

**NEW ZEALAND  
HUNGER  
MONITOR  
2025**

March 2026

Prepared for New Zealand Food  
Network

Ipsos Public Affairs

**SUMMARY VERSION**



# Foreword

Food insecurity is no longer a marginal issue in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is affecting households across the country, often quietly, often unexpectedly and with increasing frequency. The 2025 Hunger Monitor confirms what frontline food support organisations have been observing for some time. The scale of need is significant; the pressure is persistent and for many people this is a new and unsettling reality.

One in three households experiencing some form of food insecurity in the past year is not a statistic that can be ignored. Behind these numbers are families skipping meals, parents going without so their children can eat and individuals facing difficult choices between food, housing, energy and transport. The finding that most food insecure households first experienced this within the last 12 months speaks to how quickly circumstances can change, particularly in a prolonged cost of living crisis.

At the New Zealand Food Network, our role is to ensure that food reaches communities where it is needed, working alongside food rescues, iwi, food banks and community organisations across the motu. This research strengthens our ability to do that well. By providing robust, nationally representative data the Hunger Monitor gives us a clearer understanding of who is being affected, how often and why. It also highlights the barriers people face in accessing help, including stigma, uncertainty and lack of awareness which must be addressed if support is to be both effective and dignified.

This report is not intended to stand alone. It is a tool for action. The insights within it should inform operational planning, guide collaboration across the food support sector and support evidence-based conversations about how New Zealand responds to food insecurity. It also establishes an essential baseline, allowing us to track change over time and assess whether our collective efforts are making a difference.

We would like to thank Ipsos for their rigorous and thoughtful approach to this research and the thousands of New Zealanders who shared their experiences. Most importantly, we acknowledge the frontline organisations and volunteers who continue to show up every day for their communities. Their work matters and this data helps ensure it is supported, strengthened and sustained.

Food is fundamental. Access to it should never be uncertain. The 2025 Hunger Monitor makes clear that there is urgent work to be done and that it must be done together.

**Deborah Manning**

*Founder*

New Zealand Food Network

**Gavin Findlay**

*Chief Executive*

New Zealand Food Network

# At a glance

Note: ^ / v – significantly higher / lower than total sample

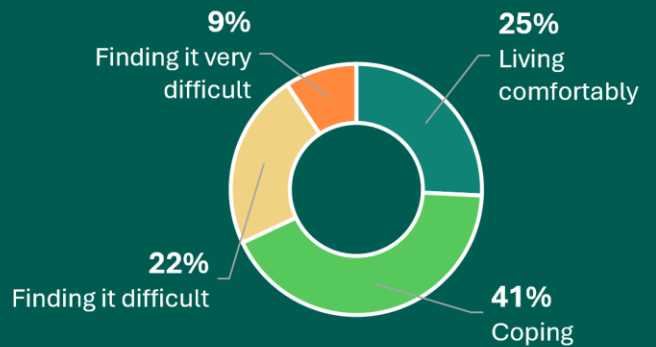
**One in three** New Zealand households (33%)



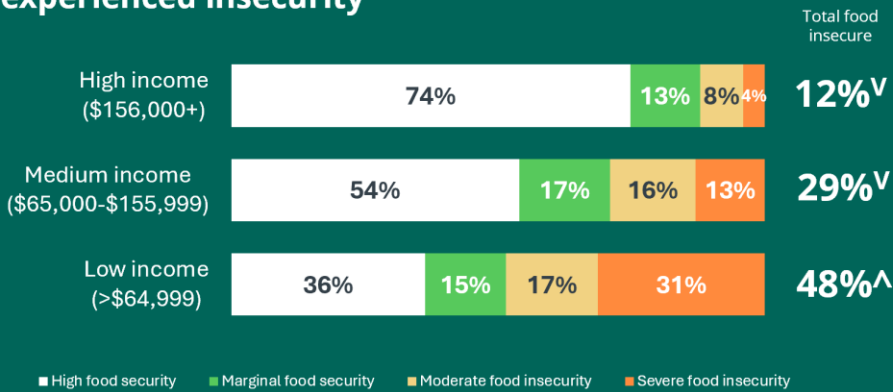
Have experienced **some form of food insecurity** in the last 12 months

Base: Total (n=3,000); Food secure (n=2,010); Food insecure (n=990)

Around a **third** (32%) of Kiwi households are finding it difficult living on their present income



Food insecurity is **not exclusive** to the lowest income bracket, even those with a **high household income** have experienced insecurity



The **top 3** most common actions taken to manage cost of living all relate to **food**:

- 67%** Looked for sales / discounts on food & groceries
- 58%** Cut back on eating / drinking in restaurants / cafes
- 41%** Swapped food for cheaper alternatives

This was a multichoice question, so respondents could choose more than one answer.

Households most at **risk** of food insecurity are **single parent** households and households containing a member with a **disability**

**70%<sup>^</sup>**



Of single-parent households are food insecure

**82%<sup>^</sup>**



Of households with a disability are food insecure



**57%<sup>^</sup>**

Of the **severely food insecure** cut back on **other food and grocery items** to manage cost of living

**68%**

Of the **food insecure** first experienced insecurity in the past **12 months**, and

Close to **half** of respondents wouldn't know where to go to get food support **if they needed it**

**46%**



**Feeling shame or embarrassment** is a key barrier among the food-insecure to accessing food relief, with **close to half** feeling this way (49%)

**50%**

Experience bouts of insecurity **multiple times per month**

**52%**



**More than half** of those who have received food relief state they are accessing it **more often** this year than the year before



This even **more likely** to be the case (55%<sup>^</sup>) among the **severely food insecure**