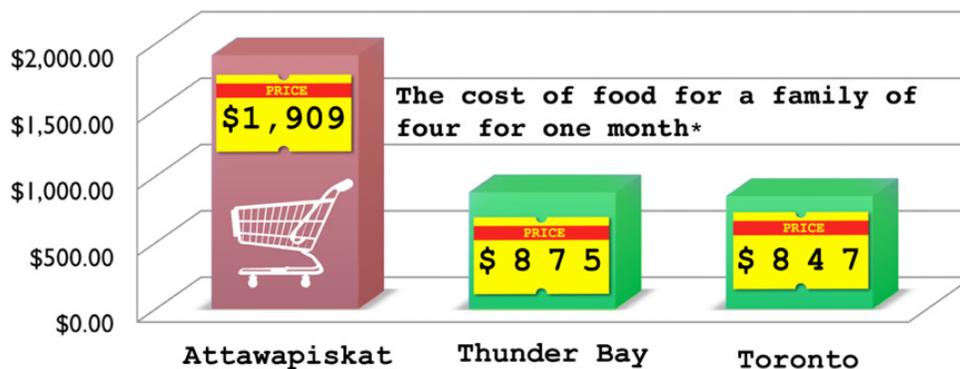


For immediate release

NEW REPORT: FIRST NATIONS ALONG JAMES BAY COAST NEED TO SPEND MORE THAN HALF THEIR INCOME ON FOOD

MONTREAL, September 12, 2016 – First Nations communities located in the Mushkegowuk territories along the west coast of James Bay, including Moose Factory, Fort Albany and Attawapiskat, need to spend over half of their income on food in order to meet their basic nutritional requirements. According to a report released today by Food Secure Canada, the average cost of groceries for a month in Attawapiskat in June 2015 was \$1909 compared to, for instance, \$847 in Toronto. On-reserve households in Ontario’s northeast need to spend over 50% of their median income to buy nutritious food, whereas those in Toronto need to spend 10%.



The report, [Paying for Nutrition: A Report on Food Costing in the North¹](#) documents alarmingly high food prices despite the fact that Fort Albany and Attawapiskat are serviced by the federal government’s [Nutrition North Canada](#) program. Nutrition North is intended to make healthy perishable food more affordable in northern communities and has been widely criticized.

"The subsidy, as we experience it in Fort Albany, has not made it possible for the average family to eat well, let alone afford basic things like diapers and toilet paper. The Nutrition North subsidy goes to the retailer and is not being passed on properly to the consumer. We are living hand to mouth," says Gigi Veeraraghavan, a community health worker and one of the authors of the report. Currently, the program is under review by the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, who is mandated to see how it can be expanded and updated.

¹ By Gigi Veeraraghavan, Kristin Burnett, Kelly Skinner, Patty Williams, Debbie Martin, Aliya Jamal, Megan Ramsay, Christopher Stothart.

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Food Secure Canada

“Food insecurity has reached crisis proportions and Nutrition North is an inadequate response, as outlined in this report,” said Joseph Leblanc, a Food Secure Canada’s Board Member who has worked for many years on the issue and was an advisor on the project. “We need more support for community projects where people living in food insecurity can be involved in a meaningful way in developing alternatives to the current system, including more local control and competition to the retailers, more support for traditional foods and better access to data to monitor prices relative to incomes.”

Many of the issues outlined in the report will be discussed at Food Secure Canada’s upcoming Assembly, [Resetting the Table](#), which will take place in Toronto, October 13-16th. There are several panels and workshop on issues of Indigenous and Northern food sovereignty planned. The full program will be released in the coming weeks.

Visit [Food Secure Canada website](#) for infographics.

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Food Secure Canada is a national network of organizations and individuals working for zero hunger, healthy and safe food and sustainable food systems. Food Secure Canada has received funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada’s Contributions Program for Non-profit Consumer and Voluntary Organizations and from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada or of the Government of Canada or of SSHRC.