

New Westminster Child Poverty Profile and Frequently Asked Questions– Updated January 12, 2024

Contents

- Table of Figures 2
- Introduction 3
- COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Data 3
- How do we analyze child poverty? 4
- How many children in New Westminster are in low-income households?..... 5
- Is the child poverty rate in New Westminster high or low relative to other areas? 6
- How does the child poverty rate for children in New Westminster compare with seniors and other adults?..... 6
- How does the child poverty rate for children in lone parent families compare with children in couple families and not in families? 7
- How has the child poverty rate changed over time?..... 7
- Where does child poverty occur in New Westminster? 8
- Which demographic groups are more vulnerable to child poverty? 10
- Do child poverty rates differ by the age of children? 12
- How many children are in families on income assistance/disability assistance? 12
- How many children are in families experiencing working poverty?..... 14
- How many families are struggling with housing? 14
- What percentage of families are food insecure?..... 15

Table of Figures

- Figure 1: 2021 Thresholds for CFLIM-AT 5
- Figure 2: Child Poverty Rate (0-17 years old) (CFLIM-AT), by geography, Canada, BC, Metro Vancouver and New Westminister, 2021 Taxfiler data 6
- Figure 3: Poverty rates by age group (CFLIM-AT), by age group, New Westminister, 2021 Taxfiler data 6
- Figure 4: Child poverty rates (0-17 years old) (CFLIM-AT), by family arrangement for child, New Westminister, 2021 Taxfiler data..... 7
- Figure 5: Number of children (0-17 years old) in low-income households, CFLIM-AT, New Westminister, 2016-2021 8
- Figure 6: Child (0-17 years old) poverty rate (CFLIM-AT), New Westminister, 2016-2021 8
- Figure 7: Number of children (0-17 year olds) in low-income households, based on CFLIM-AT (Census Family Low Income Measure - After Tax), New Westminister Census Tracts, 2021 Taxfiler Data..... 9
- Figure 8: Child poverty rates (0-17 years old) (%) (based on CFLIM-AT), New Westminister census tracts, 2021 Taxfiler data 10
- Figure 9: Child (0-17 year olds) poverty rate for various demographic groups, New Westminister, based on LIM-AT, 2021 Census (2020 Taxfiler data) 11
- Figure 10: Child poverty rates by age group of children, LIM-AT, New Westminister, 2021 Census (based on 2020 data) 12
- Figure 11: Number of income assistance recipients (monthly average throughout a year) and as a percentage of the total population, New Westminister, 2016-2022 13
- Figure 12: Number of dependent children in households receiving income/disability assistance (monthly average throughout a year), New Westminister, 2016-2022..... 13
- Figure 13: Number of children 0-17 years old, in households that spent 30% or more of before-tax household income on housing costs, New Westminister and comparison geographies, 2021 Census..... 14
- Figure 14: Number of families on BC Housing Wait List, New Westminister, 2016-2022..... 15
- Figure 15: Food hampers statistics, Hamper Distribution - Weekly Averages (Combined 3 Don't Go Hungry and Saint Barnabas - Shiloh 5th Ave Food and Resource Hubs), January 2022 - November 2023 16

Introduction

This profile is designed to answer questions about child poverty in New Westminster, including how many people are living in poverty, who is living in poverty, where they are living, and how this has changed over time. This profile is structured based on answering common questions about child poverty.

COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Data

In March 2020, there was a state of emergency declared for the Province of British Columbia related to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in a lock-down and the temporary closure of many businesses and associated temporary job loss. Throughout the 2020 and 2021 years, there were lockdown measures that were lifted and later reinstated (such as a ban on indoor team sports and indoor dining) that may have impacted employment.

Both the Federal and Provincial Governments provided extensive income supports during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in 2020 (but also in 2021). 2021 Census data indicated that 18,595 New Westminster residents 15+ years old (or 27.3% of New Westminster residents) received some form of COVID-19 emergency and recovery benefits from the Federal Government in 2020, which was in the middle of the rates for Canada (27.6%), BC (26.4%) and Metro Vancouver (28.3%), with a median amount of \$8,500 per recipient in New Westminster from these benefits.¹ 2021 federal government income support data wasn't available for New Westminster, but federal data indicates 2.3 million Canadians applied for the Canada Recovery Benefit and 1.2 million Canadians applied for the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit between September 2020 and December 2021².

The BC Provincial Government provided more extensive and widespread pandemic financial support than other provincial governments, especially for low-income families. For example, in 2020, 90.3% of BC families (with children 0-17 years old) in the bottom half of the adjusted after-tax income distribution received provincial COVID-19 benefits, with only Ontario (73.5%) coming close in provincial coverage, whereas the average across Canadian provinces and territories was 41.7%³. The Provincial Government

¹ Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census Profile.

<https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>

² Statistics Canada. COVID-19 Application Statistics.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/benefits/covid-application-statistics.html>

³ Statistics Canada. Product ID: 98100074

Title: Economic family unit income statistics for income sources and taxes by family characteristics and decile group: Canada, provinces and territories, census metropolitan areas and census agglomerations with parts
Archive Status: Current

Frequency: Occasional

Universe: Economic families and persons not in economic families aged 15 years and over in private households, 2021 Census — 25% Sample Data and 100% Data

Variable List: Income sources and taxes (20), Economic family characteristics of persons (29), Economic family income decile group (13), Income statistics (8B)

Start Reference Period: 2021-01-01

End Reference Period: 2021-01-01

Survey Code: 3901

also assisted with housing, receiving 2,181 temporary rent supplement applications in 2020 from New Westminster residents⁴

Although the COVID-19 pandemic created massive job losses and societal disruption, the Federal and Provincial Governments responded with a large suite of income support programs for businesses and residents. In Canada, as well as many other countries (e.g., Australia, UK, USA), this resulted in poverty rates actually falling during the COVID-19 pandemic compared with the pre-pandemic period.

However, since the pandemic restrictions ended in 2022 and the income supports have ended, it is likely that poverty rates have increased, as well as other cost of living issues due to rapid inflation in 2022 and 2023, as shown by the more recent housing waitlist and food security data in this document. However, as we do not yet have low-income data from 2022 or 2023, poverty rates in 2022 and 2023 could not be determined.

How do we analyze child poverty?

Although poverty is multi-dimensional and can also include material deprivation, feelings of poverty, high levels of debt and low levels of financial and in-kind assets, the simplest and most common measure of poverty is based on annual family incomes (or in the case of singles, individual incomes). Income measures are limited in that they do not account for debt, assets, and other variables and varied circumstances: for example, a family with a low income, but that owns a house and has little debt might be in a better financial situation than a middle income family with large amounts of debt and very few financial assets. However, in order to use the most up to date and local data possible, income measures will be used for this report. They are supplemented by other indicators such as food insecurity and housing costs to provide a more detailed picture. Taxfiler data (mostly from Table I-13) was acquired through the [Community Data Program](#).

The most up to date child poverty data is from Taxfiler data from Statistics Canada, based on tax returns from Canadians. This data set uses the Census Family Low Income Measure (CFLIM-AT) to measure poverty rates, which is a measure of the whether or not a family's after-tax income is 50% or less of the median after-tax income for a family of similar size. The CFLIM-AT income thresholds are shown in **Figure 1**. More information on Taxfiler data is available from the T1 Family File, 2021 estimates.

Although Taxfiler data provides the most up to date poverty data, it does not provide data on certain vulnerable demographic groups such as recent immigrant children and Indigenous children. Therefore, this Taxfiler data is augmented with 2021 Census data (based on 2020 incomes), using the LIM-AT (Low-Income Measure After-Tax). Although both the Census and Taxfiler data use taxfiling records for analysis, there are some differences in methodologies, including differences between the LIM-AT and CFLIM-AT, that make comparisons between the two sources invalid. Statistics Canada's 2021 Census

Survey Name: Census of Population

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810007401>

⁴ Prepared by BC Housing's Research and Corporate Planning Dept., June 2020

Source: BCTRS001 Report, 1 September 2020

Dictionary provides additional information about the 2021 Census and the LIM-AT⁵. Census data for these demographic groups was acquired through the [Community Data Program](#). Housing data came from other sources such as BC Housing (through the Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book), while income assistance data came from the BC Government and food security data came from the New Westminster Homelessness Coalition Society. Trend data was analyzed for 2016 to the most recent time period (a mix of 2021, 2022 and 2023 data) to look at trends since the development of New Westminster’s first Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2016. Colour coded text (green = favourable result compared with comparison group/geography/time period, red = unfavourable result compared with comparison group/geography/time period) helps with comparisons, as well as a variety of graphs and maps.

Figure 1: 2021 Thresholds for CFLIM-AT

Table F
2021: Thresholds for After-Tax Census Family Low Income Measure

Number of family members	After-Tax Census Family Low Income Measure Thresholds
	dollar amount
1	24,397
2	34,503
3	42,257
4	48,794
5	54,553
6	59,760
7	64,548
8	69,005
9	73,191
10	77,150

Source: [Statistics Canada. T1 Family File, Final Estimates, 2021. Section 1. Data. Table F: 2021 Thresholds for After-Tax Census Family Low Income Measure.](#)

How many children in New Westminster are in low-income households?

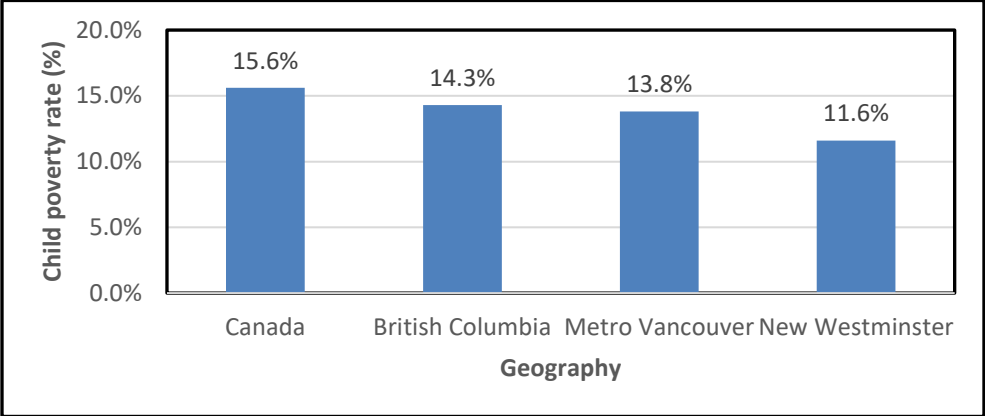
In 2021 (according to Taxfiler data and based on CFLIM-AT), there were 1,350 children (0-17 years old) living in low-income households, composing 11.6% of children in New Westminster.

⁵ Statistics Canada. Dictionary. Census of Population, 2021. Low-income measure, after tax (LIM-AT). <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/ref/dict/az/Definition-eng.cfm?ID=fam021>

Is the child poverty rate in New Westminister high or low relative to other areas?

Based on 2021 Taxfiler data, the child poverty rate (based on CFLIM-AT) (**Figure 2**) in New Westminister (11.6%) **was lower** than for comparison geographies of Metro Vancouver (13.8%), British Columbia (14.3%) and Canada (15.6%).

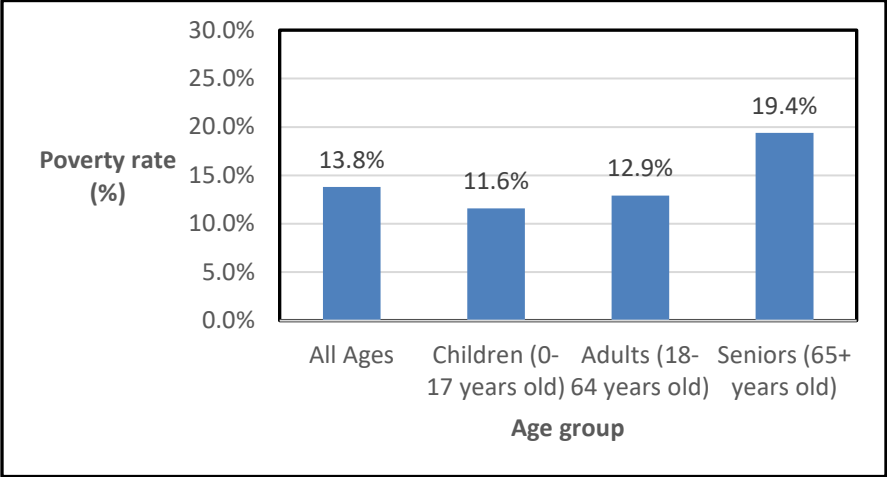
Figure 2: Child Poverty Rate (0-17 years old) (CFLIM-AT), by geography, Canada, BC, Metro Vancouver and New Westminister, 2021 Taxfiler data



How does the child poverty rate for children in New Westminister compare with seniors and other adults?

In 2021 based on Taxfiler data (based on CFLIM-AT) (**Figure 3**), the child poverty rate in New Westminister (11.6%) **was lower** than the seniors (65+ years old) poverty rate (19.4%). The child poverty rate in New Westminister **was also lower** than the adult (18-64 year old) poverty rate of 12.9% and the overall population poverty rate of 13.8% in New Westminister. In 2021 in New Westminister, there were 10,430 persons living in low-income households, including 1,350 children (0-17 years old), 6,670 adults (18-64 years old), and 2,410 seniors (65+ years old).

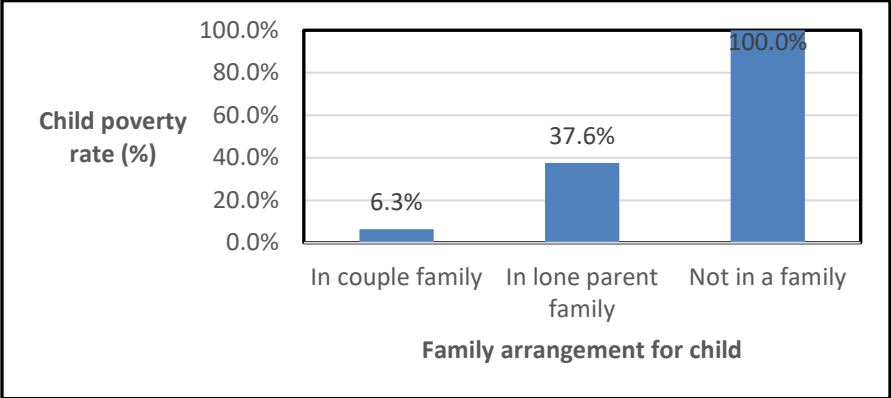
Figure 3: Poverty rates by age group (CFLIM-AT), by age group, New Westminister, 2021 Taxfiler data



How does the child poverty rate for children in lone parent families compare with children in couple families and not in families?

In 2021 in New Westminster (based on Taxfiler data) (**Figure 4**) child poverty rates were much lower among children in couple families (6.3%) than children in lone parent families (37.6%) and children not in families (100.0%). In 2019 in New Westminster, there were 700 children in low-income lone parent families, 610 children in low-income couple families, and 40 low-income children not in families.

Figure 4: Child poverty rates (0-17 years old) (CFLIM-AT), by family arrangement for child, New Westminster, 2021 Taxfiler data



How has the child poverty rate changed over time?

Between 2016 and 2021 (based on Taxfiler data), the number of children (0-17 years old) in low income households (based on CFLIM-AT) in New Westminster decreased from 1,890 children in 2016 to 1,350 children in 2021 (**Figure 5**), a decrease of -540 children (a -28.6% decrease). The largest part of this decrease occurred between 2019 and 2020 (-340 children) when many COVID-19 benefits were available. There was a small increase in the number of children living in low income households between 2020 and 2021 (+60 children) as some, but not all, COVID-19 benefits were discontinued. Between 2016 and 2021 (based on Taxfiler data), the child poverty rate (based on CFLIM-AT) decreased from 17.6% in 2016 to 11.6% in 2022 (**Figure 6**), a -6.0 ppt decrease. The largest part of this decrease occurred between 2019 (14.5%) and 2020 (11.2%), but there was a small increase between 2020 (11.2%) and 2021 (11.6%).

Figure 5: Number of children (0-17 years old) in low-income households, CFLIM-AT, New Westminster, 2016-2021

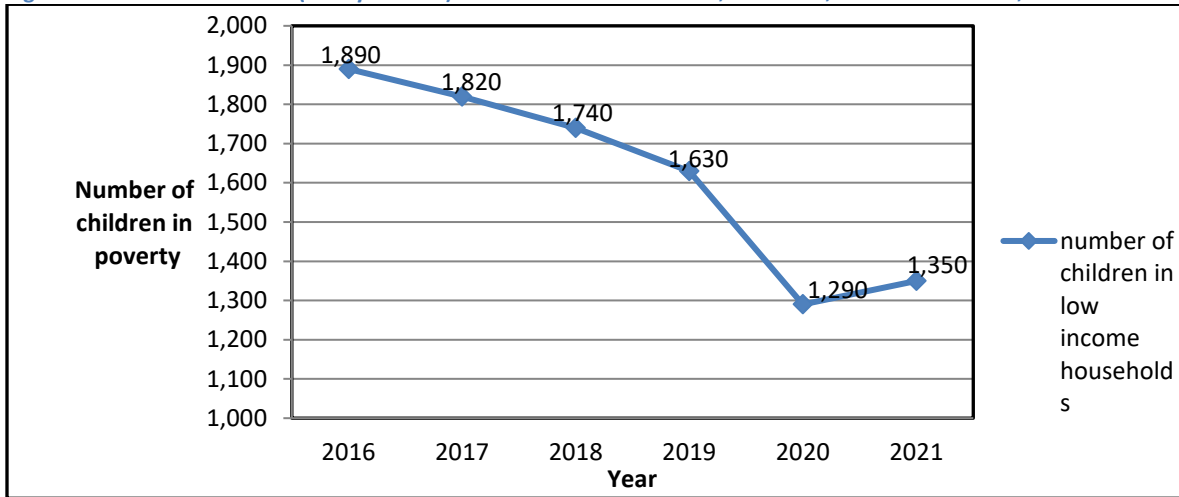
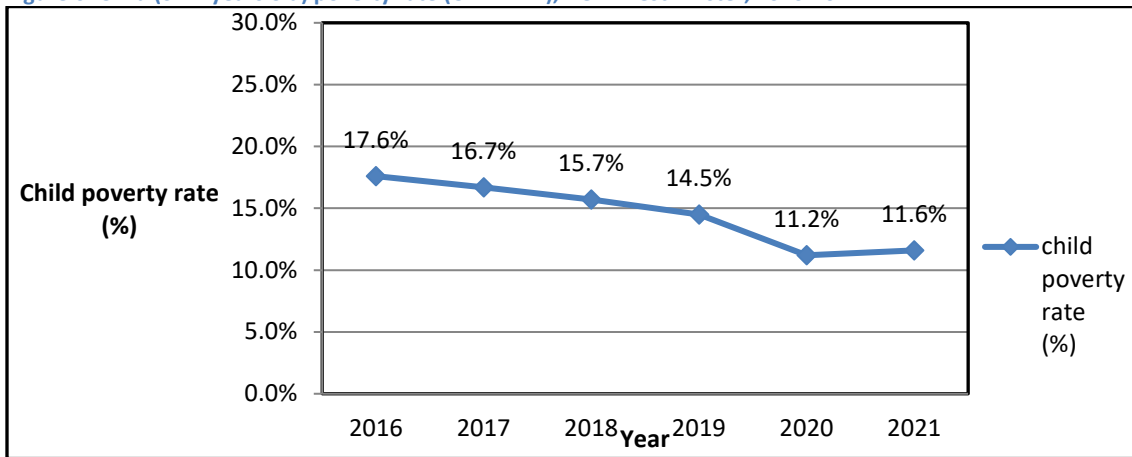


Figure 6: Child (0-17 years old) poverty rate (CFLIM-AT), New Westminster, 2016-2021



Where does child poverty occur in New Westminster?

Taxfiler data provides child poverty information up to 2021 for New Westminster’s census tracts. As of 2021, New Westminster had 16 census tracts in all. **Figure 7** shows the number of children in low-income households by census tract. Overall, there were 6 census tracts with 50 or fewer children in low-income households, 4 census tracts with 51-100 children in low-income households, 5 census tracts with 101-150 children in low-income households and 1 census tract with 151-200 children in low-income households. Census tract 201.00 (Connaught Heights) (20 children in low-income households) had the **fewest** children in low-income households, while census tract 200.02 (Queensborough other than Port Royal) (180 children in low-income households) had the **most** children in low-income households (due to the large children’s population in this area in general). The uptown census tracts typically had **larger** number of children in low-income households than other areas.

Figure 7: Number of children (0-17 year olds) in low-income households, based on CFLIM-AT (Census Family Low Income Measure - After Tax), New Westminster Census Tracts, 2021 Taxfiler Data

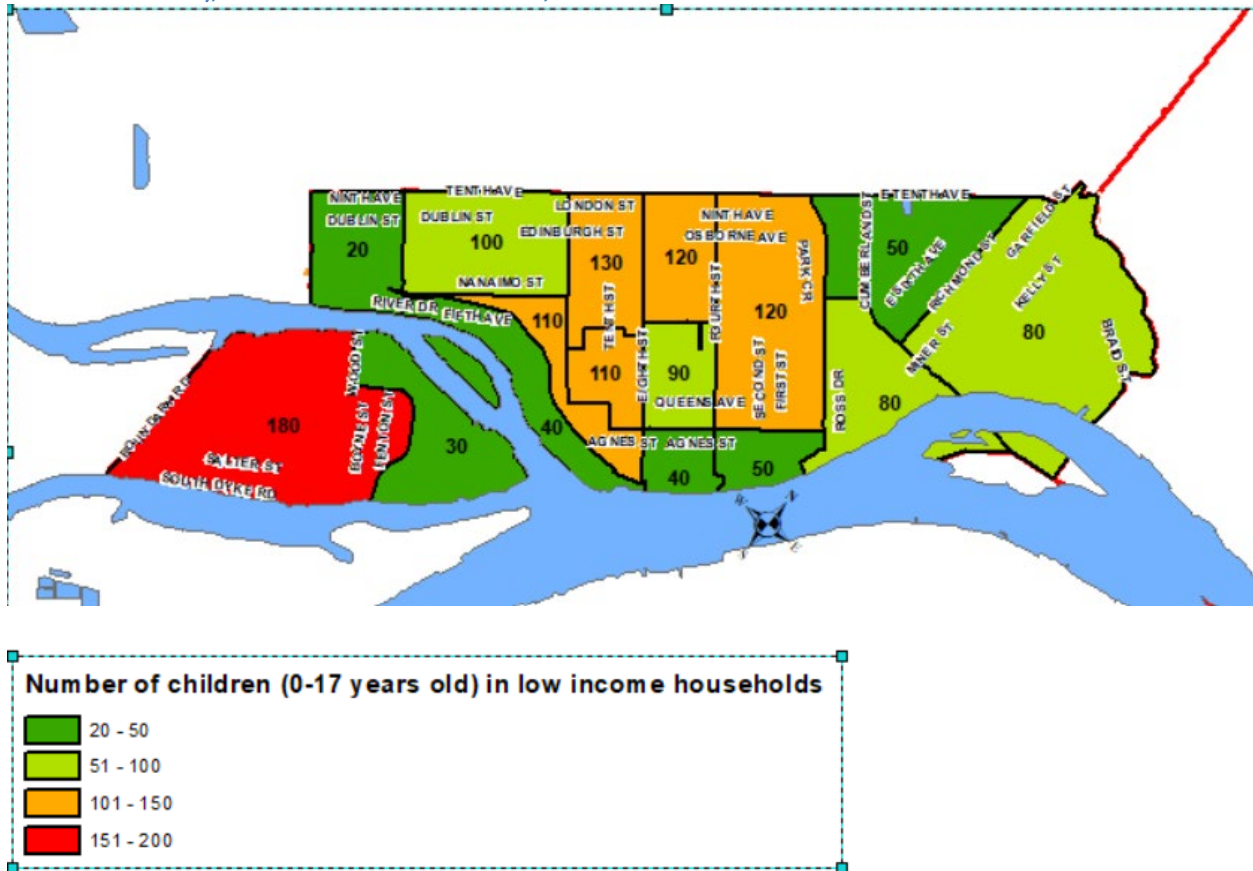
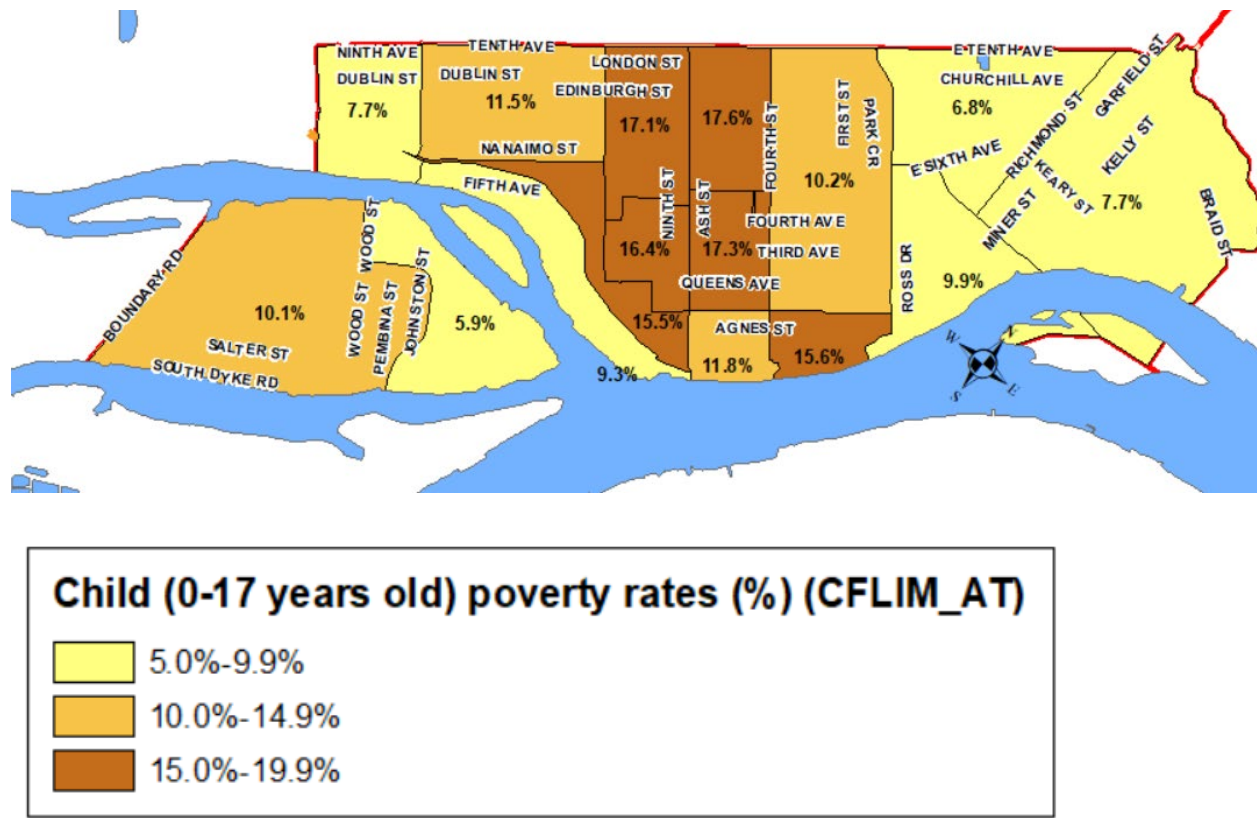


Figure 8 shows child (0-17 years old) poverty rates (based on CFLIM-AT) by census tract in New Westminster based on 2021 Taxfiler data. There were 6 census tracts with child poverty rates of 5.0%-9.9%, 4 census tracts with child poverty rates of 10.0%-14.9% and 6 census tracts with 15.0%-19.9%. The lowest child poverty rate was in census tract 200.01 (Port Royal part of Queensborough) (5.9%), while the highest child poverty rate was in census tract 205.02 (north part of Uptown) (17.6%). Child poverty rates were higher in parts of Brow of the Hill and Uptown and lower in the East End in general.

Figure 8: Child poverty rates (0-17 years old) (%) (based on CFLIM-AT), New Westminster census tracts, 2021 Taxfiler data



Although there was considerable variation in child poverty by census tract, the level of neighbourhood inequality in child poverty in New Westminster was small compared with Metro Vancouver census tracts as a whole and census tracts in many other Canadian urban areas. For example, in 2021, 128 Metro Vancouver census tracts (out of 520 Metro Vancouver census tracts with data available) had child poverty rates that were higher than the child poverty rate in census tract 205.02 (northern part of Uptown) (highest rate in New Westminster). On the other end, 6 Metro Vancouver census tracts had child poverty rates that were lower than the child poverty rate in census tract 200.01 (Port Royal part of Queensborough) (lowest rate in New Westminster). When comparing New Westminster census tracts with other parts of Metro Vancouver, it's worth noting that there may be some income (including overseas income) reporting issues in some parts of the region (particularly parts of the West Side of Vancouver, West Vancouver and Richmond) that make comparability difficult.

Which demographic groups are more vulnerable to child poverty?

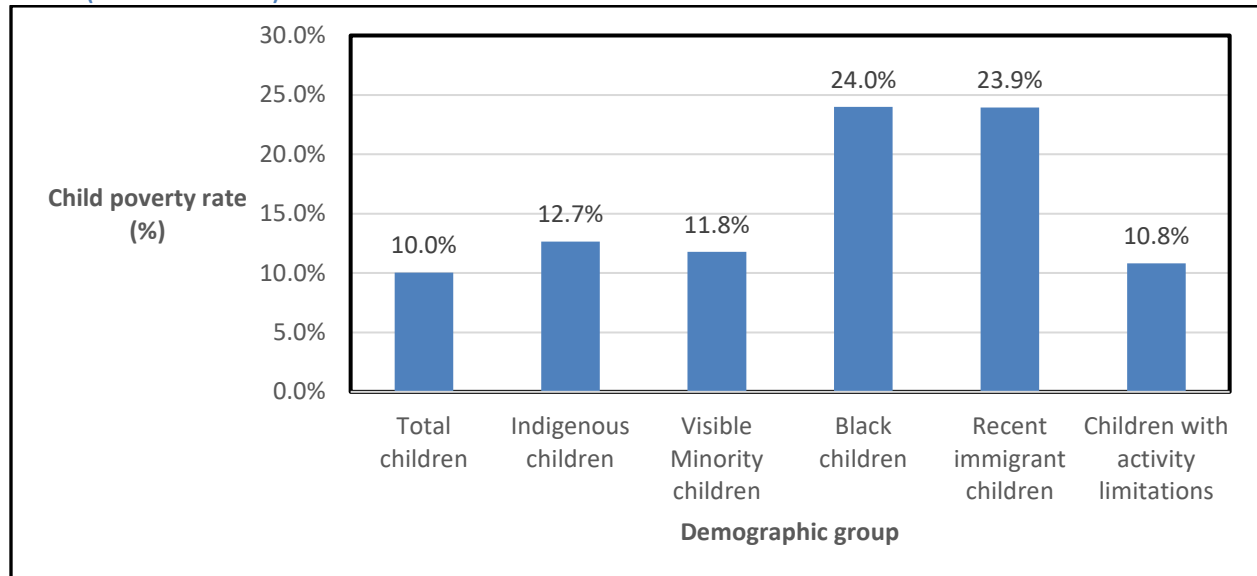
Children in some demographic groups are more vulnerable to child poverty than other groups. **Figure 9** shows child (0-17 years old) poverty rates for various demographic groups from the 2021 Census (2020 data) (based on LIM-AT, Low Income Measure – After Tax) in New Westminster:

- Black children (24.0% child poverty rate), recent immigrant children (immigrated between 2016 and 2021) (23.9% child poverty rate), Indigenous children (12.7% child poverty rate) and Visible

Minority children (also includes Black children and other Visible Minority children) (11.8% child poverty rate) had **higher** child poverty rates than the overall child poverty rate (10.0%) in New Westminster.

- Children with activity limitations/disabilities (10.8% child poverty rate) had a similar child poverty rate to the overall child poverty rate (10.0%) in New Westminster.

Figure 9: Child (0-17 year olds) poverty rate for various demographic groups, New Westminster, based on LIM-AT, 2021 Census (2020 Taxfiler data)



Overall, there were 820 Visible Minority children, 190 children with activity limitations/disabilities, 150 Black children, 140 recent immigrant children and 50 Indigenous children in low income households in New Westminster in 2020.

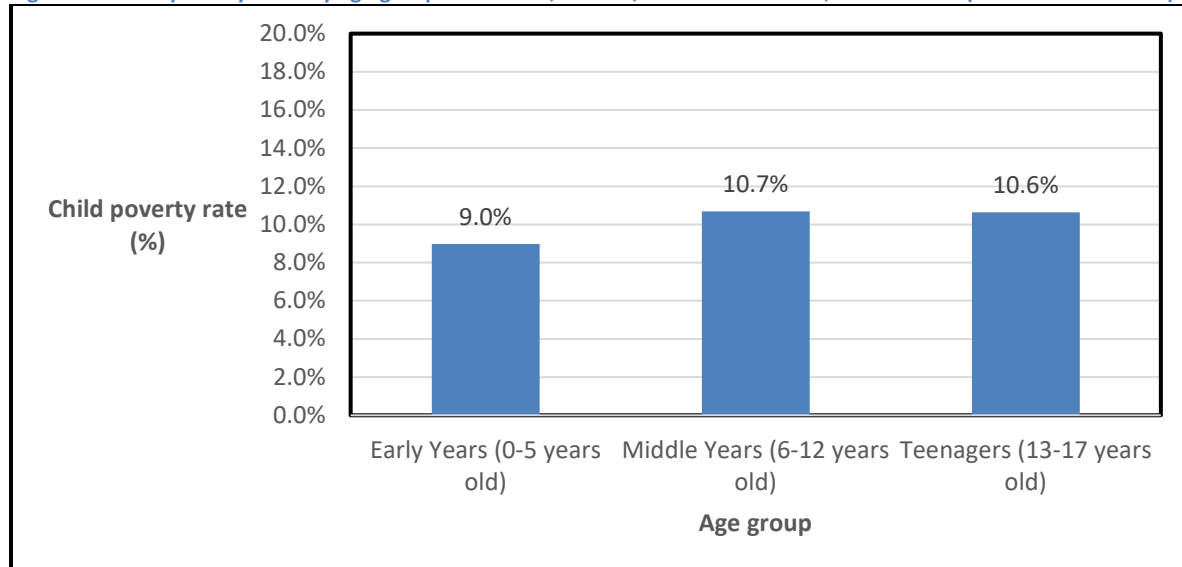
Compared with other geographies, based on 2021 Census (2020 data):

- New Westminster had a **much lower** Indigenous child poverty rate (12.7%) than Metro Vancouver (15.3%), BC (18.4%) and Canada (23.7%);
- New Westminster had a **lower** Visible Minority child poverty rate (11.8%) than BC (13.5%), Metro Vancouver (14.1%) and Canada (14.8%);
- New Westminster had a **much higher** Black child poverty rate (24.0%) than Canada (18.0%), Metro Vancouver (14.1%), and BC (13.9%);
- New Westminster had a similar recent immigrant child poverty rate (23.9%) to BC (22.9%) and Metro Vancouver (23.7%) but a **lower** recent immigrant child poverty rate than Canada (25.5%); and,
- New Westminster had a similar activity limited/disabled child poverty rate (10.8%) to Metro Vancouver (11.3%) but a **lower** activity limited/disabled child poverty rate than BC (12.2%) and Canada (13.2%).

Do child poverty rates differ by the age of children?

Based on 2021 Census data (from 2020 incomes) (**Figure 10**), in New Westminster, early years children (0-5 years old) (9.0% early years poverty rate) had a **lower** poverty rate than middle years children (6-12 years old) (10.7%) and teenagers (13-17 years old) (10.6%). In total, New Westminster had 385 early years children, 465 middle years children and 330 teenagers in low-income households in 2020.

Figure 10: Child poverty rates by age group of children, LIM-AT, New Westminster, 2021 Census (based on 2020 data)



In comparison to other geographies using 2021 Census data (from 2020 incomes):

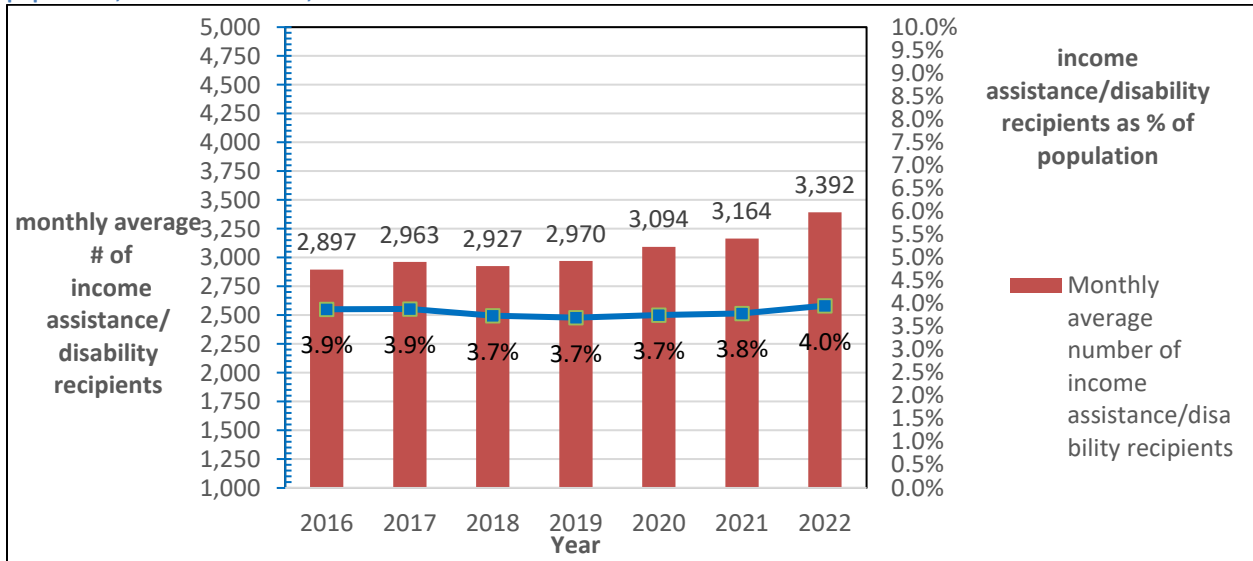
- New Westminster had a **lower** early years child poverty rate (9.0%) than BC (11.0%), Metro Vancouver (11.0%) and Canada (12.6%);
- New Westminster had a **lower** middle years child poverty rate (10.7%) than BC (11.8%), Metro Vancouver (11.9%) and Canada (12.1%); and,
- New Westminster had a similar teenager poverty rate (10.6%) to Canada (10.5%), BC (10.7%), and Metro Vancouver (11.4%).

How many children are in families on income assistance/disability assistance?

Based on BC Government income assistance/disability assistance data, as well as BC stats population estimates data and as shown in **Figure 11**, the monthly average percentage of New Westminster residents on income assistance/disability assistance **decreased slightly** from 3.9% in 2016 to 3.7% in 2018, but has since **increased slightly** to 4.0% in 2022. The monthly average number of New Westminster residents on income assistance/disability assistance **increased** from 2,897 residents in 2016

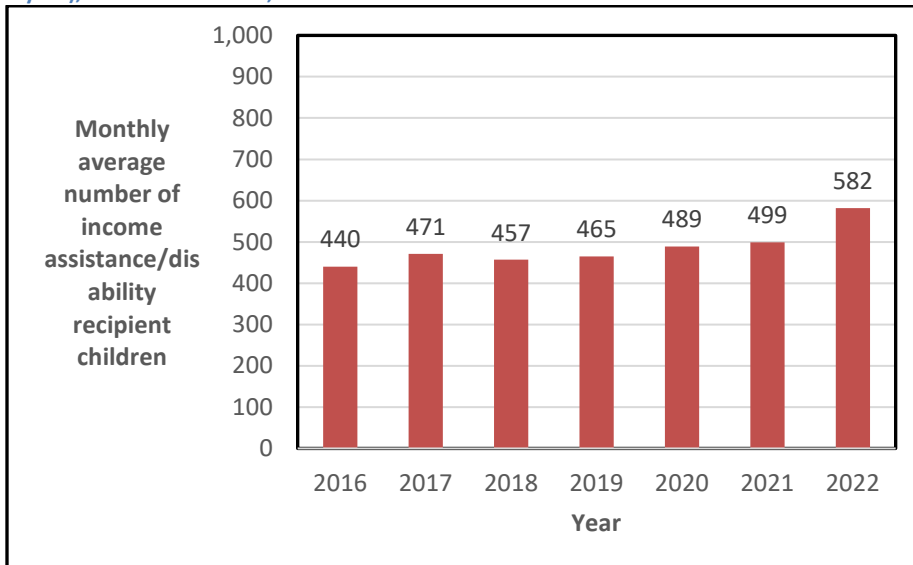
to 3,392 residents in 2022 (an **increase** of +495 recipients, a 17.1% **increase**). This is a similar trend to the provincial trend. In 2022, the monthly average percentage of New Westminster residents on income assistance/disability assistance (4.0%) **was slightly lower** than the BC average (4.2%).

Figure 11: Number of income assistance recipients (monthly average throughout a year) and as a percentage of the total population, New Westminster, 2016-2022



As shown in **Figure 12**, the monthly average number of dependent children in households receiving income assistance/disability assistance in New Westminster **increased** from 440 children in 2016 to 582 children in 2022 (an **increase** of 142 children, a 32.2% **increase**), with an especially **large increase** between 2021 (499 children) to 2022 (582 children). This is a similar trend to the provincial trends.

Figure 12: Number of dependent children in households receiving income/disability assistance (monthly average throughout a year), New Westminster, 2016-2022



How many children are in families experiencing working poverty?

Due to the frequent lockdowns and COVID-19 restrictions that impacted employment and the full-time nature of jobs, particularly in low-paying sectors such as accommodation and food services, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic benefits, the analysis of working poverty by full-time, full-year status from 2020 is not reflective of the poverty context and was thus not analyzed. Working poverty by full-time, full-year status will be analyzed in the next Census cycle (i.e., 2025 income data from the 2026 Census).

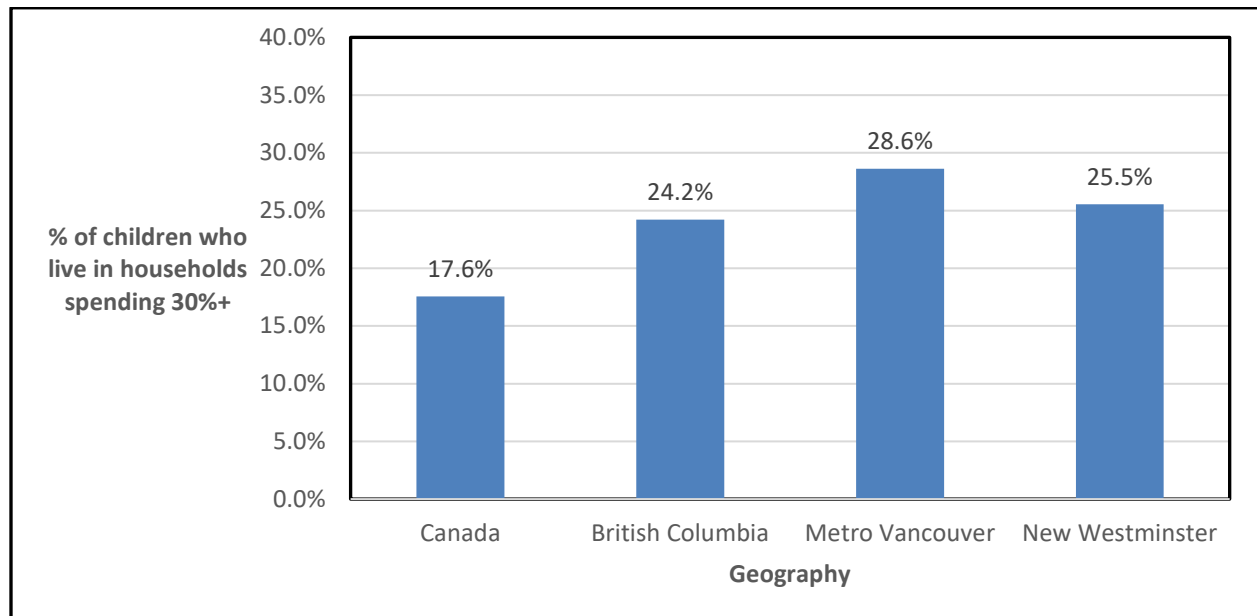
How many families are struggling with housing?

There are many measures for determining how many families are struggling with housing. Two of the most common methods are:

- 1) Children (0-17 years old) in households spending 30% or more of their before-tax household income on housing costs (based on 2021 Census data); and,
- 2) Number of families on BC Housing Wait List

Based on 2021 Census data (and shown in **Figure 13**), there were 25.5% of children (0-17 years old) in New Westminster were in households spending 30% or more of before-tax household incomes on housing costs, with 2,995 children in such households. Based on 2021 Census, the percentage of New Westminster children (0-17 years old) in households spending 30% or more of before-tax household incomes on housing costs (25.5%) was **lower** than Metro Vancouver (28.6%) but **higher** than for BC (24.2%) and **much higher** than for Canada (17.6%).

Figure 13: Number of children 0-17 years old, in households that spent 30% or more of before-tax household income on housing costs, New Westminster and comparison geographies, 2021 Census



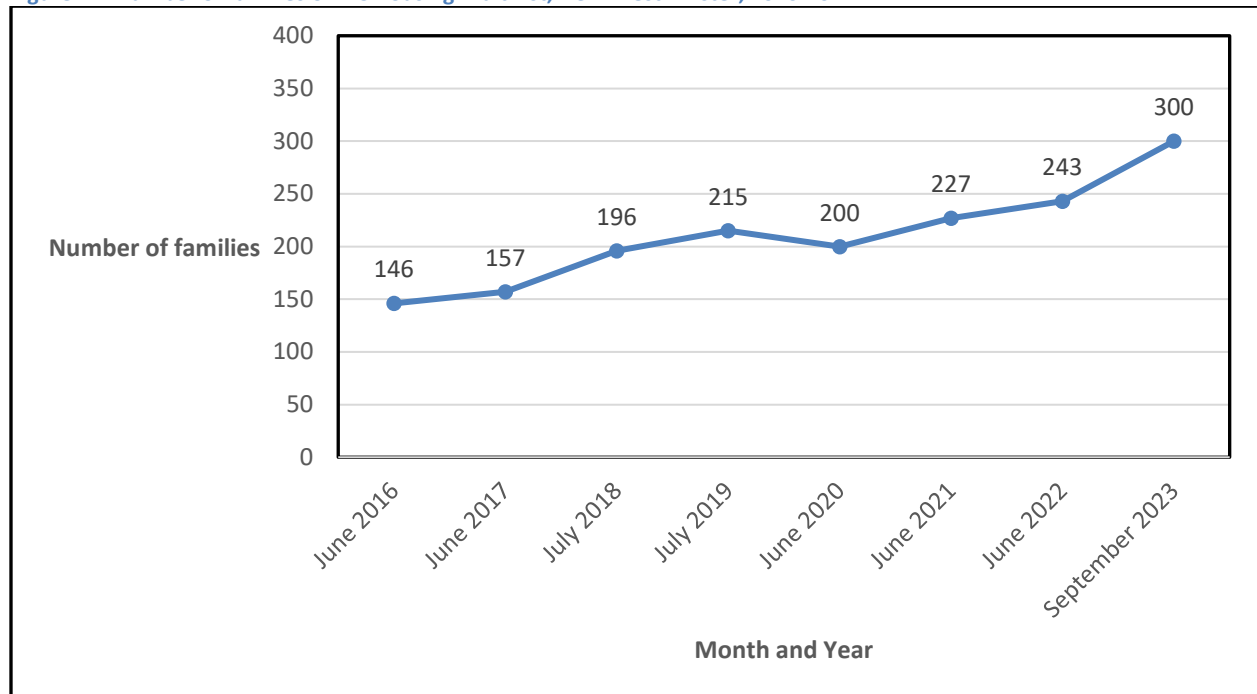
Based on 2021 Census data, in New Westminster, there were 1,155 children (0-17 years old) in renter households and 1,840 children (0-17 years old) in owner households spending 30%+ of their before-tax

household income on housing costs. Based on 2021 Census data, in New Westminister, the percentage of children (0-17 year old) in renter households spending 30%+ of their before-tax household income on housing costs (29.1%) **was higher** than for children (0-17 years old) in owner households (23.7%)

Figure 14 shows the number of families on the BC Housing Wait List in New Westminister from 2016 to 2022. The number of families on the wait list **increased** from 146 families in June 2016 to 300 families in September 2023 (an **increase** of 154 families, a 105.5% **increase**), with an **especially sharp increase** between June 2022 (243 families) to September 2023 (300 families). New Westminister’s 105.5% increase in the number of families on the BC Housing Wait List between June 2016 and September 2023 was **even larger** than Metro Vancouver’s very large increase of 92.6%.

The total number of households (including families, singles, seniors, persons with disabilities, and wheelchair users) on the BC Housing Wait List in New Westminister also **increased sharply** from 454 households in June 2016 to 823 households in September 2023 (a +369 household **increase**, a 81.3% **increase**), with the largest increase occurring between June 2022 (661 households) and September 2023 (823 households). Similarly, the number of households on the BC Housing Wait List in Metro Vancouver increased (including families, singles, seniors, persons with disabilities, and wheelchair users) increased by 79.7% between June 2016 and September 2023.

Figure 14: Number of families on BC Housing Wait List, New Westminister, 2016-2022



What percentage of families are food insecure?

Based on food hamper statistics provided by the New Westminister Homelessness Coalition Society on the combined three Don't Go Hungry programs and Saint Barnabas – Shiloh 5th Ave Food and Resource hubs from January 2022 – November 2023 and shown in **Figure 15**, the weekly average number of

people fed by these programs **increased** from 681 people in January 2022 to 1,465 people in November 2023, an **increase** of 784 people (115.1% **increase**) during that period. Between January 2022 and November 2023, the average weekly number of families helped by these programs **increased** from 125 families in January 2022 to 287 families in November 2023, an **increase** of 162 families (129.6% **increase**).

Severe increases in food security issues have been reported in Canada and BC as a whole, as per the [Food Banks Canada. Hunger Counts 2023 report](#): "In March 2023, there were almost 2 million visits to food banks across Canada, representing a 32 per cent increase compared to March 2022, and a 78.5 per cent increase compared to March 2019, which is the highest year-over-year increase in usage ever reported." In March 2023 in BC, there were 195,925 visits to food banks in BC, representing a 20% increase compared to March 2022 and a 57% increase compared to March 2019.

Figure 15: Food hampers statistics, Hamper Distribution - Weekly Averages (Combined 3 Don't Go Hungry and Saint Barnabas - Shiloh 5th Ave Food and Resource Hubs), January 2022 - November 2023

