

Inuit Nunangat's first Market Basket Measure



The **Inuit Nunangat Market Basket Measure (MBM-IN)** is the first poverty indicator tailored specifically to Inuit Nunangat. It estimates the cost of a modest, basic standard of living by measuring the cost of a basket of goods and services that families need to meet their everyday needs.

The MBM-IN is based on Statistics Canada's Market Basket Measure (MBM), Canada's official measure of poverty, and builds on northern adaptations such as the Northern MBM and Nunavut MBM. Statistics Canada's MBM and the MBM-IN are complementary tools for understanding poverty in Canada.

The MBM-IN adapts the national framework to better reflect the realities of life in Inuit Nunangat, where the cost of living is significantly higher and many communities face unique challenges related to geography, transportation, climate, nutrition and access to services.

Using prices from 2023, a modest standard of living in Inuit Nunangat costs approximately \$74,000 per year for a reference family of four. The MBM-IN shows that about 41 percent of families in Inuit Nunangat experienced poverty that year.

The MBM-IN measures poverty by comparing the cost of basic needs to household disposable income, including government transfers. Families whose income falls below the cost of the basket are considered to be living in poverty.

Measuring Basket Cost vs. Income



Income is shown to be less than the cost of the basket resulting in a family living in poverty.



Income meets (or exceeds) the basket cost, indicating basic needs can be met.

Unlike southern Canada, many basic needs in Inuit Nunangat are also met through land-based and traditional activities such as hunting, fishing, harvesting, and sewing. These activities are essential to food security, clothing production, cultural continuity, and household well-being. At the same time, communities have limited retail options and rely on costly shipping systems to access goods and supplies.

What's in the Inuit Nunangat Market Basket Measure basket?



Food

The food basket reflects the high cost of nutritious food in Inuit Nunangat and includes frozen, canned, and non-perishable foods that are more practical for the region. Food prices are influenced by shipping costs, seasonal availability, and limited retail competition.



Clothing

The clothing basket includes items needed for Arctic conditions, such as parkas, snow pants, mitts, and insulated boots. Clothing costs are higher because of harsh weather, heavy use, and additional shipping and handling costs.



Shelter

The shelter basket reflects regional housing costs across Inuit Nunangat, including public housing rent scales and the higher costs associated with heating, construction, and maintenance in northern communities.



Transportation

Transportation is an essential part of life in Inuit Nunangat, where most communities are not connected by roads. The transportation basket includes costs associated with the purchase and maintenance of snowmobiles, ATVs, and boats, along with fuel, shipping, and maintenance costs—essential tools for mobility, harvesting, and access to country food. In 2024, transportation costs in Inuit Nunangat (\$8,127) were 57 percent higher than in Canada as a whole (\$5,186).



Other necessities

The MBM-IN also includes essential household goods and services such as personal hygiene products, cleaning supplies, and communications technology. Digital connectivity is treated as an essential need for communication, education, work, and access to services.

The basket also recognizes the importance of traditional activities by including items that support hunting, fishing, harvesting, and sewing. These activities help families access country foods and reduce reliance on expensive store-bought goods.

Why the Inuit Nunangat Market Basket Measure matters

The MBM-IN provides a clearer picture of the real cost of living in Inuit Nunangat and the financial pressures facing Inuit families and communities. It helps governments, Inuit organizations, and researchers better understand poverty in Inuit Nunangat and supports evidence-based decision-making on affordability, poverty reduction, infrastructure, housing, food security, and income supports.

