PIETERMARITZBURG ECONOMIC JUSTICE & DIGNITY

Economic justice through the lens of human dignity

Key Data from October 2026 Household Affordability Index

28 October 2026

For immediate release

1. *Key data from the October 2026 Household Affordability Index*

The October 2026 Household Affordability Index, which tracks the prices of 44 basic foods from 52 supermarkets and 36 butcheries, in Johannesburg (Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa and Hillbrow), Durban (KwaMashu, Umlazi, Isipingo, Durban CBD, Hammarsdale and Pinetown), Cape Town (Khayelitsha, Gugulethu, Philippi, Langa, Delft and Dunoon), Mthatha (Eastern Cape), Pietermaritzburg (KwaZulu-Natal), Springbok (Northern Cape), and Mtubatuba (Northern KwaZulu-Natal), shows that:

- **In October 2026:** The average cost of the Household Food Basket is **R5 512,53.**
- **Month-on-month**: The average cost of the Household Food Basket ***increased*** by **R24,48 (0,4%)**, from R5 488,06 in September 2026 to R5 512,53 in October 2026.
- **Year-on-year**: The average cost of the Household Food Basket ***increased*** by **R71,94 (1,3%)**, from R5 440,60 in October 2025 to R5 512,53 in October 2026.

2. *Food pricing trends in October 2026.*

In October, of the 44 foods tracked in the basket: 17 foods increased in price, and 27 foods decreased in price (*See page 2 of October 2026, Household Affordability Index).*

Below are the month-on-month price movements of individual foods in the average household food basket:

Foods in the basket which *increased* in price in October 2026 by 5% or more, include: onions (11%), tomatoes (10%), butternut (26%), oranges (6%), and margarine (6%).

Foods in the basket which *increased* in price in October 2026 by 2% or more, include: sugar beans (2%), potatoes (4%), tea (4%), and apricot jam (3%).

Foods in the basket which *decreased* in price in October 2026, by 5% or more, include: soup (-5%), spinach (-10%), and cabbage (-5%).

Foods in the basket which *decreased* in price in October 2026, by 2% or more, include: maize meal (-2%), salt (-2%), frozen chicken portions (-2%), chicken gizzards (-3%), chicken livers (-3%), *wors* (-4%), beef tripe (-2%), fish (-2%), carrots (-3%), green pepper (-2%), peanut butter (-4%), and polony (-2%).

3. *Inflation on the food baskets per area tracked.*

In October 2026, food baskets increased in price in: Joburg (+R87,70), Durban (+R51,60), Cape Town (+R5,32), and Mtubatuba (+R199,47). Food baskets decreased in Springbok (-R42,35), Pietermaritzburg (-R123,76), and Mthatha (-R22,60).

(See pages 8-15 for area specific data, in the October 2026, Household Affordability Index).

4. *Statistics South Africa's Consumer Price Index and Producer Price Index.*

Statistics South Africa's latest *Consumer Price Index* for September 2026[1] shows that **Headline inflation was 0,4% month-on-month and 4,5% year-on-year,** and for the **lowest expenditure quintiles 1-3 it is 3,3%, 3,1%,** and **3,2%** respectively. **CPI Food & non-alcoholic beverages inflation was -0,1% month-on-month and 1,2% year-on-year.** STATS SA's *Producer Price Index* for August 2026[2] shows ***Agriculture* was -3,6%**, of which, *Products of crops and horticulture* was **-6,4%**, and *Live animals and animal products* was **-0,5%.**

[1] STATSSA (2026). **Consumer Price Index September 2026**. Statistical release P0141. 21 October 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P3, 6. See Link: https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0141/P0141September2026.pdf

[2] STATSSA (2026). **Producer Price Index August 2026**. Statistical release P0142.1. 30 September 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P12. See Link: https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P01421/P01421August2026.pdf

5. Workers and The National Minimum Wage

The National Minimum Wage is R30,23 per hour, R241,84 for an 8-hour day, and R5 078,64 for an average 21-day working month.

In October 2026, with **22 working-days,** the maximum National Minimum Wage for a General Worker is **R5 320,48.** Workers work to support their families. The wage workers earn is not just to sustain themselves alone, it is used to support the entire family. For Black South African workers, **one wage typically must support 4,1 people**. The maximum wage of **R5 320,48** when disbursed in a **family of four persons is R1 330,12.** This is **below the National Upper-Bound Poverty Line of R2 962 per capita per month**, and **below the National Lower-Bound Poverty Line of R1 457 per capita per month** (in May 2026 prices).[3]

On our calculations, electricity, and transport will take up **R3 375,45** (**63,4%)** of a worker's wage in October 2026 (R2 112,00 for transport and R1 263,45 for electricity).

After paying for transport and electricity, workers are left with **R1 945,03.**

Food is bought after monies for transport and electricity have been paid for or set aside.

The October 2026 average cost of a basic nutritional food basket for a family of four persons is **R3 828,72** (*See page 5 of October 2026, Household Affordability Index).*

The minimum shortfall on food for a workers' family in October 2026 is **49,2%** (a shortfall of **R1 883,69** on a basket of nutritional food costing **R3 828,72**). **If all the remaining money (R1 945,03) went to buy food, then for a family of 4, it would provide R486,26 per person per month. This is 44% below the National Food Poverty Line of R868 per person per month.** Note that: the Food Poverty Line is a monetary-based threshold below which a person cannot consume enough food to meet their minimum daily energy requirements. *(See page 7 of October 2026, Household Affordability Index).*

6. Women and children: the Child Support Grant

In October 2026, the average monthly cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet was **R975,66.** Over the past month, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet ***increased*** by **R5,39 (0,6%).** Year-on-year, the average cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet ***increased*** by **R30,62 (3,2%).** *See page 5 of October 2026, Household Affordability Index.*

In October 2026, the **Child Support Grant** of **R580 per month** is **33% <u>below</u> the National Food Poverty Line** of **R868 per month** *(in May 2026 prices)*, and **41% <u>below</u>** the average monthly **cost to feed a child a basic nutritious diet (R975,66).**

7. PMBEJD's Basic Nutritional Food Basket for families

As financial and economic circumstances worsen, so too does household health and nutrition. The gap between what women are able to buy for their families and what they need to buy for proper nutrition widens.

The Basic Nutritional Food Basket, is a basket designed by a Registered Dietician and includes foods *<u>which does constitute proper and healthy nutrition, unlike the Household Food Basket, which does not.</u>*[4] The Basic Nutritional Food Basket ensures that current food expenditure (severely limited by affordability constraints) is not conflated with the food expenditure required to secure proper nutrition. Read together with the *Household Food Basket,* the *Basic Nutritional Food Basket* assists to provide a more comprehensive picture of the economic situation and food crisis South African households face. *Table 1.*

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[3] STATSSA (2026). **National Poverty Lines 2026.** Statistical Release P0310.1. 26 August 2026. Statistics South Africa. Pretoria. P3. See link: https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03101/P031012026.pdf

[4] The Basic Nutritional Food Basket includes a greater variety of better quality nutritionally-rich foods and in higher quantities to provide a family with a basic but nutritionally complete monthly diet. The basket can be amended to respond to families of various sizes, genders, ages and life stages through its connection to four "energy groups." Food price data for the Basic Nutritional Food Basket is collected with the Household Food Basket and conforms to the same methodology. *See page 5 of April 2026, Household Affordability Index.*

Table 1: October 2026: The Basic Nutritional Food Index: household sizes 4, 5 &7.

By number of family members	Index 2025/26			change in Rands		change in %	
	Oct_2025	Sep_2026	Oct_2026	Sep 2026 vs. Oct 2026	Oct 2025 vs. Oct 2026	Sep 2026 vs. Oct 2026	Oct 2025 vs. Oct 2026
Four (4)	R3 707,08	R3 807,11	R3 828,72	R 21,61	R 121,64	0,6%	3,3%
Five (5)	R4 684,45	R4 813,23	R4 839,88	R 26,65	R 155,43	0,6%	3,3%
Seven (7)	**R6 473,90**	**R6 655,29**	**R6 692,25**	**R 36,96**	**R 218,35**	**0,6%**	**3,4%**

Month-on-month: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket** for a family of 7 members ***increased*** by **R36,96 (0,6%)** from R6 655,29 in September 2026 to R6 692,25 in October 2026.

Year-on-year: The cost of a **basic nutritional food basket** for a family of 7 members ***increased*** by **R218,35 (3,4%)** from R6 473,90 in October 2025 to R6 692,25 in October 2026.

In October 2026, *The Basic Nutritional Food Basket,* using the same household size (7) as tracked by the Household Food Basket, is **R6 692,25.** This shows that the difference in cost between the foods which families living on low incomes try and buy each month (a household food basket) and the foods which families would like to buy and should buy to meet basic nutrition (a basic nutritional food basket) was **R1 179,72** (R5 512,53 vs. R6 692,25).

It shows that as at October 2026, families living on low-incomes may underspend on basic nutritional food by a minimum of 18% (R1 179,72). It means that the nutritional health and wellbeing of households is far worse than that shown by the Household Food Basket, and that the economic situation households face, with its attendant food crisis in homes is much deeper *(See page 5 of October 2026, Household Affordability Index).*