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Statistical Supplement to Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

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Matthew P. Rabbitt, Laura J. Hales, Michael P. Burke,
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Note to Readers

This supplement provides statistics that complement those in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022* (Report No. ERR-325), a research report that presents the primary national statistics on household food security, food spending, and the use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs by food-insecure households. Additional statistics here cover component items of the household food security measure, the frequency of occurrence of food-insecure conditions, and selected statistics on household food security, food spending, and the use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs.

Keywords: food security, food insecurity, food spending, free food, food pantry, food bank, soup kitchen, emergency kitchen, charitable foods, material well-being, SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, National School Lunch Program, WIC, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

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Statistical Supplement to Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

Introduction

This supplement provides statistics on component items of the household food security measure, the frequency of occurrence of food-insecure conditions, and selected statistics on household food security, food spending, and the use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs. It complements the *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022* report (Rabbitt et al., 2023), which provides the primary national statistics on household food security, food spending, and the use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs by food-insecure households.

The statistics presented here are based on data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) Food Security Supplement (FSS) conducted in December 2022. Information about the survey, data, and methods is available in the *Household Food Security in the United States in 2022* report. All statistics were calculated by applying the FSS weights to responses of surveyed households to obtain nationally representative prevalence estimates. Unless otherwise noted, statistical differences described in the text are significant at the 90-percent confidence level.¹

Updates and modifications to the FSS survey instrument were implemented in 2022. The box, “Revisions to the 2022 Food Security Supplement Survey Instrument,” has more information on those modifications. Because of the changes to the survey instrument, statistics on the use of community food and nutrition assistance in 2022 shown in this report are not comparable to those statistics from previous years.

Food Insecurity in Low-income Households

Table S-1 presents food security statistics for households with annual incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line.² By definition, food insecurity results from insufficient household resources; however, many factors that might affect a household’s food security (e.g., job loss, divorce, health shock, or other unexpected events) are not captured by an annual income measure. Some households experienced episodes of food insecurity, or even very low food security, when their annual incomes were well above the poverty line (Nord & Brent, 2002; Gundersen & Gruber, 2001). Conversely, many low-income households managed to remain food secure. In 2022, 64.8 percent of households with incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line were food secure, while 35.2 percent were food insecure.

¹ Standard errors of estimates were calculated using balanced repeated replication (BRR) methods based on replicate weights computed for the supplement by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

² The Federal poverty line in 2022 was \$29,678 annual income for a family of four (two adults and two children). Households with gross monthly income at or below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible to participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), provided they meet other eligibility criteria. The gross monthly income limit does not apply to households with an elderly member or member with a disability. Some States have adopted a broad-based categorical eligibility that provides a higher gross income limit for SNAP applicants who are categorically eligible for SNAP based on participation in other programs or benefits. Children were eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs if household income was determined to be at or below 130 percent of the poverty line.

Table S-1

Households with annual income below 130 percent of the poverty line by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2022

Category	Total ¹	Food insecure							
		Food secure		All		With low food security		With very low food security	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All low-income households	18,338	11,891	64.8	6,447	35.2	3,583	19.6	2,864	15.6
Household composition									
With children < 18 years	6,691	3,929	58.7	2,762	41.3	1,766	26.4	996	14.9
With children < 6 years	3,328	2,009	60.4	1,319	39.6	878	26.3	441	13.3
Married-couple families	2,581	1,646	63.8	935	36.2	719	27.8	216	8.4
Female head, no spouse	3,271	1,751	53.5	1,520	46.5	860	26.3	660	20.2
Male head, no spouse	748	468	62.6	280	37.4	168	22.4	112.0	15.0
Other household with child ²	90	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
With no children < 18 years	11,648	7,964	68.4	3,684	31.6	1,816	15.6	1,868	16.0
More than one adult	4,374	3,139	71.8	1,235	28.2	599	13.7	636	14.5
Women living alone	4,091	2,726	66.6	1,365	33.4	730	17.9	635	15.5
Men living alone	3,183	2,098	65.9	1,085	34.1	488	15.3	597	18.8
With adults aged 65 and older	5,942	4,423	74.4	1,519	25.6	914	15.4	605	10.2
Adults aged 65 and older living alone	3,443	2,522	73.3	921	26.7	533	15.4	388	11.3
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons:									
White, non-Hispanic	8,569	5,858	68.4	2,711	31.6	1,410	16.4	1,301	15.2
Black, non-Hispanic	3,664	2,111	57.6	1,553	42.4	863	23.6	690	18.8
Hispanic ³	4,648	2,928	63.0	1,720	37.0	1,043	22.4	677	14.6
Other, non-Hispanic	1,458	995	68.2	463	31.8	267	18.4	196	13.4
Area of residence ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	14,767	9,530	64.5	5,237	35.5	2,908	19.7	2,329	15.8
In principal cities ⁵	5,941	3,668	61.7	2,273	38.3	1,289	21.7	984	16.6
Not in principal cities	6,175	4,154	67.3	2,021	32.7	1,069	17.3	952	15.4
Outside metropolitan area	3,571	2,361	66.1	1,210	33.9	675	18.9	535	15.0
Census geographic region									
Northeast	2,803	1,943	69.3	860	30.7	490	17.5	370	13.2
Midwest	3,929	2,482	63.2	1,447	36.8	700	17.8	747	19.0
South	8,034	5,063	63.0	2,971	37.0	1,768	22.0	1,203	15.0
West	3,572	2,403	67.3	1,169	32.7	625	17.5	544	15.2

NA = Not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey with this characteristic and food security status.

¹ Totals exclude households for which income was not reported (about 22 percent of households) and those for which food security status is unknown because the households did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale (0.5 percent of low-income households).

² Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

³ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 18 percent of low-income households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Number of Persons by Household Food Security Status and Selected Household Characteristics

The survey measures food security status at the household level. While it is informative to examine the number of persons residing in food-insecure households, these statistics should be interpreted carefully (see tables S-2 for all individuals and S-3 for children). Within a food-insecure household, household members may be affected differently by the household's food insecurity. Some members—particularly young children—may experience only mild or no effects, while adults are more severely affected as they try to shield younger children from experiencing food insecurity. It is more precise to describe these statistics as representing “persons living in food-insecure households” rather than as representing “food-insecure persons.” Similarly, “persons living in households with very low food security” is a more precise description than “persons with very low food security.”

Table S-2

Number of individuals by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2022

Category	Total ¹	In food-insecure households							
		In food-secure households		All		In households with low food security		In households with very low food security	
			Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
All individuals in households	327,892	283,741	86.5	44,151	13.5	28,165	8.6	15,986	4.9
Household composition									
With children < 18 years	154,851	128,253	82.8	26,598	17.2	18,378	11.9	8,220	5.3
With children < 6 years	67,856	56,141	82.7	11,715	17.3	8,037	11.9	3,678	5.4
Married-couple families	106,606	94,406	88.6	12,200	11.4	9,258	8.6	2,942	2.8
Female head, no spouse	33,879	22,542	66.5	11,337	33.5	7,041	20.8	4,296	12.7
Male head, no spouse	12,602	9,881	78.4	2,721	21.6	1,827	14.5	894	7.1
Other household with child ²	1,765	1,425	80.7	340	19.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
With no children < 18 years	173,042	155,489	89.9	17,553	10.1	9,787	5.6	7,766	4.5
More than one adult	133,451	121,647	91.2	11,804	8.8	6,717	5.0	5,087	3.8
Women living alone	21,247	18,037	84.9	3,210	15.1	1,759	8.3	1,451	6.8
Men living alone	18,344	15,805	86.2	2,539	13.8	1,311	7.1	1,228	6.7
With adults aged 65 and older	85,421	77,354	90.6	8,067	9.4	5,272	6.1	2,795	3.3
Adults aged 65 and older living alone	16,381	14,509	88.6	1,872	11.4	1,119	6.8	753	4.6
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons									
White, non-Hispanic	199,622	180,409	90.4	19,213	9.6	11,949	6.0	7,264	3.6
Black, non-Hispanic	40,994	31,699	77.3	9,295	22.7	5,672	13.9	3,623	8.8
Hispanic ³	59,381	46,693	78.6	12,688	21.4	8,682	14.7	4,006	6.7
Other, non-Hispanic	27,895	24,942	89.4	2,953	10.6	1,861	6.7	1,092	3.9
Household income-to-poverty ratio									
Under 1.00	32,561	20,112	61.8	12,449	38.2	7,399	22.7	5,050	15.5
Under 1.30	47,786	30,197	63.2	17,589	36.8	10,642	22.3	6,947	14.5
Under 1.85	70,220	46,662	66.5	23,558	33.5	14,598	20.7	8,960	12.8
1.85 and over	190,677	177,468	93.1	13,209	6.9	9,119	4.8	4,090	2.1
Income unknown	66,995	59,611	89.0	7,384	11.0	4,449	6.6	2,935	4.4
Area of residence ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	284,555	247,177	86.9	37,378	13.1	23,847	8.3	13,531	4.8
In principal cities ⁵	89,184	74,734	83.8	14,450	16.2	9,184	10.3	5,266	5.9
Not in principal cities	154,133	136,844	88.8	17,289	11.2	10,939	7.1	6,350	4.1
Outside metropolitan area	43,338	36,565	84.4	6,773	15.6	4,318	9.9	2,455	5.7
Census geographic region									
Northeast	55,972	49,444	88.3	6,528	11.7	4,389	7.9	2,139	3.8
Midwest	67,867	59,055	87.0	8,812	13.0	5,273	7.8	3,539	5.2
South	126,434	106,731	84.4	19,703	15.6	12,661	10.0	7,042	5.6
West	77,619	68,511	88.3	9,108	11.7	5,841	7.5	3,267	4.2

NA = Not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey with this characteristic and food security status.

¹ Totals exclude individuals in households for which food security status is unknown because the households did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2022, these exclusions represented about 709,000 individuals (0.2 percent of the U.S. population).

² Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

³ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 14 percent of individuals living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-3

Number of children by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2022

Category	In food-secure households		In food-insecure households ²		In households with food-insecure children ³		In households with very low food security among children		
	Total ¹	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All children	72,595	59,201	81.5	13,394	18.5	7,263	10.0	783	1.1
Household composition									
With children < 6 years	34,354	27,917	81.3	6,437	18.7	3,682	10.7	411	1.2
Married-couple families	48,594	42,922	88.3	5,672	11.7	2,782	5.7	203	0.4
Female head, no spouse	17,649	11,383	64.5	6,266	35.5	3,740	21.2	502	2.8
Male head, no spouse	5,692	4,376	76.9	1,316	23.1	713	12.5	70	1.2
Other household with child ⁴	660	519	78.6	141	21.4	NA	NA	NA	NA
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons									
White, non-Hispanic	39,401	34,108	86.6	5,293	13.4	2,604	6.6	298	0.8
Black, non-Hispanic	10,460	7,438	71.1	3,022	28.9	1,805	17.3	118	1.1
Hispanic ⁵	16,413	12,217	74.4	4,196	25.6	2,355	14.3	315	1.9
Other, non-Hispanic	6,321	5,438	86.0	883	14.0	499	7.9	NA	NA
Household income-to-poverty ratio									
Under 1.00	10,580	5,979	56.5	4,601	43.5	2,734	25.8	341	3.2
Under 1.30	15,393	8,855	57.5	6,538	42.5	3,817	24.8	441	2.9
Under 1.85	20,872	12,784	61.2	8,088	38.8	4,709	22.6	569	2.7
1.85 and over	39,272	35,837	91.3	3,435	8.7	1,581	4.0	139	0.4
Income unknown	12,451	10,579	85.0	1,872	15.0	973	7.8	NA	NA
Area of residence ⁶									
Inside metropolitan area	62,867	51,550	82.0	11,317	18.0	6,224	9.9	710	1.1
In principal cities ⁷	18,717	14,493	77.4	4,224	22.6	2,267	12.1	285	1.5
Not in principal cities	35,164	29,765	84.6	5,399	15.4	2,924	8.3	319	0.9
Outside metropolitan area	9,728	7,650	78.6	2,078	21.4	1,039	10.7	74	0.8
Census geographic region									
Northeast	11,555	9,864	85.4	1,691	14.6	814	7.0	NA	NA
Midwest	15,235	12,339	81.0	2,896	19.0	1,596	10.5	179	1.2
South	28,608	22,567	78.9	6,041	21.1	3,380	11.8	334	1.2
West	17,197	14,431	83.9	2,766	16.1	1,473	8.6	196	1.1

NA = Not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey with this characteristic and food security status.

¹ Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because the households did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2022, these exclusions represented 241,000 children (0.3 percent).

² Food-insecure households are those with low or very low food security among adults or children, or both.

³ Households with food-insecure children are those with low or very low food security among children.

⁴ Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

⁵ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁶ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁷ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 14 percent of children living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Security During the 30 Days Prior to the Food Security Survey

The annual food security survey was designed to assess households' food security during the 12-month period prior to the survey, but information was also collected for the 30-day period before the survey for the subset of households that reported experiencing food insecurity in the 12 months before the survey.³ Households that responded affirmatively to each 12-month period question were asked whether the same behavior, experience, or condition occurred during the last 30 days. Researchers used responses to these questions to assess the food security status of households during the 30 days before the survey, following the same protocols used for the 12-month measure.⁴ The 30-day food security measurement protocol was revised in 2005, so 30-day statistics for 2022 are directly comparable with those for 2005 and later years but not with those reported for 2004 and earlier years.

An estimated 93.0 percent of households were food secure throughout the 30-day period, from mid-November to mid-December 2022 (table S-4).⁵ An estimated 7.0 percent (9.3 million households) were food insecure at some point during the 30-day period, including 2.8 percent (3.7 million households) with very low food security. The national-level prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security were statistically significantly higher than the corresponding 30-day period in 2021 (5.5 percent and 2.2 percent, respectively) (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022).⁶ Additionally, many subpopulations experienced statistically significant increases in prevalence rates of food insecurity from 2021 to 2022, including most household compositions, all income groups, all residence areas, and all regions. There were no statistically significant declines in the prevalence of 30-day food insecurity from 2021 to 2022. See figure S-1 for the percent of households that were food insecure in the 30 days before the survey in 2021 and 2022 and the percentage point changes in the prevalence from 2021 to 2022 for all subpopulation groups. Changes marked with an asterisk (*) in the figure are statistically significant.

Many subpopulations also experienced increases in the prevalence of 30-day very low food security when compared with the corresponding 30-day period in 2021. Figure S-2 displays the prevalence of very low food security during the 30 days prior to the food security survey in 2021 and 2022 for all population subgroups and shows the statistically significant increases (marked with an asterisk) in many of those groups. There were no significant declines in 30-day very low food security from 2021 to 2022.

Just over half (55 percent) of households that were food insecure some time during the 12 months before the survey (17.0 million households) (Rabbitt et al., 2023) were food insecure at some time during the 30 days from mid-November to mid-December 2022 (9.3 million households; table S-4); the corresponding statistic for very low food security was 54 percent (3.7 million versus 6.8 million households). If food insecurity during this 30-day period was like that for other 30-day periods throughout the year, then these comparisons imply the average household that was food insecure at some time during the year experienced this condition in 7

³ Households reporting they are food secure during the 12-month period prior to the survey are assumed to be food secure for the 30-day period before the survey.

⁴ For questions asking about the frequency of conditions or behaviors (items 5, 10, and 17), responses that indicated the described conditions occurred on at least 3 days of the previous 30 days were counted as affirmative. See Nord (2002). Beginning with the 2019 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data collection, all continuous variables for the number of days out of the previous 30 days that food-insecure conditions occurred are only released after being categorized into ranges of number of days. In 2022, all these recoded variables include at least a category for 1 or 2 days so that the 30-day food security prevalence rate can be calculated the same way as in previous years, using 3 or more days as affirmative. One variable, HESSHM5: "In the last 30 days, did children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?" did not meet U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census guidelines for disclosure and no data are provided for that variable. That question was not used in assessing 30-day food security status but is unlikely to affect the estimates because it is the most severe item on the scale and not near the food insecurity or very low food security thresholds.

⁵ The 2022 food security survey was conducted December 11–20, 2022.

⁶ The 2021 food security survey was conducted December 12–21, 2021.

months of the year. Likewise, the average household with very low food security experienced that condition in 7 months of the year.⁷ However, analysis of food insecurity in different months suggests that food insecurity is somewhat more prevalent in the summer months (July–September) than in March–April and November–December. The reason is perhaps because of less access to school meal programs during the summer (Cohen et al., 2002; Nord & Romig, 2006; Nord & Kantor, 2006), so typical frequencies may be somewhat higher than the 7 months implied.

⁷ The number of months is estimated as the monthly rate, divided by the annual rate, multiplied by 12.

Table S-4

Households by food security status during the 30 days prior to the food security survey and selected household characteristics, 2022¹

Category	Total ¹	Food secure		Food insecure					
		1,000	Percent	All		With low food security		With very low food security	
				1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All households	132,730	123,390	93.0	9,340	7.0	5,671	4.2	3,669	2.8
Household composition									
With children < 18 years	37,235	33,742	90.6	3,493	9.4	2,450	6.6	1,043	2.8
With children < 6 years	15,551	14,051	90.4	1,500	9.6	1,107	7.1	393	2.5
Married-couple families	24,152	22,801	94.4	1,351	5.6	1,019	4.2	332	1.4
Female head, no spouse	9,207	7,522	81.7	1,685	18.3	1,110	12.1	575	6.2
Male head, no spouse	3,437	3,017	87.8	420	12.2	296	8.6	124	3.6
Other household with child ²	439	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
With no children < 18 years	95,494	89,647	93.9	5,847	6.1	3,221	3.4	2,626	2.7
More than one adult	55,904	53,239	95.2	2,665	4.8	1,548	2.8	1,117	2.0
Women living alone	21,247	19,479	91.7	1,768	8.3	970	4.5	798	3.8
Men living alone	18,344	16,929	92.3	1,415	7.7	704	3.8	711	3.9
With adults aged 65 and older	42,670	40,563	95.1	2,107	4.9	1,275	3.0	832	1.9
Adults aged 65 and older living alone	16,381	15,415	94.1	966	5.9	536	3.3	430	2.6
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons									
White, non-Hispanic	85,603	81,120	94.8	4,483	5.2	2,603	3.0	1,880	2.2
Black, non-Hispanic	17,271	15,220	88.1	2,051	11.9	1,287	7.5	764	4.4
Hispanic ³	19,507	17,302	88.7	2,205	11.3	1,419	7.3	786	4.0
Other, non-Hispanic	10,348	9,749	94.2	599	5.8	361	3.5	238	2.3
Household income-to-poverty ratio									
Under 1.00	12,948	10,162	78.5	2,786	21.5	1,481	11.4	1,305	10.1
Under 1.30	18,338	14,608	79.7	3,730	20.3	2,004	10.9	1,726	9.4
Under 1.85	27,305	22,306	81.7	4,999	18.3	2,780	10.2	2,219	8.1
1.85 and over	76,680	74,072	96.6	2,608	3.4	1,717	2.2	891	1.2
Income unknown	28,744	27,011	94.0	1,733	6.0	1,174	4.1	559	1.9
Area of residence ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	114,666	106,807	93.1	7,859	6.9	4,777	4.2	3,082	2.7
In principal cities ⁵	38,197	34,939	91.5	3,258	8.5	1,932	5.0	1,326	3.5
Not in principal cities	59,281	55,877	94.3	3,404	5.7	2,110	3.5	1,294	2.2
Outside metropolitan area	18,063	16,582	91.8	1,481	8.2	894	5.0	587	3.2
Census geographic region									
Northeast	22,807	21,293	93.4	1,514	6.6	951	4.1	563	2.5
Midwest	28,581	26,534	92.8	2,047	7.2	1,263	4.5	784	2.7
South	51,529	47,447	92.1	4,082	7.9	2,495	4.8	1,587	3.1
West	29,814	28,116	94.3	1,698	5.7	962	3.2	736	2.5

NA = Not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey with this characteristic and food security status within the past 30 days.

¹ The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 11–20, 2022. Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because the households did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the 30-day food security scale. In 2022, these exclusions represented 278,000 households (0.2 percent of all households). The 30-day statistics for 2004 and earlier years were based on a different methodology and are not comparable with these statistics.

² Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

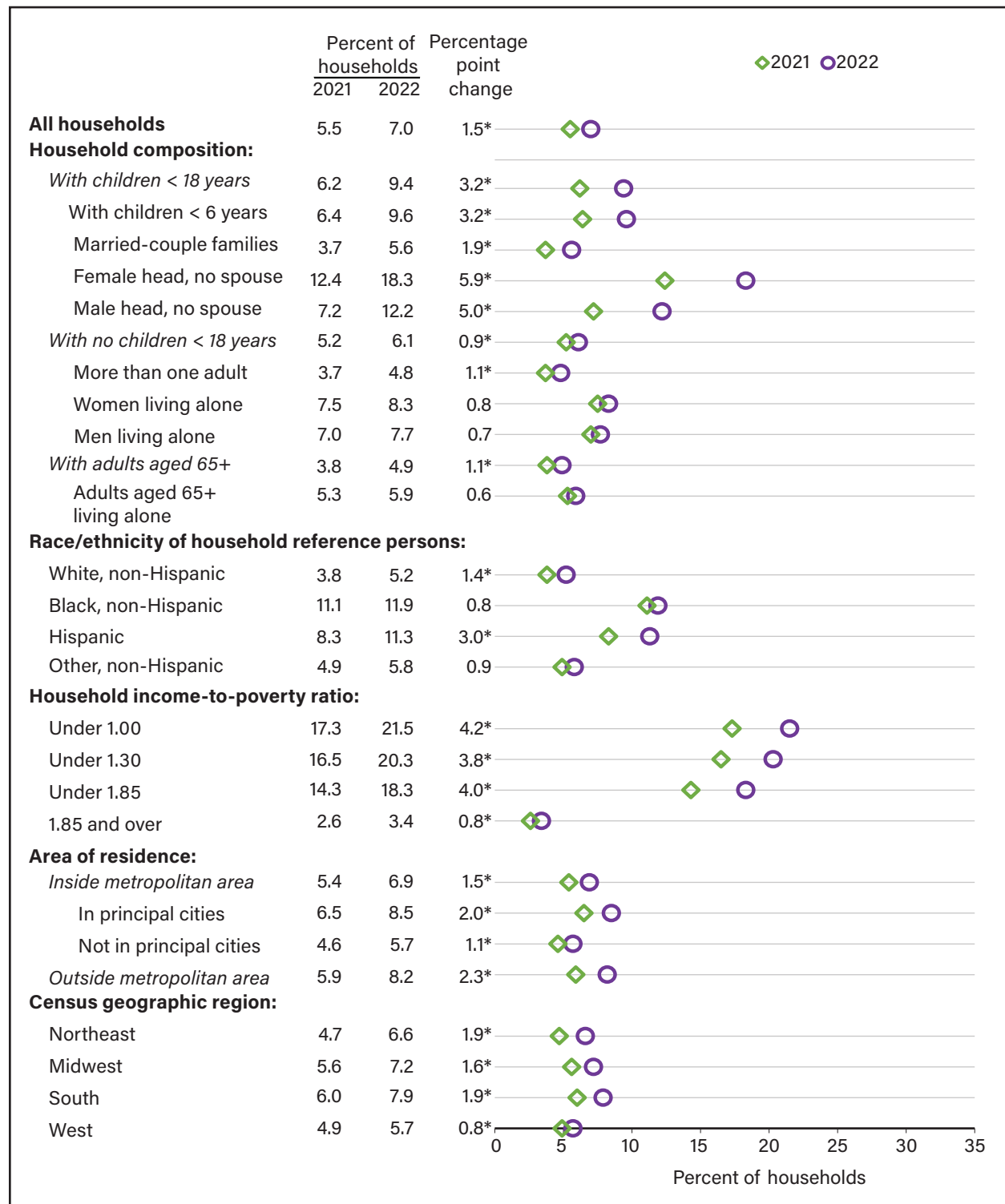
³ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 15 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Figure S-1
Prevalence of 30-day food insecurity, 2021 and 2022

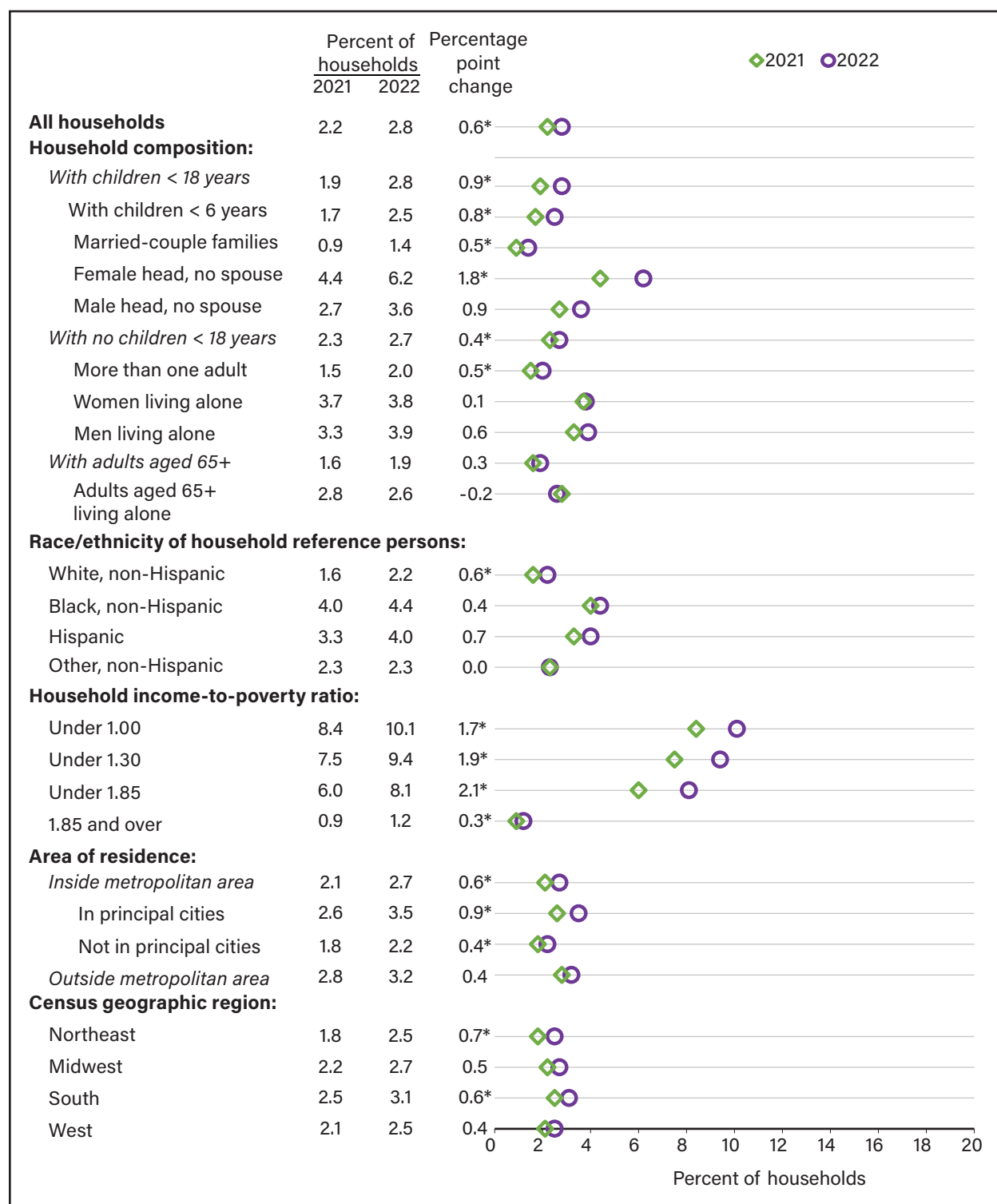


Note: The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December each year.

* An asterisk indicates change is statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level ($t > 1.645$).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2021 and 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Figure S-2
Prevalence of 30-day very low food security, 2021 and 2022



Note: The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December each year.

* An asterisk indicates change is statistically different from zero at the 90 percent confidence level ($t > 1.645$).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2021 and 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Household Responses to Questions in the Food Security Scale

The 18 food security questions ask about conditions, experiences, and behaviors that range widely in severity (items near the top of the lists in table S-5 are relatively less severe, while those nearer the bottom are more severe). Those indicating less severe food insecurity are observed in a larger proportion of households, and the proportion declines as severity increases (table S-5). The two least severe questions refer to uncertainty about having enough food and the experience of running out of food. The remaining 16 items indicate reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diets, as well as increasingly severe disruptions of normal eating patterns and reductions in food intake. (The box, “Questions Used to Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Supplement,” on page 27 displays the complete question wording, and box S-1, “Revisions to the 2022 Food Security Supplement Survey Instrument,” on page 25 provides information on recent changes to the questions.)

Table S-5
Responses to items in the food security scale, 2019–22¹

Scale item ²	Households affirming item ³			
	2019	2020	2021	2022
	Percent			
Household items				
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	13.9	14.2	13.9	16.7
Food bought didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	11.4	11.4	11.0	14.0
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	11.8	11.3	11.3	14.2
Adult items				
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	6.4	6.2	6.0	7.7
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	6.7	6.3	6.2	7.9
Adult(s) cut size or skipped meals in 3 or more months	4.9	4.7	4.6	6.0
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	3.5	3.3	3.4	4.0
Respondent lost weight	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.8
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.6
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day in 3 or more months	1.2	0.9	0.9	1.1
Child items				
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	11.3	12.9	10.1	13.1
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	6.8	7.7	6.8	9.5
Child(ren) were not eating enough	2.9	3.6	3.0	3.9
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	1.2	1.9	1.5	2.4
Child(ren) were hungry	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.1
Child(ren) skipped meals	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.7
Child(ren) skipped meals in 3 or more months	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.5
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2

¹ Survey responses are weighted to population totals.

² The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., “... because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food” or “... because there wasn't enough money for food.” See box on page 27 for the complete wording of these questions.

³ Households not responding to an item are omitted from the calculations of percentages for that item. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of child-referenced items.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2019-22 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Three or more affirmative responses are required for a household to be classified as food insecure. All households in that category affirmed at least one item indicating reduced diet quality or disruption of normal eating patterns or a reduction in food intake. Most food-insecure households reported multiple indicators of these conditions. A large majority of households (72.2 percent of households with children and 81.1 percent of those without children) reported no problems or concerns in meeting their food needs (table S-6). Households that reported only one or two indications of food insecurity (10.5 percent of households with children and 7.9 percent of households without children) are also classified as food secure. Most of these households affirmed one or both of the first two items,

indicating uncertainty about having enough food or about exhausting their food supply, but did not indicate actual disruptions of normal eating patterns or reductions in food intake. Although these households are classified as food secure, the food security of some households may have been marginal at times, especially in the sense that they lacked “assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways,” a condition that the Life Sciences Research Office includes in its definition of food security (Anderson, 1990, p. 1598).⁸ Research examining health and children’s development in these marginally food-secure households generally indicates that outcomes are either intermediate between those in highly food-secure and food-insecure households or more closely resemble those in food-insecure households (Radimer & Nord, 2005; Winicki & Jemison, 2003; Wilde & Peterman, 2006).

Table S-6

Percentage of households by food security raw score, 2022

Panel A: Households with children—18-item household food security scale			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households ¹	Cumulative percent of households ¹	Food security status
0	72.23	72.23	Food secure (82.71 percent)
1	6.10	78.32	
2	4.39	82.71	
3	4.01	86.72	Low food security (11.83 percent)
4	2.63	89.35	
5	2.03	91.38	
6	1.77	93.15	
7	1.39	94.54	
8	1.62	96.16	
9	1.07	97.23	Very low food security (5.46 percent)
10	0.85	98.08	
11	0.76	98.84	
12	0.47	99.31	
13	0.21	99.52	
14	0.17	99.69	
15	0.12	99.80	
16	0.02	99.82	
17	0.12	99.94	
18	0.06	100.00	

Panel B: Households with children—8-item child food security scale			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households ¹	Cumulative percent of households ¹	Food security status
0	84.86	84.86	Children food secure (91.23 percent)
1	6.37	91.23	
2	4.76	95.99	Low food security among children (7.75 percent)
3	2.13	98.13	
4	0.85	98.98	
5	0.45	99.43	Very low food security among children (1.02 percent)
6	0.18	99.61	
7	0.31	99.92	
8	0.08	100.00	

Panel C: Households with no children—10-item adult food security scale			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households ¹	Cumulative percent of households ¹	Food security status
0	81.08	81.08	Food secure (88.96 percent)
1	4.70	85.78	
2	3.18	88.96	
3	3.36	92.32	Low food security (6.06 percent)
4	1.30	93.62	
5	1.40	95.02	
6	1.74	96.75	
7	1.26	98.02	Very low food security (4.98 percent)
8	1.05	99.07	
9	0.38	99.45	
10	0.55	100.00	

¹Survey responses are weighted to population totals.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁸ The Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) is a nonprofit organization in Bethesda, MD. Concepts and definitions of food security and related conditions developed by LSRO for the American Institute of Nutrition (Anderson, 1990) provided key parts of the theoretical underpinnings of the household food security measure.

Frequency of Occurrence of Behaviors, Experiences, and Conditions That Indicate Food Insecurity

Most of the questions used to calculate the food security scale also elicit information about how often the food-insecure behavior, experience, or condition occurred. The food security scale does not take all this frequency-of-occurrence information into account, but analysis of these responses can provide insight into the frequency and duration of food insecurity. Frequency-of-occurrence information is collected in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) using two different methods:

- **Method 1:** A condition is described, and the respondent is asked if this condition was often, sometimes, or never true for their household during the past 12 months.
- **Method 2:** Respondents who answer “yes” to a question are asked, “How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?”

Table S-7 presents responses to each food security question, broken down by reported frequency of occurrence for all households interviewed in the December 2022 survey. Questions using Method 1 are presented in the top panel of the table, and those using Method 2 are presented in the bottom panel. Most households that responded affirmatively to Method 1 questions reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “sometimes,” while 15 to 24 percent (depending on the specific question) reported that it occurred “often.”

In response to Method 2 questions—conditional on affirming the general question—16 to 33 percent of respondents reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “in almost every month;” 44 to 56 percent reported that it occurred in “some months, but not every month;” and 21 to 33 percent reported that it occurred “in only 1 or 2 months.”

Table S-8 presents the same frequency-of-occurrence response statistics for households classified as having very low food security.

Table S-7

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2022¹

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence				
		Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes	
		--- Percent of all households ---			Percent of "ever during the year" ³	
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	16.7	4.0	12.8	24.0	76.0	
Food bought didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	14.0	2.6	11.3	19.0	81.0	
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	14.2	3.4	10.8	24.0	76.0	
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	13.1	2.7	10.4	21.0	79.0	
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	9.5	1.4	8.1	15.0	85.0	
Child(ren) were not eating enough	3.9	0.6	3.3	16.0	84.0	

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence					
		Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months
		--- Percent of all households ---			Percent of "ever during the year" ³		
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	7.7	2.4	3.6	1.6	32	47	21
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	7.9	2.3	3.6	1.9	29	46	25
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	4.0	1.2	1.8	1.0	30	45	25
Respondent lost weight	2.8	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.6	0.4	0.7	0.4	27	44	28
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.4	0.4	1.3	0.6	19	56	25
Child(ren) were hungry	1.1	0.2	0.6	0.4	16	51	33
Child(ren) skipped meals	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.2	33	44	23
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	0.2	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

NC = Frequency of occurrence information was not collected for these conditions.

¹ Survey responses are weighted to population totals. Households not responding to an item or not responding to the follow-up question about frequency of occurrence are omitted from the calculation of percentages for that item. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of percentages for child-referenced items.

² The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

³ Columns labeled "Percent of 'Ever during the year'" show the distribution by frequency of occurrence for households that indicate they experienced the condition "Ever during the year" (shown in the first column of statistics).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-8

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by households with very low food security, 2022¹

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence			
		Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
	- - - Percent of all households with very low food security - - -			Percent of "ever during the year" ³	
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	97.5	43.9	53.6	45	55
Food bought didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	97.1	33.7	63.4	35	65
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	95.6	37.8	57.8	40	60
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	90.2	30.9	59.2	34	66
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	82.8	20.7	62.1	25	75
Child(ren) were not eating enough	52.9	10.3	42.6	19	81

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence					
		Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	1 or 2 months
	- - - Percent of all households with very low food security - - -			Percent of "ever during the year" ³			
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	95.8	39.4	47.4	9.0	41	49	9
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	94.6	37.6	44.5	12.5	40	47	13
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	64.6	22.5	29.5	12.5	35	46	19
Respondent lost weight	46.0	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	28.5	8.3	13.4	6.8	29	47	24
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	34.8	7.7	18.6	8.5	22	53	24
Child(ren) were hungry	19.8	3.4	9.9	6.5	17	50	33
Child(ren) skipped meals	13.1	4.3	5.8	3.0	33	44	23
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	3.6	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

NC = Frequency of occurrence information was not collected for these conditions.

¹ Survey responses are weighted to population totals. Households not responding to an item or not responding to the follow-up question about frequency of occurrence are omitted from the calculation of percentages for that item. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of percentages for child-referenced items.

² The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

³ Columns labeled "Percent of 'Ever during the year'" show the distribution by frequency of occurrence for households that indicate they experienced the condition "Ever during the year" (shown in the first column of statistics).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Monthly and Daily Occurrence of Food-Insecure Conditions

Respondents also reported whether the behaviors and experiences that indicate food insecurity had occurred during the 30 days before the survey.⁹ For seven of these behaviors and experiences, respondents also reported how many days the condition had occurred during that period. Table S-9 summarizes responses to these questions.¹⁰

Table S-9

Monthly and daily occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2022¹

Condition ²	For households reporting condition at any time during previous 30 days					Average daily prevalence Percent ³
	Ever during previous 30 days	Number of days out of previous 30 days			Monthly average occurrence Days ³	
		1-7 days Percent ³	8-14 days	15-30 days		
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	8.06	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Food bought didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	7.22	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	8.23	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	5.01	69	14	18	7.3	1.23
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	4.72	60	17	23	8.9	1.39
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	2.55	67	16	17	7.7	0.65
Respondent lost weight	1.75	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	0.94	75	15	10	6.0	0.19
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	6.89	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	5.15	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Child(ren) were not eating enough	2.40	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	1.60	72	16	12	6.5	0.35
Child(ren) were hungry	0.77	75	NA	NA	6.4	0.16
Child(ren) skipped meals	0.56	66	NA	NA	8.3	0.15
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	NA	NC	NC	NC	NC	NC

NC = Number of days of occurrence was not collected for these conditions.

NA = Number of days of occurrence was not reported because there were fewer than 10 households in the survey with responses for that question and category.

¹ Survey responses are weighted to population totals. The 30-day and daily statistics refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 11–20, 2022.

² The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

³ Households without children are excluded from the denominator of child-referenced items.

Note: Beginning with the 2019 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data and continuing in 2022, the variables for the number of days out of the previous 30 days in which food-insecure conditions were experienced are now reported in categories. The midpoint of the categories was used to estimate the average daily prevalence. The category ranges enable reporting of the conditions in 1-7 day, 8-14 day, and 15-30 day increments as in previous annual reports.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁹ Beginning with the 2019 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data collection and continuing in 2022, all continuous variables for the number of days out of the previous 30 days that food-insecure conditions occurred are only released after being categorized into ranges of the number of days that a condition occurred. The result is less precise estimates of the average daily prevalence of food-insecure conditions. The midpoint of the range is used to calculate the average daily prevalence. The average daily prevalence for each condition is still calculated as the product of the 30-day prevalence and the average number of days experienced divided by 30. In prior annual food security reports, these estimates were then used to approximate the average daily prevalence of very low food security. That approximation for the daily prevalence of very low food security is no longer presented, given the less precise estimates of average daily prevalence for the conditions.

¹⁰ Average daily prevalence for these questions is calculated as the product of the 30-day prevalence and the average number of days divided by 30.

Food Spending by Food-Secure and Food-Insecure Households

Usual food spending was adjusted for household size and composition in two ways. First, researchers divided each household's usual weekly food expenditure by the number of household members, yielding the "usual weekly food spending per person" for that household. The second adjustment more precisely accounts for the different food needs of households by comparing each household's usual food spending with the estimated cost of the USDA Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) for that household in December 2022 (for a complete discussion of these methods, see Rabbitt et al., 2023). Each household's reported usual weekly food spending was divided by the household-specific cost of the TFP based on the age- and gender-specific cost of the TFP for each household member and the number of persons in the household (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, 2023).

Food-secure households typically spent more on food than food-insecure households of similar age-gender composition. The pattern of higher median food spending relative to the cost of the TFP by food-secure households was consistent for many groups across household structure, race, Hispanic ethnicity, residence, and geographic region (table S-10).¹¹ For low-income households, food spending relative to the cost of the TFP was similar for food-secure and food-insecure households.

¹¹ Estimates of median weekly food spending relative to the household cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) for December 2022 are not comparable with estimates for years prior to 2021. The cost of the TFP was revised in 2021 to reflect updated data on food prices, food composition, consumption patterns, and current dietary guidance.

Table S-10

Weekly household food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2022

Category	Median weekly food spending, relative to December 2022 TFP ¹	
	Food secure	Food insecure
	Ratio (Cost of TFP = 1.0)	
All households	1.14	0.99
Household composition		
With children < 18 years	1.03	0.92
At least one child < 6 years	1.00	0.96
Married-couple families	1.04	0.88
Female head, no spouse	0.97	0.94
Male head, no spouse	1.01	0.92
Other household with child ²	NA	NA
With no children < 18 years	1.20	1.07
More than one adult	1.11	0.94
Women living alone	1.31	1.20
Men living alone	1.32	1.20
With adults aged 65+	1.08	0.96
Adults aged 65+ living alone	1.17	1.13
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons		
White, non-Hispanic	1.18	1.02
Black, non-Hispanic	0.96	0.98
Hispanic ³	1.04	0.95
Other, non-Hispanic	1.14	1.02
Household income-to-poverty ratio		
Under 1.00	0.89	0.90
Under 1.30	0.90	0.92
Under 1.85	0.92	0.92
1.85 and over	1.20	1.13
Income unknown	1.08	1.01
Area of residence ⁴		
Inside metropolitan area	1.17	1.02
In principal cities ⁵	1.19	1.00
Not in principal cities	1.18	1.04
Outside metropolitan area	1.02	0.91
Census geographic region		
Northeast	1.18	1.11
Midwest	1.09	1.00
South	1.13	0.96
West	1.20	0.98

NA = Median not reported; fewer than 100 interviewed households in the category.

¹ Statistics exclude households that did not answer the questions about spending on food or reported zero usual food spending and those that did not provide valid responses to any of the questions on food security. These exclusions represented 7.7 percent of all households. Estimates of median weekly food spending relative to the household cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) for December 2022 are not comparable to estimates for years prior to 2021. This is because the cost of the TFP was revised in 2021 to reflect updated data on food prices, food composition, and consumption patterns, and current dietary guidance.

² Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

³ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 15 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Note: Beginning with the 2015 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, food spending amounts are categorized in public-use data.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Use of Community Nutrition Assistance

The December 2022 CPS food security survey included questions about the use of two types of community-based food and nutrition assistance programs (see box, “Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs,” on page 28). All households with incomes below 185 percent of the Federal poverty threshold were asked these questions. To minimize the burden on respondents, households with incomes above that range were not asked the questions unless they indicated some level of difficulty in meeting their food needs on preliminary screener questions.

These questions on community food and nutrition assistance were revised substantially with the 2022 CPS-FSS data collection (see box, “Revisions to the 2022 Food Security Supplement Survey Instrument,” on page 25.) The questions more broadly refer to the receipt of free groceries and free meals rather than the use of food pantries and emergency kitchens as were asked previously. The revised wording means that statistics from these new questions are not comparable to past years’ statistics on use of food pantries and emergency kitchens. The questions analyzed in this supplement are:

- “In the last 12 months, did you or anyone in your household ever get free groceries from a food pantry, food bank, church, or other place that helps with free food?”

The use of these resources any time during the last 12 months is referred to as “receipt of free groceries.” Households that reported receiving free groceries in the last 12 months were asked, “How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?” Households reporting that they did not receive free groceries in the last 12 months were asked, “Is there a food pantry, food bank, church, or other place in your community where you could get free groceries if you needed it?”

- “In the last 12 months, have (you/you or anyone in your household) received a free meal from a church, shelter, home-delivered meal service like Meals on Wheels, or other place that helps with free meals?”

The use of this resource is referred to as “receipt of free meals” in the following discussion.

Table S-11 presents estimates of the number of households that obtained free groceries from food pantries or other organizations or ate free meals from charitable organizations one or more times during the 12-month period ending December 2022. Estimates of the proportion of households receiving free meals based on the CPS-FSS almost certainly understate the proportion of the population that uses these providers. The CPS selects households to interview from an address-based list and, therefore, interviews only persons who occupy housing units. People who were homeless at the time of the survey are not included in the sample, and those in tenuous housing arrangements (e.g., temporarily doubled-up with another family) also may have been missed. These two factors—exclusion of the homeless and underrepresentation of those who are tenuously housed—bias estimates of receipt of free meals use downward, especially among certain population subgroups. The downward bias is likely attenuated by the changes to the question wording since it is more inclusive of different types of free meals received. But, the address-based sampling for the CPS-FSS would still exclude some users. The effect of these factors is much less true for receipt of free groceries because cooking facilities are needed to use most items.¹²

Table S-12 compares the food security of low-income households that received free groceries and free meals from charitable organizations with that of low-income households that did not use these charitable organizations.

Table S-13 shows receipt of free groceries by household composition, race, Hispanic ethnicity, income, and residence.

¹² Previous studies of emergency kitchen or shelter users and food pantry users confirm these assumptions. For example, a nationally representative survey of people who use food pantries and emergency kitchens found that about 36 percent of emergency kitchen clients and 8 percent of households that received food from food pantries were homeless in 2001 (Briefel et al., 2003).

Table S-11

Use of community food and nutrition assistance, 2022

Category	Received free groceries			Received free meals		
	Total households ¹	Users		Total households ¹	Users	
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	132,073	8,317	6.3	131,932	2,896	2.2
All persons in households	326,167	21,497	6.6	325,807	6,320	1.9
Adults in households	254,130	15,168	6.0	253,909	4,907	1.9
Children in households	72,038	6,328	8.8	71,899	1,413	2.0
Households by food security status						
Food-secure households	115,288	3,460	3.0	115,188	1,279	1.1
Food-insecure households	16,735	4,850	29.0	16,697	1,613	9.7
Households with low food security	10,068	2,453	24.4	10,052	719	7.2
Households with very low food security	6,667	2,396	35.9	6,645	894	13.5

¹ Total weighted number of households exclude households that did not answer the question about receipt of community food and nutrition assistance. Totals in the bottom section also exclude households that did not answer any of the questions in the food security scale.

Note: Statistics for free groceries and free meal are not comparable to previous years estimates of use of food pantries and emergency kitchens because of changes in question wording.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-12

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity of households with annual incomes of less than 185 percent of the poverty line, by use of community food and nutrition assistance, 2022

Category	Food secure	Food insecure		
		All	With low food security	With very low food security
		Percent		
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line				
Received free groceries in the previous 12 months	41.6	58.4	29.4	29.0
Did not receive free groceries in the previous 12 months	74.0	26.0	16.0	10.0
Received free meal in the previous 12 months	46.7	53.3	22.6	30.7
Did not receive free meal in the previous 12 months	69.5	30.5	18.2	12.3

Note: Statistics for free groceries and free meals are not comparable to previous years' estimates by use of food pantries and emergency kitchens because of changes in question wording.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-13

Receipt of free groceries, by selected household characteristics, 2022

Category	Total ¹	Free grocery recipients	
			Percent
All households	132,073	8,317	6.3
Household composition			
With children < 18 years	36,941	2,843	7.7
At least one child < 6 years	15,416	1,131	7.3
Married-couple families	24,030	1,219	5.1
Female head, no spouse	9,075	1,345	14.8
Male head, no spouse	3,402	224	6.6
Other household with child ²	435	55	12.6
With no children < 18 years	95,132	5,474	5.8
More than one adult	55,750	2,314	4.2
Women living alone	21,121	2,007	9.5
Men living alone	18,261	1,153	6.3
With adults aged 65+	42,503	2,765	6.5
Adults aged 65+ living alone	16,311	1,469	9.0
Race/ethnicity of household reference persons			
White, non-Hispanic	85,329	3,869	4.5
Black, non-Hispanic	17,068	1,941	11.4
Hispanic ³	19,372	1,996	10.3
Other, non-Hispanic	10,304	511	5.0
Household income-to-poverty ratio			
Under 1.00	12,786	2,856	22.3
Under 1.30	18,128	3,922	21.6
Under 1.85	26,989	4,981	18.5
1.85 and over	76,560	1,908	2.5
Income unknown	28,524	1,428	5.0
Area of residence ⁴			
Inside metropolitan area	114,093	6,700	5.9
In principal cities ⁵	37,961	2,760	7.3
Not in principal cities	59,021	2,763	4.7
Outside metropolitan area	17,980	1,616	9.0
Census geographic region			
Northeast	22,670	1,418	6.3
Midwest	28,458	1,953	6.9
South	51,252	3,048	5.9
West	29,693	1,898	6.4

¹ Totals exclude households that did not answer the question about getting food from a food pantry. These exclusions represented 0.7 percent of all households.

² Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

³ Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴ Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵ Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 15 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Note: Statistics for receipt of free groceries are not comparable to previous years estimates of use of food pantries because of changes in question wording.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Spending by Households That Received Food and Nutrition Assistance

Table S-14 presents median food spending, relative to the cost of the December 2022 TFP, by households that received food and nutrition assistance and by nonparticipant households in similar low-income ranges.¹³

Table S-14

Weekly household food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) by participation in selected Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs, 2022

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to cost of the December 2022 TFP ⁴
	Ratio (cost of TFP = 1.0)
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line	
Received SNAP ¹ benefits in the previous 30 days	0.97
Did not receive SNAP ¹ benefits in the previous 30 days	0.88
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household	
Received NSLP ² free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days	0.88
Did not receive NSLP ² free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days	0.84
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household	
Received WIC ³ in the previous 30 days	0.92
Did not receive WIC ³ in the previous 30 days	0.87
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line	
Received free groceries in the previous 12 months	0.84
Did not receive free groceries in the previous 12 months	0.94

¹ SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the Food Stamp Program.

² NSLP = National School Lunch Program.

³ WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

⁴ Estimates of median weekly food spending (relative to the household cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) for December 2022) are not comparable to estimates of years prior to 2021 because the cost of the TFP was revised in 2021 to reflect updated data on food prices, food composition, consumption patterns, and current dietary guidance.

Note: Beginning with the 2015 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement, food spending amounts are categorized in public-use data. Estimates for food spending by receipt of free groceries are not comparable to prior year estimates of food spending by food pantry use.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

¹³ Food purchased with SNAP benefits is included in household food spending as calculated here. However, the value of school lunches and food obtained through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is not included. Food from these sources supplemented the food purchased by many of these households.

Food Security During the 30 Days Prior to the Food Security Survey in Households That Received Food and Nutrition Assistance

Table S-15 presents prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security during the 30-day period just prior to the food security survey for households that received selected types of food and nutrition assistance and for nonparticipant households in similar low-income ranges. This complements table 8 of the report (Rabbitt et al., 2023), which is based on the 12-month measure. Measured food insecurity and reported use of food and nutrition assistance programs are more likely to refer to contemporaneous conditions when both are referenced to the previous 30 days than when one or both is referenced to the previous 12 months.

From 2021 to 2022, the prevalence of 30-day food insecurity increased for:

- Households that received Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in the previous 30 days (from 19.7 percent to 26.4 percent),
- Households that received SNAP benefits in every month during the previous 12 months (from 19.9 percent to 26.0 percent),
- Households that received SNAP benefits in the previous 12 months but not the previous 30 days (from 22.4 percent to 33.2 percent),
- Households that received free or reduced-price school lunch (from 15.1 percent to 23.3 percent) and did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days (from 9.8 percent to 18.1 percent), and
- Households that did not receive Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits in the previous 30 days (from 9.2 percent to 18.3 percent) (see Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022, for prevalence estimates for 2021; statistics on food pantry use from 2021 are not directly comparable with statistics on receipt of free groceries in 2022).

From 2021 to 2022, the prevalence of 30-day very low food security increased for:

- Households that did not receive SNAP benefits in the previous 12 months (from 5.7 percent to 7.6 percent),
- Households that received free or reduced-price school lunch (from 5.3 percent to 8.2 percent), and
- Households that did not receive WIC benefits in the previous 30 days (from 2.0 percent to 4.5 percent).

Table S-15

Prevalence of food insecurity during the 30 days prior to the food security survey, by participation in selected Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs, 2022¹

Category	Food insecure in 30 days prior to survey (low or very low food security)	Very low food secure in 30 days prior to survey
	Percent	
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line		
Received SNAP ² benefits in the previous 30 days	26.4	11.8
Received SNAP ² benefits every month during the previous 12 months	26.0	12.2
Received SNAP ² benefits in the previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (SNAP leavers)	33.2	14.1
Did not receive SNAP ² benefits in the previous 12 months	15.6	7.6
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household		
Received NSLP ³ free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days	23.3	8.2
Did not receive NSLP ³ free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days	18.1	7.6
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household		
Received WIC ⁴ in the previous 30 days	18.8	5.6
Did not receive WIC ⁴ in the previous 30 days	18.3	4.5
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line		
Received free groceries in the previous 30 days	42.5	23.5
Did not receive free groceries in the previous 30 days	15.6	6.4

¹ The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 11-20, 2022.

² SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the Food Stamp Program.

³ NSLP = National School Lunch Program.

⁴ WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Note: Statistics for free groceries are not comparable to previous years' estimates by use of food pantries because of changes in question wording.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Combined Use of Federal and Community Food and Nutrition Assistance

Both Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs are important resources for low-income households. Designing and managing these programs to function effectively together as a nutrition safety net requires knowing how they complement and supplement each other. The extent to which households that participate in Federal food and nutrition assistance programs also receive assistance from community food assistance programs provides information about these relationships (table S-16).

Table S-16

Combined use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs by low-income households,¹ 2022

Category	Share of category that obtained free groceries	Share of free grocery recipients in category	Share of category that obtained free meal	Share of free meal recipients in category
	Percent			
Received SNAP ² benefits in the previous 30 days	29.4	44.9	10.6	45.5
Received NSLP ³ free or reduced-price school lunch in the previous 30 days	23.0	25.3	4.3	13.4
Received WIC ⁴ benefits in the previous 30 days	21.5	7.1	4.4	4.1
Participated in one or more of the three Federal programs	26.5	59.5	8.4	53.1
Did not participate in any of the three Federal programs	12.8	40.5	5.2	46.9

¹ Analysis is restricted to households with annual incomes less than 185 percent of the poverty line because most households with incomes above that range were not asked whether they participated in food and nutrition assistance programs.

² SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the Food Stamp Program.

³ NSLP = National School Lunch Program.

⁴ WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Note: Statistics for free groceries and free meal are not comparable to previous years estimates of use of food pantries and emergency kitchens because of changes in question wording.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2022 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Revisions to the 2022 Food Security Supplement Survey Instrument

USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS) implemented updates and modifications to the Food Security Supplement (FSS) survey instrument in 2022. The full survey instrument had not been reviewed and evaluated with cognitive testing since it was first developed in the early 1990s. As USDA, ERS approached 25 years of food security data collection, researchers worked with the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census (U.S. Census Bureau) and USDA's Food and Nutrition Service to review the FSS survey content, make revisions, and conduct cognitive interviews to ensure the data collected continued to be relevant, current, and useful. A report on the FSS survey instrument and cognitive testing was published by the U.S. Census Bureau (Kephart et al., 2021). Split-panel test data were collected as a supplement to the September 2020 Current Population Survey to assess differences in data collected from the standard instrument and the modified test instrument that resulted from the review and cognitive testing (Coleman-Jensen & Rabbitt, 2023). There were modifications to the instrument across food spending, food security, and nutrition assistance. Modifications included changing the ordering of sections, updating language on food spending, and revising questions on community nutrition assistance use.

continued on next page ►

Modifications to the CPS-FSS Test Instrument:

Screeners: Screener questions are used to reduce respondent burden by screening households unlikely to experience food insecurity or participate in nutrition assistance out of those sections in the survey. One change was made to the location of the screening questions because sections of the instrument were reordered. The screening question about running short of money and trying to make food or your food money go further (labeled “S9” in the questionnaire and labeled “HES9” in the public-use data file) and the food sufficiency screening question that asks a household to describe whether they have enough of the kinds of food they want to eat (labeled “SS1” in the questionnaire and labeled “HESS1” in the public-use data file) are now placed immediately after one another. The lead-in for HES9 was removed, and the former lead-in for HESS1 became the lead-in for HES9 in the test instrument. Because HESS1 is located earlier in the test instrument, it was also used to screen households into the Federal nutrition assistance sections, while in the standard instrument, only income and HES9 were used to screen households into the Federal nutrition assistance sections. There were no changes to screening based on income. Screening procedures in the food security section and community nutrition assistance section were unchanged from the standard to the test instrument.

Food Spending: Questions in the section on food spending were updated and modified to reflect changes in terminology, the retail environment, and technology. In both instruments, the section first asks respondents to think about all the places they purchased food and how much they spent, and then asks them to report usual food spending. Questions that ask respondents to think about all the places they spent money on food purchases and how much they spent last week were modified. For example, the new wording asks about online food purchases and purchases at farmers’ markets that were not included when the survey was developed in the 1990s. Estimates on food spending for 2022 are comparable to previous years.

Food Security: The section on food security was moved earlier in the survey instrument. Two questions about child food insecurity (items 13 and 15 shown in the box, “Questions Used to Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Supplement”) were modified to standardize the resource constraint to “there wasn’t enough money for food.” Also, the lead-in to one of the screening variables (HES9) was dropped due to moving sections in the questionnaire. Food security estimates from 2022 are comparable to previous years (Coleman-Jensen & Rabbitt, 2023).

Federal Food and Nutrition Assistance: The section on Federal nutrition assistance was moved after the food security section. The lead-in to the first question (HESP1) in the section changed due to moving the section. Questions on school meals were modified slightly to refer to “reduced-price” meals instead of “reduced-cost.” A new question was added on receipt of free or reduced-price afterschool meals and snacks. Estimates for Federal nutrition assistance from 2022 are comparable to previous years.

Community Food and Nutrition Assistance: The section on community food and nutrition assistance was modified to use new questions that ask about the receipt of free groceries and free meals. These questions were recommended by experts in the charitable feeding sector and their testing of the questions. The section no longer asks separate questions about free meals received by older adults but includes those programs in the more general questions about the receipt of free meals. Estimates for the use of community nutrition assistance for 2022 are not comparable to estimates for previous years. The questions on free groceries and free meals discussed in this report are different from previous questions on the use of food pantries and emergency kitchens. USDA, ERS recommends that readers do not compare data or statistics on food pantries and emergency kitchens from 2021 or earlier years to 2022 data on free groceries and free meals.

Questions Used to Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Supplement

1. “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
2. “The food that we bought just didn’t last and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
3. “We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
4. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in the household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
5. (If yes to question 4) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?
6. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
7. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn’t eat, because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
9. In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)
10. (If yes to question 9) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

(Questions 11–18 were only asked if the household included children ages 0–17)

11. “We relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed our children because we were running out of money to buy food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
12. “We couldn’t feed our children a balanced meal, because we couldn’t afford that.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
13. “The children were not eating enough because there wasn’t enough money for food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
14. In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
15. In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
16. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
17. (If yes to question 16) How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

18. In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food? (Yes/No)

Coding of Responses

Questions 1–3 and 11–13 are coded as affirmative (i.e., possibly indicating food insecurity) if the response is “often” or “sometimes.” Questions 5, 10, and 17 are coded as affirmative if the response is “almost every month” or “some months but not every month.” The remaining questions are coded as affirmative if the response is “yes.”

Assessing Food Security Status in Households Without Children

Households without children are classified as food insecure if they report 3 or more indications of food insecurity in response to the first 10 questions; they are classified as having very low food security if they report 6 or more food-insecure conditions out of the first 10 questions.

Assessing Food Security Status in Households with Children Ages 0–17

Households with children are classified as food insecure if they report 3 or more indications of food insecurity in response to the entire set of 18 questions; they are classified as having very low food security if they report 8 or more food-insecure conditions in response to the entire set of 18 questions.

The food security status of children in the household is assessed by responses to the child-referenced questions (questions 11–18). Households reporting two or more of these conditions are classified as having food insecurity among children. Households reporting five or more are classified as having very low food security among children.

Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs

Community food and nutrition assistance programs include food pantries and emergency kitchens or shelters and other organizations. These agencies are locally based and rely heavily on volunteers. Most of them are affiliated with faith-based organizations (see Feeding America, 2014, p. 47; Ohls et al., 2002). Organizations providing free groceries, such as food pantries, and organizations providing free meals, such as shelters or Meals on Wheels programs, play different roles. Food pantries distribute unprepared foods for offsite use, and free meal providers can provide individuals with prepared food to eat onsite or deliver meals to clients' homes. Most of the food distributed by these organizations comes from local resources, but USDA supplements these resources through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). USDA supplied 921 million pounds of USDA Foods to TEFAP in fiscal year 22. This food was provided to community emergency food providers for distribution to the public.

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