

Regional Snapshot: Canterbury



New Zealand Council Of
Christian Social Services

98,400 people in Canterbury (14.5%) experience poverty after housing costs are paid

11,000 adults over 65 years old in Canterbury (9.69%) experience poverty after housing costs
26,800 children in Canterbury (18.6%) live in households experiencing poverty after housing costs

55,500 people in Canterbury (8.2%) are unable to afford essential items

2,000 adults over 65 years old in Canterbury (1.76%) are unable to afford the essentials
21,000 children in Canterbury (14.6%) are living in households that are unable to afford the essentials



Housing

In the year to March 2026 more than a third (36.4%) of emergency housing applications were declined
Homelessness is on the rise, with Christchurch City Mission reporting connecting with 214 new clients between March and August 2025

Some people in Christchurch are spending up to 90% of their income on rent and utilities, leaving almost nothing left for food and other expenses

Health

35% people in Canterbury had unmet dental treatment due to costs, with this disproportionately impacting 25-34 year olds (49.6%)
Almost 1 in 4 adults aged 25-34 in Canterbury were unable to access a doctor due to cost

34% of people in Canterbury experienced food insecurity in the past year

Income adequacy

The Jobseeker support is estimated to be \$116.42/week short of covering essential living costs like food, housing and power for single adult recipients in Christchurch

In the year to June 2026 38,091 special needs grants were approved in Canterbury, for households unable to cover their everyday expenses such as food, medical costs and utilities

Christchurch has had the highest increases in home insurance of any region, with this increasing 60% in the past 3 years, with contents increasing 33%

A population bigger than the Selwyn District are living in poverty

Visit our website for more information on steps we recommend to help free New Zealanders from poverty
nzccss.org.nz

