</sup>



**1 in 3** (33%)  
children  
are living in food-insecure  
households in Ontario<sup>2</sup>



Household food insecurity is a **serious public health issue** that affects people's physical, social and mental health and overall well-being



Household food insecurity takes a toll on the **health of our communities** and the **health care system**



The **cause** of household food insecurity isn't the price of food – **it's lack of income**



**Individuals and families living on a low income are most affected. About half report having trouble affording food.**

**People living on a middle-income are also feeling the squeeze.**

In 2024, twice as many middle income households reported food insecurity compared with 2022 and 2023.

**Place matters:** Household food insecurity varies across communities in Simcoe Muskoka but is higher in large and medium sized urban areas when compared with smaller urban and rural areas.<sup>3</sup>

**Having a job does not guarantee food security.**

**In Ontario**, more than half of households that are food insecure rely on wages, salaries, or self-employment as their primary income source.<sup>4</sup>



**Learn, speak out and take action on income solutions so everyone can afford basic needs like food.**

## Provincial / Federal Solutions

- ☒ Improve existing social assistance programs
- ☒ Strengthen legislation that supports jobs with livable wages, regular hours and benefits
- ☒ Implement a national basic income
- ☒ Strengthen federal income support policies/programs (e.g., *Canada Child Care Benefit* and *Canada Disability Benefit*)

## Municipal Solutions

- ☒ Create municipal poverty reduction plans
- ☒ Support access to free income tax filing
- ☒ Become a certified living wage employer and encourage local businesses to do the same
- ☒ Implement policies and programs that make life more affordable (e.g., *subsidized transit and recreation programs*)

1. SMDHU, Nutritious Food Basket, 2025

2. Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). Household Food Insecurity Snapshot. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; 2025

3. SMDHU, Trends in Household Food Insecurity from a Local Survey, 2025

4. Household food insecurity in Canada, 2022. Toronto: Research to identify policy options to reduce food insecurity (PROOF). Retrieved from proof.utoronto.ca

