

Food Costs in Saint John, N.B.

-Calculating a Living Wage



The Living Wage framework is based on a family of four- two working adults and children ages 4 and 7.



A Living Wage Framework

The Human Development Council is in the process of calculating a Living Wage for Saint John. The first step is to determine local costs of living. This fact sheet is the first in a series to be released in lead up to a full Living Wage report. Keep an eye out for upcoming overviews of Childcare, Shelter, and Health Care costs in Saint John.

What is a Living Wage?

The hourly wage necessary to meet basic needs and stay out of poverty.



Determining Costs: Food

The Living Wage framework uses the Nutritious Food Basket as an approach to food costing. The basket determines the affordability of nutritious eating according to Canada's Food Guide, nothing more and nothing less (no treats!). The cost of a Nutritious Food Basket in NB was recently calculated at being \$782.17/month for our family of 4.



Food costs
\$782.17
per month for
our family of
four.



"Policies that encourage full employment may not mitigate poverty if the wages earned by the most vulnerable workers are insufficient to eliminate their susceptibility to food insecurity" - McIntyre et al

If policies are to adequately respond to food insecurity, they must see beyond a shortage of food in order to address the underlying shortage of income - McIntyre and Rondeau

Food Insecurity

is inadequate access to food due to financial constraint. It is a spectrum of lived experience ranging from stress, to constrained choice, to missed meals. **Food Bank use is a rough indicator of food insecurity**



Food bank use in NB rose 4.1% from 2015 to 2016⁴

This trend is reflected by SJ food banks which saw stable or increased use in 2016.



1 in 6 food bank users in NB are currently or recently employed.⁴



At least 1 in 6 residents of SJ were estimated to be food insecure in 2014.⁵

In 2016, the 4 core SJ food banks served a range of roughly 700 (East) to 1000 (South) people per month.



At least 1 in 5 Children in NB were estimated to be facing food insecurity in 2014.

In 2016, SJ area Food Banks each served an average of 285 children per month.

1. Common Front for Social Justice. 2016. [http://frontnb.ca/userfiles/file/Food survey 2016_Final \(5\).docx.pdf](http://frontnb.ca/userfiles/file/Food%20survey%202016_Final%20(5).docx.pdf)
 2. McIntyre, Lynn, Aaron C Bartoo, and JC Herbert Emery. 2012. "When working is not enough: food insecurity in the Canadian labour force." Public Health Nutrition: 17(1): 49-57.
 3. McIntyre, Lynn, and Krista Rondeau. 2009. "Food Insecurity" in Social Determinants of Health 2nd Edition. Dennis Raphael Ed. Canadian Scholars Press Inc:188-204.
 4. Food Banks Canada. 2016. Hunger Count 2016. <https://www.foodbankscanada.ca/contact-us.aspx>
 5. PROOF Food Security Policy Research. 2016: <http://proof.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Household-Food-Insecurity-in-Canada-2014.pdf>

