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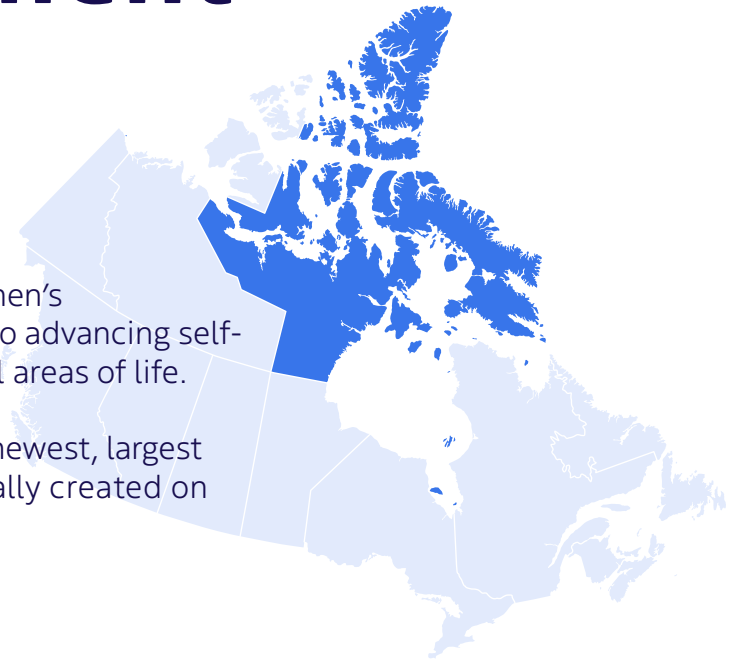


Land Acknowledgement

NUNAVUT

This report is created by Amautiit Nunavut Inuit Women's Association, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing self-determination for Nunavut Arnait [Inuit women] in all areas of life.

Nunavut, which means "Our Land" in Inuktitut, is the newest, largest and northernmost territory of Canada. It was officially created on April 1, 1999.



**1,936,113 SQUARE
KMS OF LAND**



**157,077 SQUARE
KMS OF WATER**



**21% OF THE
COUNTRY'S TOTAL
AREA**



**ONLY ACCESSIBLE
BY PLANE OR BOAT**

Introduction

As the newest territory in Canada (est. 1999), Nunavut is a beautiful land, full of vibrant Inuit culture and the stark reality of colonization and intergenerational trauma from residential schools.¹ Every institution in Nunavut is either wrestling to decolonize or perpetuating harm against Inuit by upholding colonial structures. While Amautiit, the Nunavut Inuit Women's Association, is pleased to present the first Nunavut Poverty Report Card, we know that the existing data is limited, and cannot fully capture the reality of life in Nunavut, because of the ways in which data is collected.

The 2023 Nunavut Poverty Report Card will offer a snapshot of poverty in Nunavut and the various gaps in data collection by utilizing statistics and quotes from a community conversation about poverty from 2023. Many of the statistics are from Statistics Canada, but we will incorporate Nunavut specific reports, and reports by various Inuit organizations as often as possible to present all relevant information. The majority of the participants for the community conversation are from the Amautiit board, who represent communities across the territory.

Future iterations of the report card will include input from other community groups to create a fuller image of life in Nunavut. We will also seek to build capacity for Indigenous data sovereignty - defined as "ensuring Indigenous people are recognized in data and are part of — or in control of — their own data collection"² to ensure the continuation of accurate information. By seeking Indigenous data sovereignty, Inuit will also recover and maintain Inuit stories, memories and un-colonized information from the past.

One thing that came to light during our research, and has been shown in the research produced by other organizations, is that the lack of clear data for poverty and programming in Nunavut has been an ongoing issue within the various governmental departments for many years.



...However, the majority of the information we requested is not tracked or was not provided by departments. In some cases, inaccurate information was provided by the department's own admission. Without this basic information about GN services, how can departments determine where they need to go when they do not know where they are?³

In 2019 the the Representative for the Child and Youth's Office stated the above quote in the executive summary of their report.

We now feel obliged to do the same.

Market Basket Measure (MBM)

The Market Basket Measure (MBM) was adopted as Canada's Official Poverty Line in 2019 following the release of [Opportunity for All – Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy](#). According to the MBM, an individual or family is considered to live in poverty if their disposable income is insufficient to purchase a predetermined basket of goods and services required to achieve a modest, basic standard of living.⁵

MBM AND NUNAVUT

Unfortunately, there is no MBM for Nunavut, which is a large gap in official poverty measurement. As of June 2023, there is a proposed methodology for attempting to calculate an MBM for Nunavut, which involves increasing the family size to 5 people, and some reflection of traditional Inuit cultural expenses.⁶

Because the Baffin example in the chart on this page is calculated from a proposed methodology, it cannot be used for statistics in this report card. However, it is worth keeping in mind that the poverty threshold for Nunavut may be more than double the poverty threshold in Southern Canada.



Figure 1. MBMs of various rural regions compared to Nunavut's proposed MBM⁷

MBM Region	Total Threshold for Poverty
Newfoundland and Labrador (rural)	\$47,684
Ontario (rural)	\$45,932
Saskatchewan (rural)	\$45,324
Baffin Region, excluding Iqaluit	\$113,498



“ When it’s all around you, it really does feel just like this constant struggle to keep your head above water for everybody. But some of us have flotation devices, and some of us have a lot of ankle weights on us, you know? But that water is always there, and there’s always the threat that any of us could drown at any point. ”

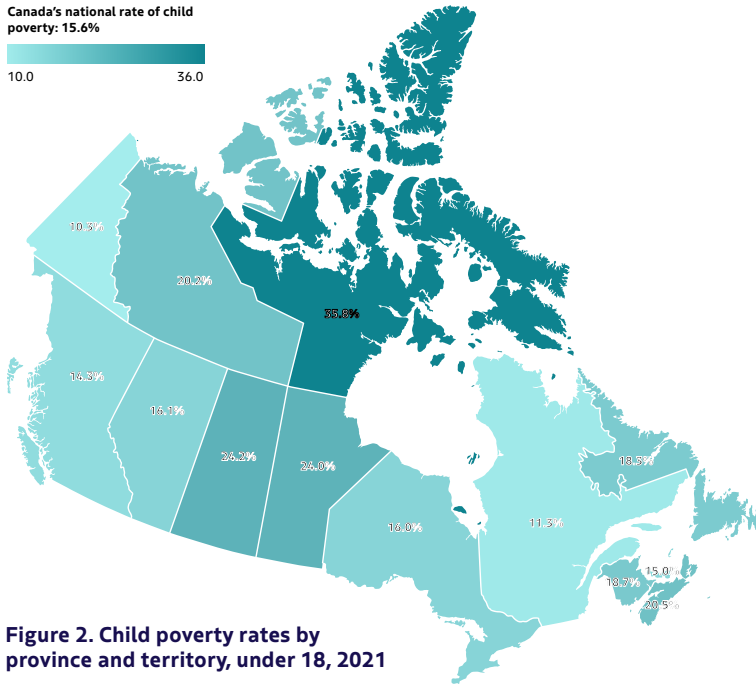


Figure 2. Child poverty rates by province and territory, under 18, 2021

Child poverty rates by province and territory, under 18, 2021

In 2021, Nunavut had the **highest child poverty rate for children under 18** among the provinces and territories at **35.8%**.

Statistics Canada. (2023). T1 Family File. Table 11-10-0018-01 After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependants based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition.

Child poverty rates by province and territory, under 6, 2021

In 2021, Nunavut had the **highest child poverty rate for children under 6** among the provinces and territories at **43.2%**.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2023). Centre of Income and Socioeconomic Well-Being Statistics, Annual Income Estimates for Census Families and Individuals (T1 Family File), Custom Tabulation.

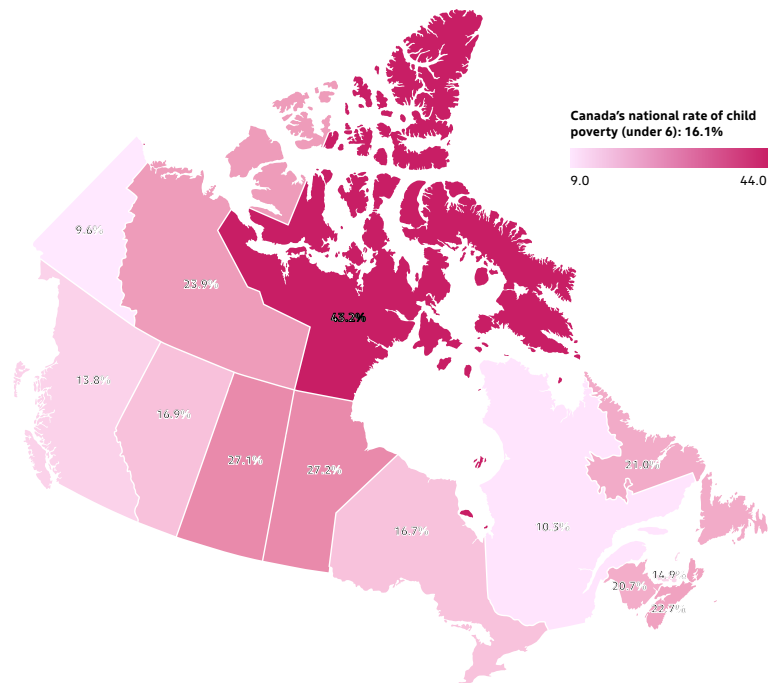


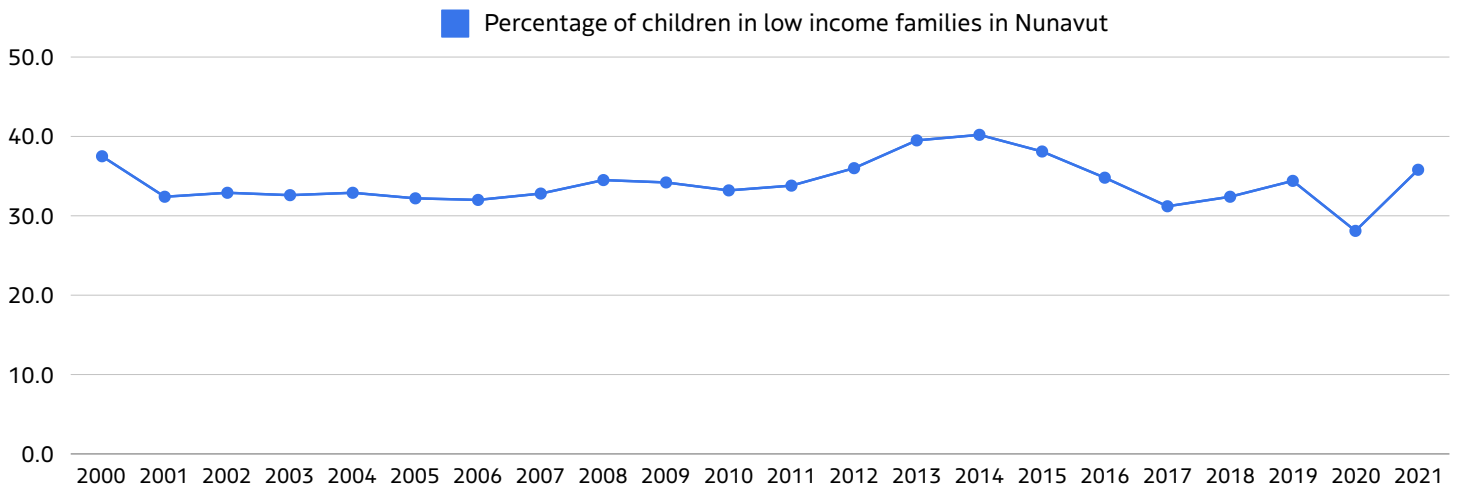
Figure 3. Child poverty rates by province and territory, under 6, 2021



“Poverty stems exclusively, historically and currently, from government policy and decisions by government.”



Figure 4. Percentage of children in low-income families in Nunavut, 2000-2021



Source: Statistics Canada. (2023). T1 Family File. Table 11-10-0018-01 After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependents based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition.

Figure 4 shows trends in Nunavut child poverty rates from 2000-2021. Rates remained consistent at about 35%, reaching a peak in 2014. Like other jurisdictions in Canada, rates showed a downward trend from 2015-2018 with the introduction of the national poverty reduction strategy and policies and programs like the Canada Child Benefit. After some increase from 2018-2019, rates fell again largely due to temporary pandemic benefits, only to rebound to levels comparable to 2000 in 2021.





“ At times I feel like I’m still living in poverty though I’m working full-time. The cost (sic) of living, it’s so expensive. ”



Percentage point change in child poverty rates, under 18, 2020 to 2021

In 2021, Nunavut saw the **largest increase in the provincial and territorial poverty rates** for children under 18, up **7.7** percentage points.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2023). T1 Family File. Table 11-10-0018-01 After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependants based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition

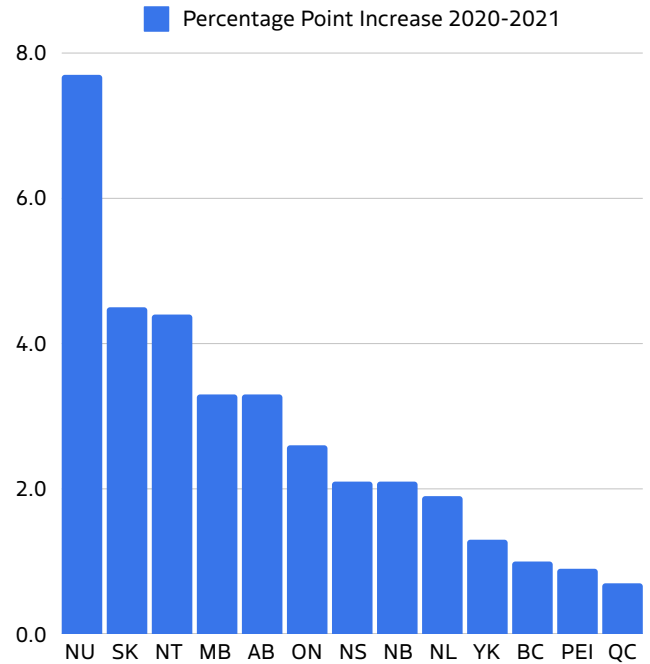
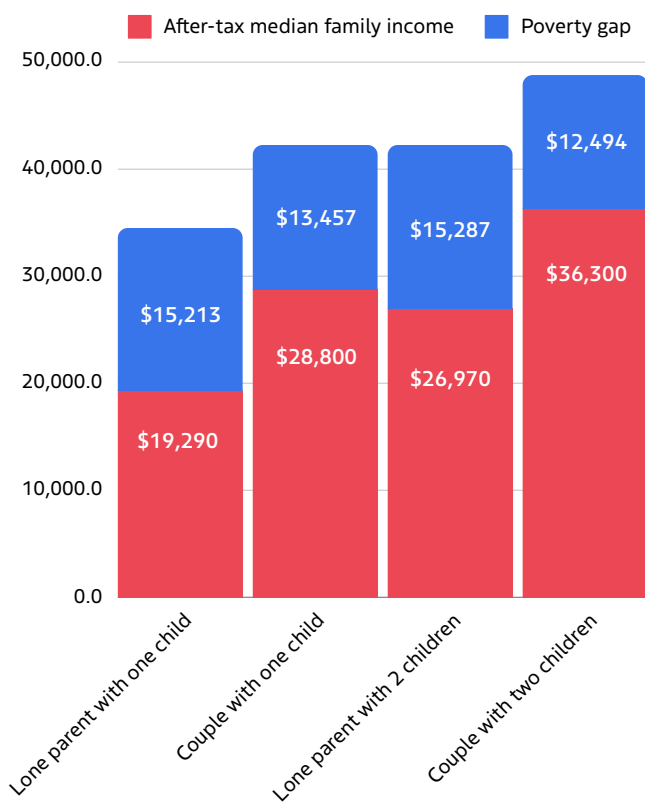


Figure 5. Percentage point change in child poverty rates under 18, 2020-2021



Depth of poverty in Nunavut by family type, 2021

The depth of poverty is the difference between the poverty line and a family’s after tax median income. It is the amount of money required to lift a family out of poverty.

Source: Statistics Canada. (2023). T1 Family File. Table: 11-10-0020-01 After-tax low income status of census families based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family composition.

Statistics Canada. (2023). Technical Reference Guide for the Annual Income Estimates for Census Families, Individuals and Seniors. T1 Family File, Final Estimates, 2021.

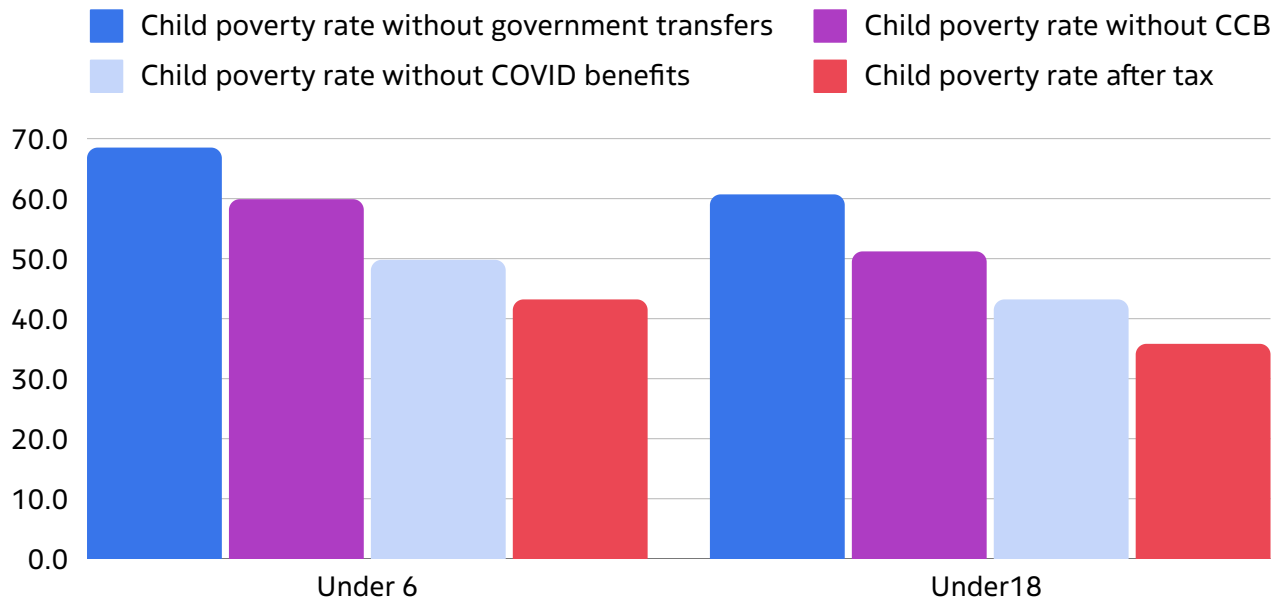
Figure 6. Depth of poverty in Nunavut by family type 2021



“ Most social assistance recipients are required to fill in their application month, after month, after month right? Even though the legislation says that they can just fill it in once for that year and be presumed eligible for the remaining part of the year. The social assistance workers weren’t aware of that. Or it’s kind of discretionary. And so they just make people apply over and over, and over again, wasting their time.



Figure 7. Nunavut child poverty rates with and without government transfers, 2021



Sources: Statistics Canada. (2023). Centre of Income and Socioeconomic Well-Being Statistics, Annual Income Estimates for Census Families and Individuals (T1 Family File), Custom Tabulation.

Statistics Canada. (2023). T1 Family File. Table 11-10-0018-01 After-tax low income status of tax filers and dependants based on Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT), by family type and family type composition.

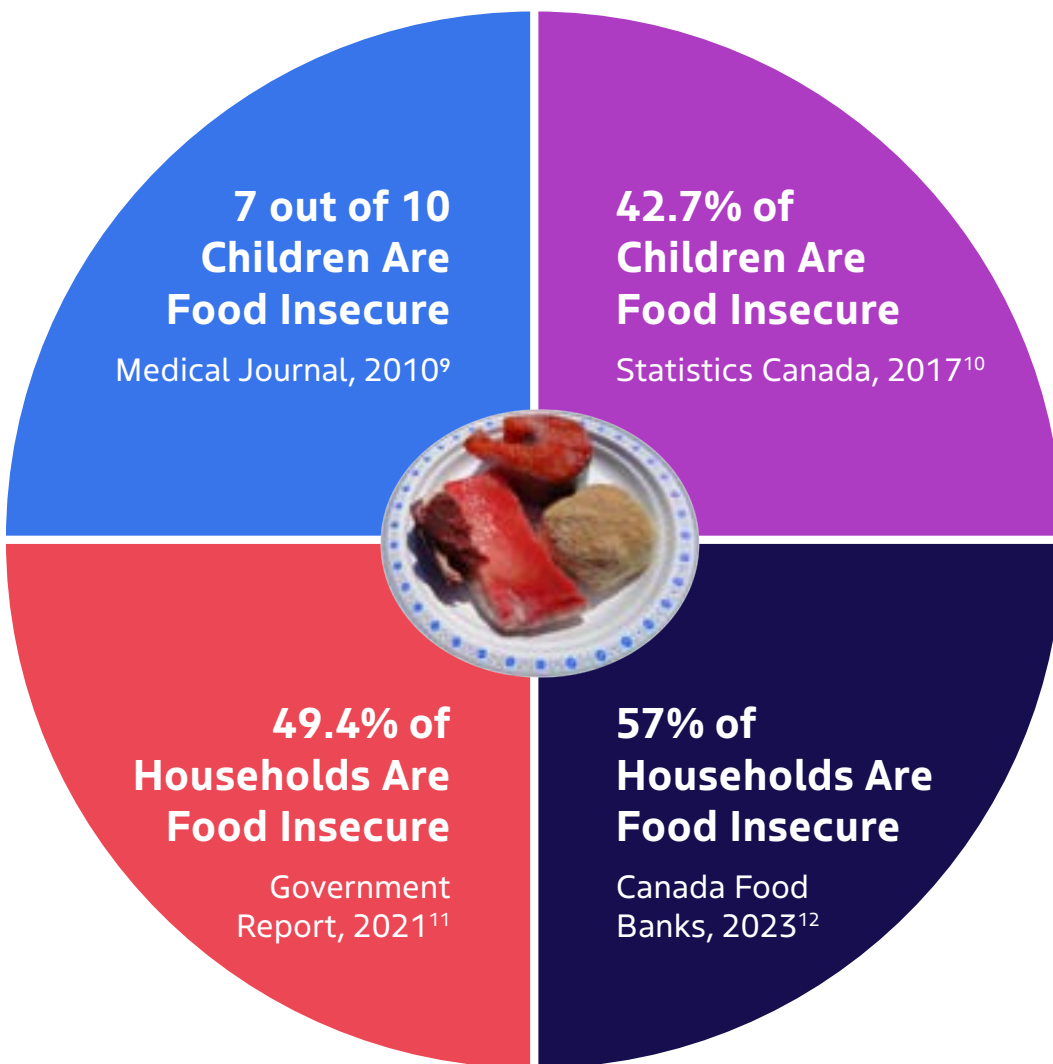


Government transfers have been shown to be a highly effective poverty reduction tool, when they can be accessed. They provide individuals and families with supplemental income, which reduces overall low-income rates. Unfortunately, to access systems to apply for government transfers one must be able to access the internet or a Service Canada location, be able to understand the form (both language and content), have a phone number for to list for any follow up calls etc. None of these circumstances are givens for the population of Nunavut, and thus we surmise the resources are likely being under-utilized.

Food Insecurity and Children in Nunavut

According to UNICEF, "Poor nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life can lead to stunted growth, which is irreversible and associated with impaired cognitive ability and reduced school and work performance."⁸ Despite worldwide recognition about the importance of children being food secure - the statistics are dire for Nunavut, when they are accessible at all.

NUNAVUT STATISTICS



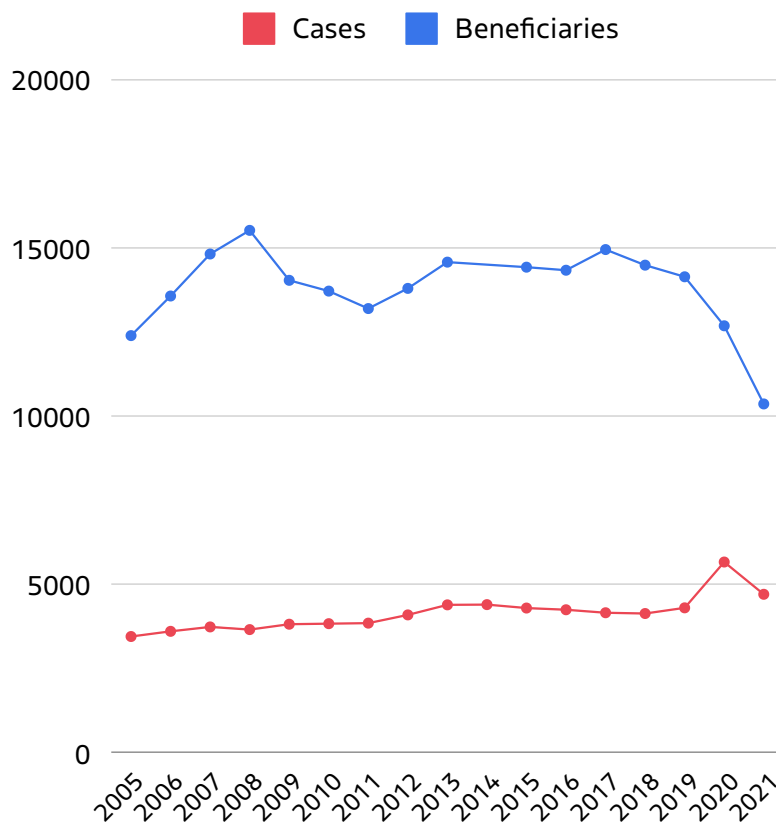
This is the type of measure that should be recorded annually and targeted with government programming, with frequent updates about if the programming is making a difference in children's lives.

It is concerning that the numbers that circulate about Nunavut all come from different sources with seemingly little continuity.

Social Assistance in Nunavut

The Department of Family Services in Nunavut administers the Income Assistance program that supports vulnerable Nunavummiut who, for various reasons, cannot meet their basic needs. The program also aims to help Nunavummiut move towards independence and self-sufficiency. To help Nunavummiut on Income Assistance keep up with the increasing cost of food, the Department of Family Services increased the Income Assistance Program's Basic Allowance by 34% starting from April 1, 2023.¹³

Figure 8. Yearly social assistance data for Nunavut 2005-2021

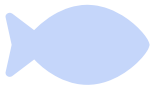


Source: Maytree: Nunavut Social Assistance

The changes to Nunavut Assistance Program to try to incentivize recipients to make “productive choices” in order to receive or continue to receive social assistance on its face sounds progressive and good - however, the fact that many of the productive choices are not truly accessible in the communities e.g. mental health counselling or addictions treatment or access to hunting/harvesting by not having equipment and/or fuel/oil, bullets, etc., training/education, etc. means that those recipients who cannot avail themselves of these services - of no fault of their own - are put at risk of having their social assistance cancelled.



“ You understand that people live pay cheque to pay cheque. You also understand that there’s not necessarily room in their house to store an annual sealift. There are children who sleep in the laundry rooms of their housing units because there’s no room anywhere else with overcrowding. ”



EFFECTIVE SUPPORTS FOR COUNTRY FOOD AND HUNTING

- ▶ **Validate that local food is more nutritious than store bought food, more culturally enriching and allows for skill building and transferring knowledge to youth.**

Recognize these facts through a government program which support hunters and those learning to hunt.

- ▶ **Address the colonial attitudes, stereotypes and lack of understanding that government brings to hunting**

"There's this tendency to really want to be supportive of hunters in a specific way...where it aligns with this romantic, idealised version of somebody who's in tune with the land. [That] forgets that they're also real people with real families, and real lives."



BUILD CAPACITY FOR INUIT-LED SOLUTIONS AND DATA COLLECTION

- ▶ **Policies need to be evaluated by the people they affect**
- ▶ **Build support systems that are robust and have capacity to have people offering support**

"In Cambridge Bay, the municipality was literally going to go door to door to (sic) talk to every household about what their reality was. Other than Iqaluit you could do that in every community. You could hire people from that community, that people trust, and collect that data. And reveal the truth, but we instead have these public meetings like the Anti-Poverty Secretary travelled around...instead of actually hiring people in the communities to go to people's homes. And to go with like a \$50 food voucher...There needs to be trust and understanding what the value of that data collection is. So, it's not going to be used against them, and it's going to be truly anonymized."

Endnotes

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- ³Representative for Child and Youth's Office. 2019-2020 Annual Report. Representative for Child and Youth's Office, 2020. Representative for Child and Youth's Office, <https://rcynu.ca/whats-new/publications>.
- ⁴Campaign 2000. Unprecedented Progress on Poverty Reduction Being Undone. Campaign 2000, <https://campaign2000.ca/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/C2000-2023-Update-on-Child-and-Family-Poverty-in-Canada.pdf>.
- ⁵Devin, Nancy, et al. "Income Research Paper Series Launch of the Third Comprehensive Review of the Market Basket Measure." Statistique Canada, 6 June 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2023007-eng.htm>.
- ⁶Devin, Nancy, et al. "Income Research Paper Series Construction of a Northern Market Basket Measure of poverty for Nunavut." Statistique Canada, 21 June 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2022003-eng.htm>.
- ⁷Gustajtis, Burton, and Andrew Heisz. "Market Basket Measure poverty thresholds and provisional poverty trends for 2021 and 2022." Statistique Canada, 17 January 2023, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75f0002m/75f0002m2022008-eng.htm>.
- ⁸United Nations Foundation. "Why You Should Care About the Hunger Crisis." Giving Compass, 2023, <https://givingcompass.org/article/why-you-should-care-about-the-hunger-crisis>.
- ⁹Egeland, Grace M., et al. "Food insecurity among Inuit preschoolers: Nunavut Inuit Child Health Survey, 2007–2008." Canadian Medical Association Journal, vol. 182, no. 3, 2010, pp. 243–248. CMAJ, <https://www.cmaj.ca/content/182/3/243#:~:text=Results%3A%20Nearly%2070%25%20of%20Inuit,%5D%2064.7%25%E2%80%9374.6%25>.
- ¹⁰Burton, Samantha. "Food Insecurity in Nunavut: An Ongoing Issue." Canada Without Poverty, 1 June 2021, <https://cwp-csp.ca/2021/06/food-insecurity-in-nunavut-an-ongoing-issue/>.
- ¹¹Representative for Child and Youth's Office. 2021-2022 Annual Report. 2023.
- ¹²Food Banks Canada. "Northern Food Insecurity." Food Banks Canada, 2024, <https://foodbankscanada.ca/northern-food-security/>.
- ¹³Department of Family Services, Nunavut. Minister's 2022-2023 Annual Report on Poverty Reduction. Government of Nunavut, <https://www.gov.nu.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2024-03/Minister%27s%20Annual%20Report%20PRD%202022-2023%20English.pdf>.
- ¹⁴Int J Circumpolar Health. "The impacts of the Nutrition North Canada program on the accessibility and affordability of perishable, nutritious foods among eligible communities: a scoping review." International Journal for Circumpolar Health, vol. 83, no. 1, 2023, p. 1. ncbi.nlm, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10863516/>.
- ¹⁵Fafard St Germain, Andrea-Ann. "Food insecurity in Nunavut following the introduction of Nutrition North Canada." Canadian Medical Association Journal, vol. 191, no. 20, 2019, pp. 552–558. NCBI, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6529307/>.
- ¹⁶Int J Circumpolar Health. "The impacts of the Nutrition North Canada program on the accessibility and affordability of perishable, nutritious foods among eligible communities: a scoping review." International Journal for Circumpolar Health, vol. 83, no. 1, 2023, p. 1. ncbi.nlm, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10863516/>.

