Household Food Security in the United States in 2014

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Webinar
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Outline of Webinar

“How many U.S. households were consistently able to put adequate food on the table?”

• How is food security measured?
• Main findings of annual food security report
• Food security survey
• Factors related to trends in food insecurity
U.S. households by food security status, 2014

Food secure – 86.0%
124 million households

Food insecure – 14.0%
17.4 million households
  - Low food security – 8.4%
    10.5 million households
  - Very low food security – 5.6%
    6.9 million households

Food security definitions

**Food Security:** Access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

**Food Insecurity:** Unable, at some time during the year, to provide adequate food for one or more household members due to a lack of resources.

**Very Low Food Security:** Normal eating patterns of some household members were disrupted at times during the year and their food intake reduced below levels they considered appropriate.
How is food security measured?

Food secure

Worry, stretch, juggle

Food insecure

Reduce quality and variety of diet

Low food security

Reduce food intake (adults)

Very low food security

Reduce food intake of children
Examples of Food Security Survey Questions

“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?

In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn’t enough money for food?

In the last 12 months, did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food?
Trends in food insecurity
(2-year averages 1996-2001, single-year rates 2002-14)

U.S. households with children by food security status, 2014

Food-secure households – 80.8%

Food-insecure households - 19.2%

- Food-insecure adults only - 9.8%
- Food-insecure children and adults - 9.4%
  - Low food security among children (and adults) – 8.3%
  - Very low food security among children (and adults) – 1.1%

Food insecurity by household characteristics, 2014

Food insecurity by metropolitan residence and region, 2014

Prevalence of food insecurity, average 2012-14

The prevalence of food insecurity depends on the length of time over which it is measured (2014)

### Use of Federal food assistance programs by food-insecure households, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Share of food-insecure households that participated in the program during the previous 30 days</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One or more of the three largest Federal food assistance programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP (Food Stamps)</td>
<td></td>
<td>44.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free or reduced-price school lunch</td>
<td></td>
<td>32.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the three programs</td>
<td></td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percent of households using community food assistance programs, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Food pantries</th>
<th>Emergency Kitchens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households by food security status:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food secure</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecure</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low food security</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very low food security</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Median weekly food spending by food security status, 2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Median weekly food spending per person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All households</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food secure households</td>
<td>50.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food insecure households</td>
<td>37.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- Taking into account estimated food need, the typical food-secure households spent 26 percent more for food than the typical food-insecure household.
Annual food security survey

- Current Population Survey (CPS)
  - Conducted by Census Bureau
  - About 45,000 households
  - Representative of U.S. civilian households
  - Source of employment and poverty statistics
  - High quality sample
  - Well trained, well managed field staff
  - High response rate
  - High quality data management
  - Conducted annually in December
Economic conditions may explain recent trends in food insecurity

• Inflation was 8.6% from 2010 to 2014
• Food prices up 10.5% from 2010 to 2014
• Maximum SNAP allotments fell 5% in November 2013 due to expiration of the temporary increase in SNAP benefits from the stimulus bill

• See today’s USDA Blog:
  http://blogs.usda.gov/tag/ers/
Summary: Food insecurity rose substantially during the recession and has been recovering slowly
For more information….


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