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# Household Food Insecurity Across Race and Ethnicity in the United States, 2016–21

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# Household Food Insecurity Across Race and Ethnicity in the United States, 2016–21

Laura J. Hales and Alisha Coleman-Jensen

## Abstract

Since 1995, when consistent food security monitoring began in the United States, differences have been identified in the prevalence of food insecurity across race and ethnicity. Households with Hispanic and Black, non-Hispanic reference persons have had a higher prevalence of food insecurity than households with White, non-Hispanic, or other, non-Hispanic reference persons. Less is known about the food security status of race and ethnic groups that comprise a smaller share of the population—including American Indian and Alaskan Native, Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiracial groups, including individuals identifying as American Indian and White, individuals identifying as Black and White, and other multiracial combinations. This report combines 6 years of data from the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (2016–21) to examine household food security among these race and ethnic groups, including by household and economic characteristics and across Hispanic and Asian origin groups. The prevalence of food insecurity ranges from a low of 5.4 percent for Asian households to a high of 23.3 percent for American Indian and Alaska Native households. Meaningful differences in food insecurity exist across and within racial, ethnic, and origin groups.

**Keywords:** Food insecurity, food security, race, ethnicity, racial disparities, poverty, food hardship, Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement

## About the Authors

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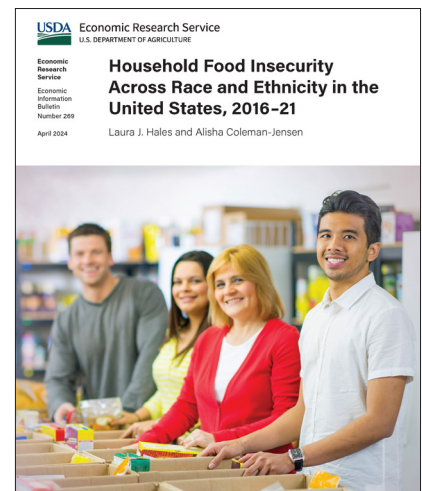


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## What Is the Issue?

Some U.S. households experience food insecurity at times during the year, meaning the households' ability to acquire adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources. Food insecurity is an important measure of well-being for the U.S. population. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) monitors the extent and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households. This report is an extension of information provided annually by USDA, ERS on food insecurity across four racial and ethnic groups: White, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; and other, non-Hispanic. This study includes American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, and multiracial groups—including individuals identifying as both American Indian and White, individuals identifying as both Black and White, and other multiracial combinations.



## What Did the Study Find?

The report presents the prevalence of food insecurity (those with low and very low food security) within each of the nine race and ethnic groups by household and individual characteristics. Some common themes emerge; however, considerable differences across racial and ethnic groups exist even when comparing similar household characteristics. For example, having low household income is related to a higher prevalence of food insecurity for all racial and ethnic groups. However, the prevalence of food insecurity for households below the Federal poverty line varies from 18 percent (Asian households) to 47.8 percent (Multiracial, American Indian-White households) across racial and ethnic groups.

- The prevalence of food insecurity ranges from a low of 5.4 percent for Asian households to a high of 23.3 percent for American Indian and Alaska Native households. Food-insecure households had difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all household members because of a lack of resources.
- The prevalence of very low food security ranges from 1.6 percent for Asian households to 11.3 percent for Multiracial, American Indian-White households. Very low food security is the more severe range of food insecurity where the food intake of some household members was reduced, and normal eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because of limited resources.

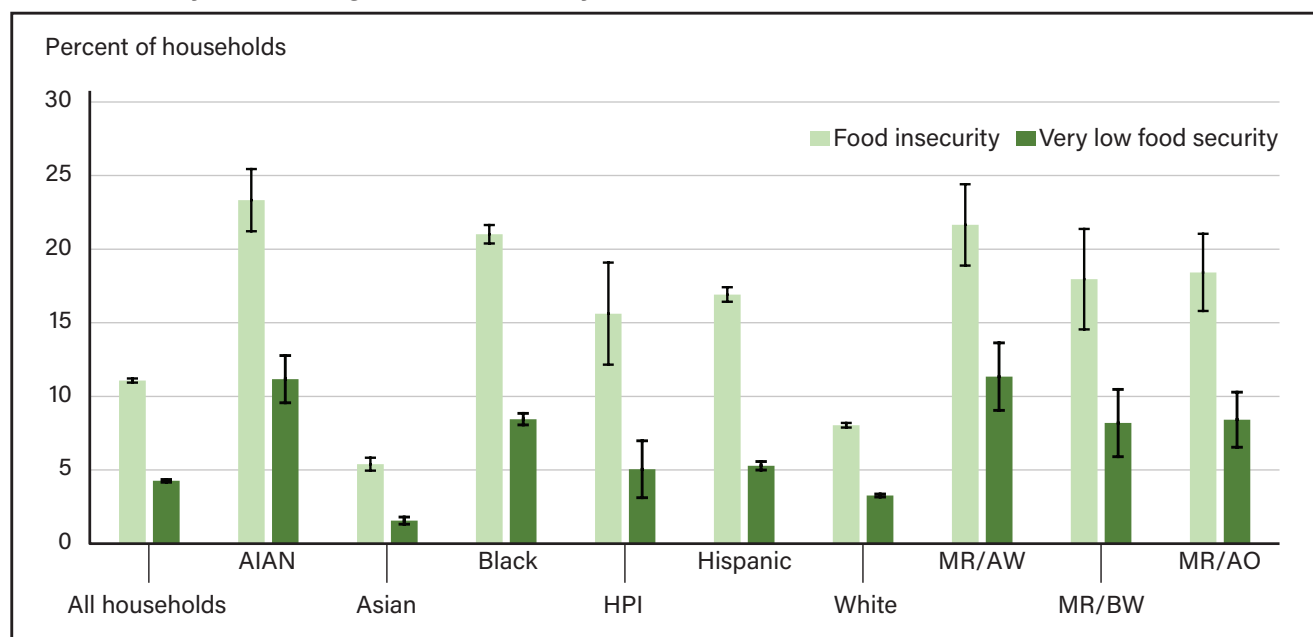
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- Food insecurity varied substantially by country of origin. Among Hispanic origin subgroups, food insecurity varied from 11.4 percent in Cuban households to 21.0 percent in Dominican households. Food insecurity among Asian origin subgroups ranged from 1.7 percent in Japanese households to 11.4 percent in other Asian households.

## How Was the Study Conducted?

Data for this report come from an annual survey conducted by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, as the December Supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey. USDA, ERS sponsors the annual Food Security Supplement and analyzes the data. This report shows the prevalence of food insecurity across nine race and ethnic groups and economic and demographic characteristics. Households are classified into racial and ethnic groups based on the race and ethnicity of the household reference person in the survey (an adult household member in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented). Examining multiple years of data was necessary to overcome limitations from small sample sizes for some race and ethnic groups. This report combines 6 years of data from 2016–21; 214,370 households are included in the combined 6-year sample. Even with the 6 years of data, some statistics are suppressed due to small sample sizes, and standard errors are large for some groups, meaning there is less precision associated with these estimates.

### Food insecurity varies along race and ethnicity



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Food insecure includes low food secure and very low food secure. Black lines represent 90-percent confidence intervals. Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

# Household Food Insecurity Across Race and Ethnicity in the United States, 2016–21

## Introduction

Some U.S. households struggle to put adequate food on the table. Food-insecure households (those with low and very low food security) have difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all household members because of a lack of resources. Very low food security is the more severe range of food insecurity, where the food intake of some household members was reduced, and normal eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because of limited resources. Food insecurity is an important indicator of population health and well-being.

USDA publishes an annual report titled *Household Food Security in the United States*. The report includes statistics on household food security by race/ethnicity of the household reference person (an adult household member in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented) for four groups: White, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; and other, non-Hispanic. Statistics consistently show that food insecurity varies by race/ethnicity. In 2021, 10.2 percent of all U.S. households were food insecure, and 3.8 percent of all U.S. households experienced very low food security (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022). In 2021, nearly one in five households (19.8 percent) with Black, non-Hispanic reference persons were food insecure; 16.2 percent of households with Hispanic reference persons were food insecure; 10.2 percent of households with other, non-Hispanic reference persons were food insecure; and 7.0 percent of households with White, non-Hispanic reference persons were food insecure. Patterns across race and ethnic groups were similar for very low food security.

While the annual statistics are important, the statistics lack two types of detail. First, the U.S. population is divided into only four race and ethnicity groups. The other, non-Hispanic category includes many different subgroups such as American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, multiracial, and others. As the statistics in this report show, important differences exist in the prevalence of food insecurity for the different subgroups, which are obscured when the subgroups are categorized together.

Second, the annual household food security report shows only the overall prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security for each of the four race/ethnic groups. The report does not provide information on the prevalence of food insecurity by household characteristics within each of the race/ethnic groups. The statistics in this report, however, show important differences exist in the prevalence rates of food insecurity for the subgroups within each race/ethnic category—including by household composition, income, and other characteristics. This report examines the prevalence of food insecurity for nine mutually exclusive racial/ethnic groups: American Indian and Alaska Native, non-Hispanic; Asian, non-Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic; Hispanic; Multiracial, American Indian-White, non-Hispanic; Multiracial, Black-White, non-Hispanic; Multiracial, All Other Combinations (i.e., not American Indian-White or Black-White), non-Hispanic; and White, non-Hispanic.

## Background

Studies consistently show that some racial and ethnic groups are more likely to experience food insecurity than other racial and ethnic groups. Households with White, non-Hispanic reference persons typically have lower food insecurity rates than do households with Black, non-Hispanic reference persons or Hispanic reference persons (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022). Differences in the prevalence of food insecurity persist across different national datasets (Altman et al., 2021; Morales et al., 2020; Myers & Painter, 2017; Walker et al., 2020). Because food insecurity is related to a lack of economic resources, the prevalence of food insecurity is higher among those households with incomes below the Federal poverty level. However, poverty is not equally distributed among racial and ethnic groups in the United States. In 2021, non-Hispanic White individuals accounted for 59.2 percent of the total population and 41.7 percent of persons living below the poverty line. Hispanic individuals accounted for 19.0 percent of the total population and 28.2 percent of people in poverty. Black persons accounted for 13.4 percent of the total population and 22.6 percent of people in poverty. Asian individuals accounted for 6.3 percent of the total population and 5.1 percent of the people in poverty. Individuals of two or more races accounted for 2.8 percent of the total population and 3.4 percent of the poverty population. American Indian and Alaska Native individuals were 1.3 percent of the total population and 2.6 percent of the poverty population.

These statistics mean that Hispanic; Black, non-Hispanic; two or more races; and American Indian and Alaska Native persons are overrepresented among those in poverty (Creamer et al., 2022). These groups are also at a higher risk of food insecurity because of their overrepresentation among those in poverty.

Although income is recognized to be closely associated with food insecurity for all populations, the extent to which other socioeconomic factors explain the differences in food insecurity among different racial and ethnic groups continues to be examined. For example, Nam et al. (2015) found that not just income but also lower levels of asset ownership and access to credit among African American, American Indian, and Hispanic populations were associated with higher levels of food insecurity compared with the White population. However, even when Black and White households have equal levels of education, income, and homeownership, Black households still have a higher predicted probability of food insecurity compared with White households (Berning et al., 2022b).

Data on food security among American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) populations are limited, and most existing research has relied on small or regional samples (Sowerine et al., 2019; Berryhill et al., 2018). A recent review (Nikolaus et al., 2022) aimed to assess the size and scope of available literature about food insecurity among AIAN populations. The review found 34 publications that reported on 30 unique studies. Just two of those analyzed Current Population Survey data to estimate a national prevalence rate of food insecurity among the AIAN population (Gundersen, 2008; Jernigan et al., 2017). Both studies found the prevalence of food insecurity to be higher for AIAN-led households than for White households. Gundersen (2008) found this to be true even when controlling for sociodemographic characteristics. Jernigan et al. (2017) found that living in a metropolitan area increased the likelihood of food insecurity for American Indian and Alaska Native populations, even while it decreased the likelihood for other racial minorities. Even so, food insecurity remains high outside of metropolitan areas as people living in rural areas struggle with access to physical infrastructure—such as public transportation and adequately stocked stores—and technology, as well as historical structural barriers, such as remoteness and isolation of reservations (Brown et al., 2007; Jernigan et al., 2013; Burki, 2021).

Immigration may be a factor related to food insecurity for some groups. U.S. citizen children of foreign-born mothers, regardless of race/ethnicity, have a greater risk of food insecurity than children of U.S.-born mothers (Chilton et al., 2009). A separate study focused specifically on the immigration status of Hispanics



and found that children of foreign-born Hispanic mothers have been shown to have higher household food insecurity than children of U.S.-born Hispanic mothers. This difference may be related to, but not fully explained by, lower familial resources among families with foreign-born mothers (Arteaga et al., 2017). Another study investigated the relationship between food insecurity, race/ethnicity, and nativity status. The study found evidence of a White/non-White divide in food insecurity for both immigrants and native-born persons, even when socioeconomic status is held constant. That is, Black and Hispanic persons—regardless of nativity status—are more food insecure than both foreign and native-born White persons (Myers & Painter, 2017). Research suggests that language barriers may also play a role in household food insecurity. Capps et al. (2009) reported food insecurity to be twice as high for children with limited English-proficient parents than for children with English-proficient parents. Becerra et al. (2018) examined Asian American households and similarly found a close relationship between the language spoken at home and food insecurity, pointing to acculturation as a factor in household food security. These studies suggest that while income differences explain some of the disparities in the prevalence of food insecurity across racial/ethnic groups, other factors play a role as well.

Some additional factors may be associated with differential outcomes across racial and ethnic groups that are hard to examine or control for in survey data. For example, some research literature focused on factors like structural racism (Odoms-Young & Bruce, 2018), discrimination (Burke et al. 2016; Phojanakong et al., 2019), racism experienced as individual trauma in addition to historical and institutional racism (Bowen et al., 2021), violence (Jackson et al., 2018), and trauma (Barnett et al., 2019), and how these factors may affect differential outcomes by race. This includes trauma associated with the enforcement of immigration policies, which may affect Hispanic households in particular (Potochnick et al., 2017). These factors have been shown to be important in the research literature, but it is not feasible to fully examine all these factors with CPS data, and the factors are not discussed in this report. This report focuses instead on establishing benchmark estimates of food insecurity for American Indian and Alaska Native, Asian, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and multiracial households that have not been disaggregated from the other, non-Hispanic racial category in previous USDA, ERS food security reports.

This report contributes to household food security literature by providing statistics for nine separate race and ethnic groups using nationally representative data. The authors provide estimates of food insecurity for selected household characteristics within each race and ethnic group.

## Data and Methods

Statistics presented in this report are based on data collected in the Food Security Supplement (FSS) to the Current Population Survey (CPS) conducted each December in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021. The CPS is a monthly survey that includes about 40,000 households and is representative (at State and national levels) of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population of the United States. The combined December 2016–21 CPS-FSS survey sample includes 214,370 participating households.

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census calculates survey sample weights for the FSS to indicate how many households were represented by each household that responded to the survey. All statistics in this report were calculated by applying the Food Security Supplement weights to responses by the surveyed households, so the statistics are nationally representative. Unless otherwise noted, statistical differences described in this report are significant at the 90-percent confidence level.

Standard errors of estimates were calculated using balanced repeated replication methods based on replicate weights computed for the CPS-FSS by the Census Bureau. Statistical significance depends both on the size of

the difference of the estimates and the precision of the estimates—or the size of the standard error of the estimates. Standard errors vary across population subgroups.

Household-level food security statistics in this report are based on a measure of food security<sup>1</sup> calculated from responses to a series of questions about conditions and behaviors that characterize households when the households have difficulty acquiring adequate food. Each question asks whether the condition or behavior occurred at any time during the previous 12 months and specifies a lack of money and other resources to obtain food as the reason. The series includes three questions about the household’s food conditions (as a whole) and seven questions about the food conditions of adults in the household. If children are present, an additional eight questions about their food conditions are included (see box, “Questions Used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement”). For more information on the measurement and definitions of food security status, see the USDA, ERS annual report *Household Food Security in the United States* (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022). Detailed information on how food security is measured is available on the USDA, ERS website under the “Food Security in the U.S.” topic (and in Hamilton et al., 1997a, 1997b; Andrews et al., 1998; Bickel et al., 1998; Carlson et al., 1999; Bickel et al., 2000; National Research Council, 2006; and Nord & Bickel, 2002).

### **Questions Used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the Current Population Survey 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)

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<sup>1</sup> Information about the validity of the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module is available on the USDA, ERS website under the “Food Security in the U.S.” topic. Information about the validity of the Spanish translation of the U.S. Household Food Security Survey Module used in the CPS-FSS, as well as information about the validity of a Chinese translation, is available at Rabbitt et al. (2017), Kwan et al. (2015), and Lyles et al. (2015). Nguyen (forthcoming) examined the model fit and differences in food security measurement across different race and ethnic groups in the National Health Interview Survey and found no substantial differences in model fit across groups.

## Questions Used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement—continued

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 asked only if the household included children aged 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 we just couldn’t afford enough 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 but you just couldn’t afford more 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

For questions 1–3 and 11–13, if the response is “often” or “sometimes,” the questions are coded as affirmative (i.e., possibly indicating food insecurity). For questions 5, 10, and 17, if the response is “almost every month” or “some months but not every month,” the questions are coded as affirmative. 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 the households report 3 or more indications of food insecurity in response to the first 10 questions; households 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 Aged 0–17

Households with children are classified as food insecure if the households report 3 or more indications of food insecurity in response to the entire set of 18 questions; households 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 (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.

Racial categories included in the census questionnaire generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in the United States and are not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically. Ethnicity is defined in this report as either “Hispanic or Latino” or “Not Hispanic or Latino.” People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race. For the purposes of this report, those who identify as Hispanic are included only in the Hispanic category. Classifications of race and ethnicity are based on the self-reported race and ethnicity of the household reference person—a household member in whose name the residence is owned or rented. If the housing unit is owned or rented jointly, the household reference person may be either partner. For more information, see the box, “Categorization of Race and Ethnicity.”

This report presents statistics on the prevalence and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households by the race/ethnicity of the household reference person. Food security is a household-level condition, so the unit of analysis is households rather than individuals. Some households may have members from different racial groups. Six years of CPS-FSS data are combined to provide large enough sample sizes to analyze race and ethnic groups that comprise a smaller share of the population with an emphasis on providing food security estimates for each single race and ethnic category available in the Current Population Survey that have historically been aggregated into the “Other, non-Hispanic” category. The 6 years of household survey data are combined for all analyses, so the resulting estimates reflect the prevalence of food insecurity for these groups from 2016 to 2021. While the food security measure used is an annual measure, the estimates do not reflect a single year over those 6 years but rather reflect the average 12-month prevalence during that 6-year period. As shown in Coleman-Jensen et al. (2022), food insecurity affected 12.3 percent of U.S. households in 2016 and declined over time to 10.2 percent in 2021.

### **Categorization of Race and Ethnicity**

The U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census adheres to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standards on race and ethnicity. The standards have five categories for data on race: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White.

Two categories are used for data on ethnicity: “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino.”

The minimum categories are defined as follows for data on race and ethnicity for Federal statistics, program administrative reporting, and civil rights compliance reporting:

**American Indian or Alaska Native.** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

**Asian:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent—including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

**Black or African American:** A person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as “Haitian” or “Negro” can be used in addition to “Black or African American.”

**Hispanic or Latino:** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term “Spanish origin” can be used in addition to “Hispanic or Latino.”

**Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

**White:** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

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## Categorization of Race and Ethnicity—continued

People who identify as Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish may be of any race.

The following standards apply to collecting race and ethnicity information in the Current Population Survey (CPS):

Respondents are offered the option of selecting one or more racial designations in addition to Hispanic ethnicity. Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic or Latino, regardless of the racial category selected. Respondents who selected only one category for each of the five racial categories are reported separately from respondents who selected a combination of racial categories. All possible combinations of multiple race selections are reported when sample sizes permit. Even with combining 6 years of data, not all possible multiple race combinations are reported because of small sample sizes, so some multiracial respondents are classified as “Multiracial, All Other Combinations.”

In the public-use CPS data, 26 possible race categories are provided that include single-race groups and groups for combinations of races. These categories are:

01 White only (W)	14 AI-HP
02 Black only (B)	15 Asian-HP
03 American Indian, Alaskan Native only (AI)	16 W-B-AI
04 Asian only (A)	17 W-B-A
05 Hawaiian/Pacific Islander only (HP)	18 W-B-HP
06 White-Black	19 W-AI-A
07 White-AI	20 W-AI-HP
08 White-Asian	21 W-A-HP
09 White-HP	22 B-AI-A
10 Black-AI	23 W-B-AI-A
11 Black-Asian	24 W-AI-A-HP
12 Black-HP	25 Other three race combinations
13 AI-Asian	26 Other four and five race combinations

“Origin” refers to different groups based on the individual’s place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors. Survey respondents who identify as Hispanic or Asian are further asked to identify an origin group.

The Hispanic origin categories provided in the public-use CPS data are:

1. Mexican
2. Puerto Rican
3. Cuban
4. Dominican
5. Salvadoran
6. Central American, excluding Salvadoran
7. South American
8. Other Spanish (includes all other Hispanic groups not specified above)

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## **Categorization of Race and Ethnicity—continued**

The Asian origin categories provided in the public-use CPS data are:

1. Asian Indian
2. Chinese
3. Filipino
4. Japanese
5. Korean
6. Vietnamese
7. Other (includes all other Asian groups not specified above)

## **Categorization of Race and Ethnicity—continued**

In the interest of providing as much detail as possible, this report uses the Hispanic and Asian origin categories exactly as reported in the public-use CPS.

### **Race and Ethnicity Categories and Abbreviations Used in This Report:**

The 26 race categories, along with Hispanic origin, are combined into 9 groups (abbreviations used throughout the tables and figures are in parentheses):

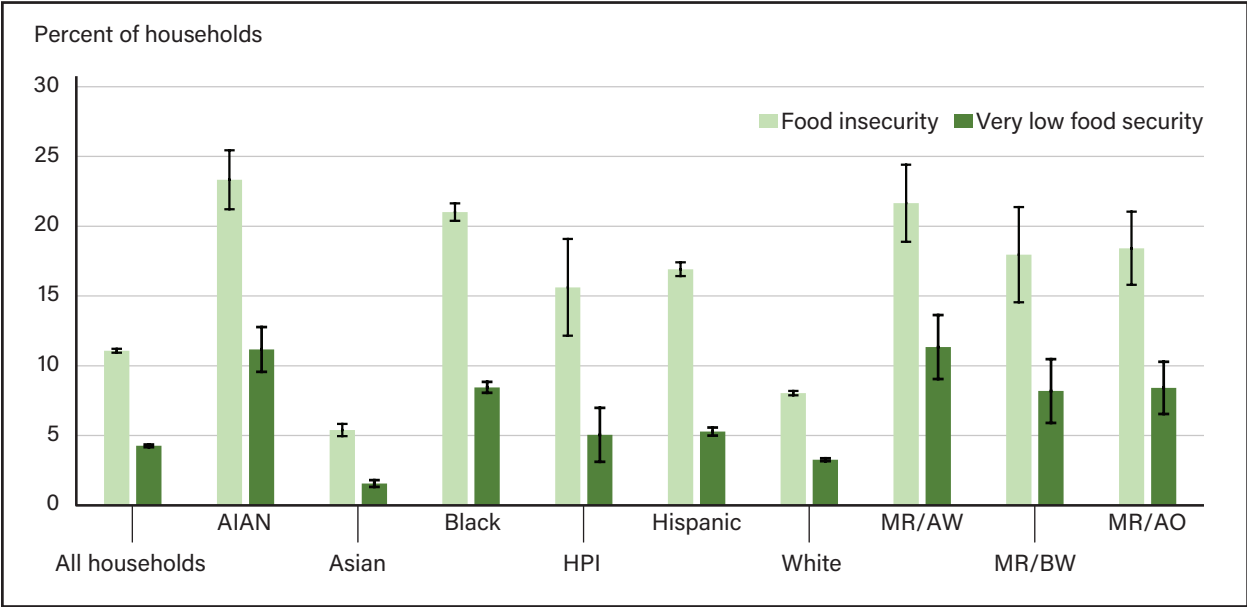
- American Indian/Alaska Native, non-Hispanic (AIAN)
- Asian, non-Hispanic (Asian)
- Black, non-Hispanic (Black)
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, non-Hispanic (HPI)
- Hispanic (Hispanic)
- White, non-Hispanic (White)
- Multiracial, American Indian-White, non-Hispanic (MR/AW)
- Multiracial, Black-White, non-Hispanic (MR/BW)
- Multiracial, All Other Combinations (i.e., not MR/AW or MR/BW), non-Hispanic (MR/AO)

# Results

## Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security by Race and Ethnicity of Household Reference Person

During 2016–21, 88.9 percent of all U.S. households were food secure per year, meaning that all household members had access to enough food for an active, healthy life (Anderson, 1990). The remaining 11.1 percent of households experienced food insecurity at some time during the year before the time of the CPS interview (figure 1). These households were unable, at times, to acquire adequate food for one or more household members because they had insufficient resources for food. Food-insecure households can be further classified as having either low food security or very low food security. From 2016–21, the majority of food-insecure households (6.8 percent) experienced low food security. This means the households were able to avoid substantial reductions or disruptions in food intake by relying on a few basic foods or reducing variety in their diets. The remaining 4.3 percent of food-insecure households were classified as having very low food security, the more severe form of food insecurity in which the eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted, and their food intake was reduced at least sometime during the year because they could not afford enough food.

Figure 1  
**Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security by race and ethnicity, 2016–21**



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/O = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Food insecure includes low food security and very low food security. Black lines indicate 90-percent confidence intervals. Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

The percentage of food-insecure households varied by race and ethnicity over the same period (2016–21). Throughout this report, race and ethnicity refers to the reported race/ethnicity of the household reference person (the adult household member in whose name the housing unit is owned or rented). For increased readability, the authors refer to households by the race or ethnicity of the household race reference person. That

is, “White households” means households with a White, non-Hispanic reference person. Multiracial categories refer to reference persons who report identification with multiple racial groups, not to households with members of different racial/ethnic groups. Further, the authors abbreviated racial/ethnic categories based on the abbreviations shown at the bottom of the box “Categorization of Race and Ethnicity.” All racial/ethnicity categories are mutually exclusive. So, for example, “White” means White, non-Hispanic. The authors dropped “non-Hispanic” for increased readability throughout the report.

The prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security for all racial and ethnic groups can be found in figure 1. Table 2 presents prevalence rates for all measures of food security across the nine racial and ethnic groups. It should be noted that even with 6 years of aggregated data, some racial categories contained few households. These small sample sizes created larger standard errors and confidence intervals for these racial subgroups, as noted in figure 1. Households with a White reference person experienced lower prevalence rates of overall food insecurity (8.0 percent) than the national average (11.1 percent). This finding was true of White households for both low food security (4.8 percent compared to 6.8 percent) and very low food security (3.3 percent compared to 4.3 percent). The prevalence of food insecurity for households with an Asian reference person, at 5.4 percent, was lower than both White households and the national average. Among Asian households, 3.9 percent experienced low food security, and 1.6 percent reported very low food security. Households in the remaining seven racial categories experienced significantly higher rates of food insecurity than the national average.

The prevalence of food insecurity was highest in households with a reference person who identified as American Indian or Alaska Native (AIAN). The prevalence of food insecurity for AIAN-headed households was 23.3 percent, more than twice the average for all U.S. households (11.1 percent). Nearly half of food-insecure households with AIAN reference persons reported experiencing the more severe form of food insecurity, very low food security, at some time during the year (11.2 percent of all AIAN households). The proportion of food-insecure AIAN households that reported very low food security was higher than the proportion seen in national trends. Historically, households that were classified as having very low food security represented about one-third of all food-insecure households (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022). Households with reference persons that identify as Multiracial, American Indian-White (MR/AW) also reported high prevalence rates of food insecurity (21.7 percent). Like AIAN-headed households, these households exhibited higher proportions of very low food security in food-insecure households. More than half of food-insecure MR/AW households reported experiencing very low food security at some time during the year (11.3 percent). Other racial subgroups that had significantly higher food insecurity rates than the U.S. average (11.1 percent) included those whose reference persons identified as Black (21.0 percent), Multiracial, All Other Combinations (MR/AO) (18.4 percent), Multiracial, Black-White (MR/BW) (18.0 percent), Hispanic (16.9 percent), and Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (HPI) (15.6 percent). Most of these subgroups also experienced higher rates of very low food security than the average prevalence of very low food security for all U.S. households. Prevalence rates of very low food security were 8.5 percent for Black households, 8.4 percent for MR/AO households, 8.2 percent for MR/BW households, and 5.3 percent for Hispanic households. The prevalence of very low food security for HPI-headed households, 5.1 percent, was not significantly different from the prevalence for all U.S. households.

## Distribution of Household Food Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity of Household Reference Person

In addition to examining the prevalence of food insecurity across racial and ethnic subgroups, this report examines the distribution of food insecurity, meaning the frequency of a subgroup’s occurrence in the food-insecure population. The combined December 2016–21 CPS-FSS samples were representative of an average of 129.2 million U.S. households annually and placed into 9 distinct racial and ethnic categories, depending on the race and ethnicity of the household reference person. Households with a White reference person



comprised the largest racial subgroup at 65.8 percent of U.S. households. Households whose reference person identified as a Hawaiian Pacific Islander constituted the smallest racial subgroup at 0.2 percent of the population. See table 1 for the full distribution of the sample, the distribution of food-insecure households, and the distribution of households with very low food security by race and ethnicity.

Table 1

**Distribution of all households by race and ethnicity, and distribution of food-insecure households and households with very low food security by race and ethnicity, 2016–21**

Category	Total		Food insecurity		Very low food security	
	Thousands	Percent of total	Thousands	Percent of total	Thousands	Percent of total
All households	129,173	100.0	14,301	100.0	5,503	100.0
White	85,023	65.8	6,835	47.8	2,776	50.4
Hispanic	18,002	13.9	3,046	21.3	951	17.3
Black	16,509	12.8	3,468	24.3	1,395	25.4
Asian	6,753	5.2	365	2.6	105	1.9
American Indian/ Alaska Native	926	0.7	216	1.5	103	1.9
Multiracial, All Other Combinations	626	0.5	115	0.8	53	1.0
Multiracial, American Indian-White	606	0.5	131	0.9	69	1.2
Multiracial, Black-White	453	0.4	81	0.6	37	0.7
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	275	0.2	43	0.3	14	0.3

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Understanding the distribution of food insecurity across race and ethnicity is helpful for understanding which racial and ethnic groups are associated with an increased risk of food insecurity. Some racial subgroups comprise a smaller proportion of the sample population but have higher prevalence rates of food insecurity. The result is that those racial subgroups make up a larger share of food-insecure households than the same group’s share of the population. For example, households headed by Black reference persons comprise 12.8 percent of the total population of households but make up nearly two times the share of food-insecure households, 24.3 percent. Similarly, American Indian Alaska Native households make up 0.7 percent of the sample population but 1.5 percent of the food-insecure population. The same pattern can be seen in the distribution of households with very low food security.

Conversely, some racial subgroups have a relatively lower prevalence of food insecurity, and the result is a disproportionately low share of households in the food-insecure population relative to the same group’s share of households in the sample population. For example, Asian households make up 5.2 percent of the population but 2.6 percent of the food-insecure population. Such distributional information is helpful for understanding which racial and ethnic subgroups are more at risk of experiencing food insecurity.

## Prevalence of Household Food Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity and Selected Household-Level Characteristics

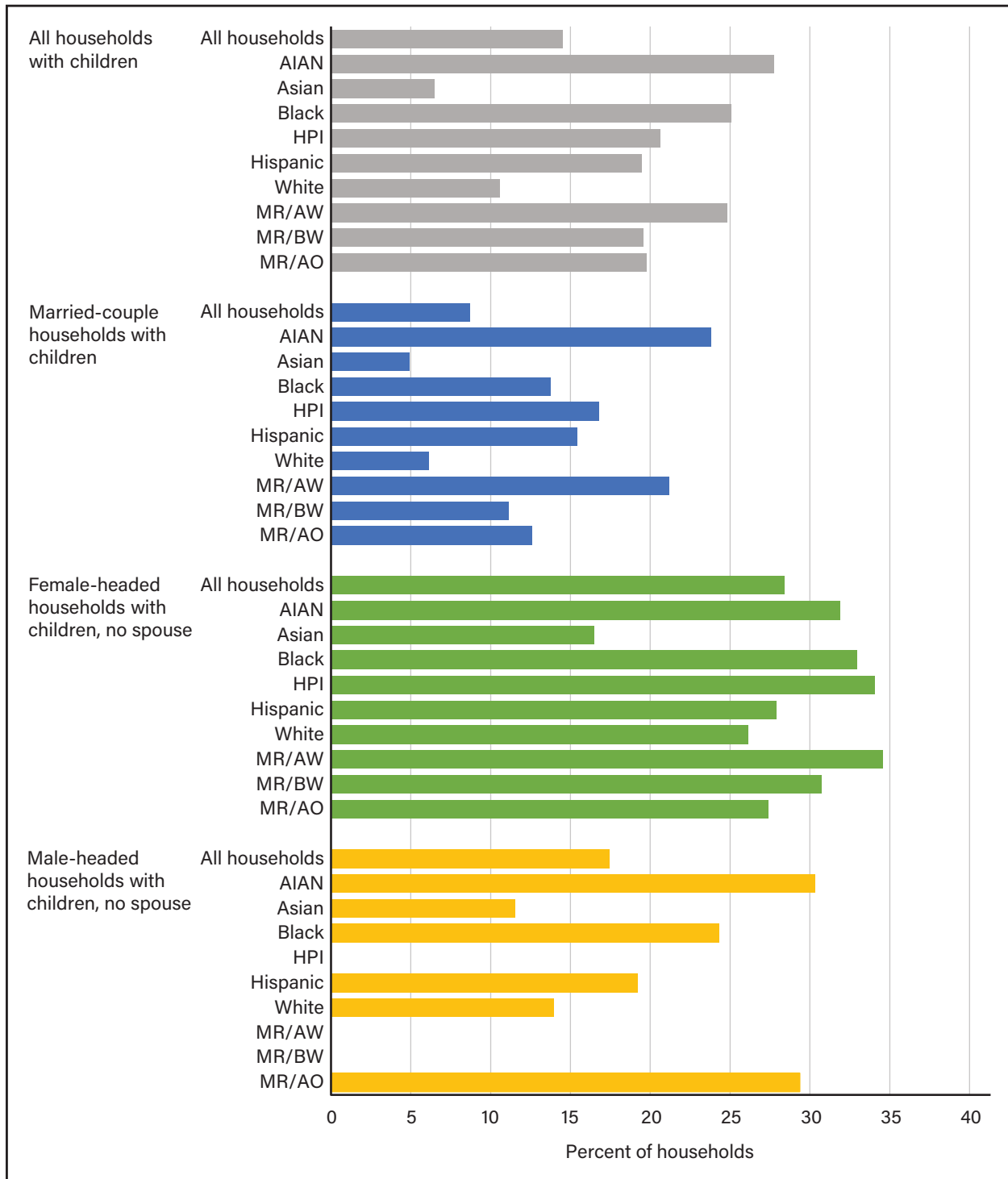
In addition to race and ethnicity as risk factors of food insecurity, some types of households typically experienced higher prevalence rates of food insecurity when compared to the prevalence rates for all households. Households that have historically been at higher risk of experiencing food insecurity include households with children, households with children headed by a single parent, females living alone or males living alone, and households with incomes below 185 percent of the Federal poverty line. Conversely, some types of households are at a lower risk of food insecurity. Married couples with children consistently had lower rates of food insecurity, as have multiple adult households with no children. Additionally, households with incomes above 185 percent of the Federal poverty line have historically had lower food insecurity than the average rate for all households.

USDA's Economic Research Service monitors the prevalence of food insecurity in these and other types of households and publishes the prevalence rates in an annual household food security report (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2022). This report compares food insecurity over these same selected household characteristics in each racial and ethnic category by combining data from 6 survey years (2016–21) to provide adequate sample sizes. Note that the statistics in tables 3 and 4 display prevalence rates of food insecurity only. Prevalence rates of very low food security for these same household characteristics can be found for each race and ethnicity in tables A.1 and A.2 in the appendix. The authors focused on overall food insecurity in the text because the results are available for most categories. For very low food security shown in the appendix, many estimates are suppressed because of small sample sizes. In the text describing the results, the authors focused on the differences within groups that are statistically significant. Those differences are marked with an arrow (▲ or ▼) in the tables to indicate significantly higher or lower as indicated by the direction of the arrow. Statistical significance is related to the size of the difference of the estimates and the standard error around the estimates, which is related to sample size. For some race and ethnic groups comprising a smaller share of the population, differences that appear large may not be statistically significant because of the standard errors around the estimate. Despite the lack of statistical significance, some readers may find differences to be substantively meaningful.

When comparing household composition across racial and ethnic groups, some patterns are consistent with national trends. For example, households with children are at a higher risk of food insecurity across most racial and ethnic subgroups. Within households with children, the prevalence of food insecurity for single female-headed households with children was statistically significantly higher than the rate for all households in the same racial category for seven of the nine racial subgroups. One-quarter to one-third of single female-headed households with children experienced food insecurity at some time during the year in AIAN (31.9 percent), Black (33.0 percent), HPI (34.1 percent), Hispanic (27.9 percent), MR/AO (27.4 percent), White (26.1 percent), and MR/BW (30.8 percent) households. Asian single female-headed households with children had a lower prevalence of food insecurity than other racial categories, but at 16.5 percent, this category had three times the prevalence of food insecurity for all Asian households. Figure 2 shows prevalence rates for multiple categories of households with children across race and ethnicity.

Figure 2

**Prevalence of food insecurity in households with children, by household composition and race and ethnicity, 2016–21**



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Bars that do not appear = data are not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey had this characteristic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Single male-headed households with children also tend to experience higher rates of food insecurity than all households in the same racial and ethnic category. The differences are only statistically significant for single male-headed Asian and White households (11.5 percent and 14.0 percent). These findings are consistent with other research that identifies single-parent households with children as being at an elevated risk of food insecurity (Balistreri, 2018; Miller et al., 2014).

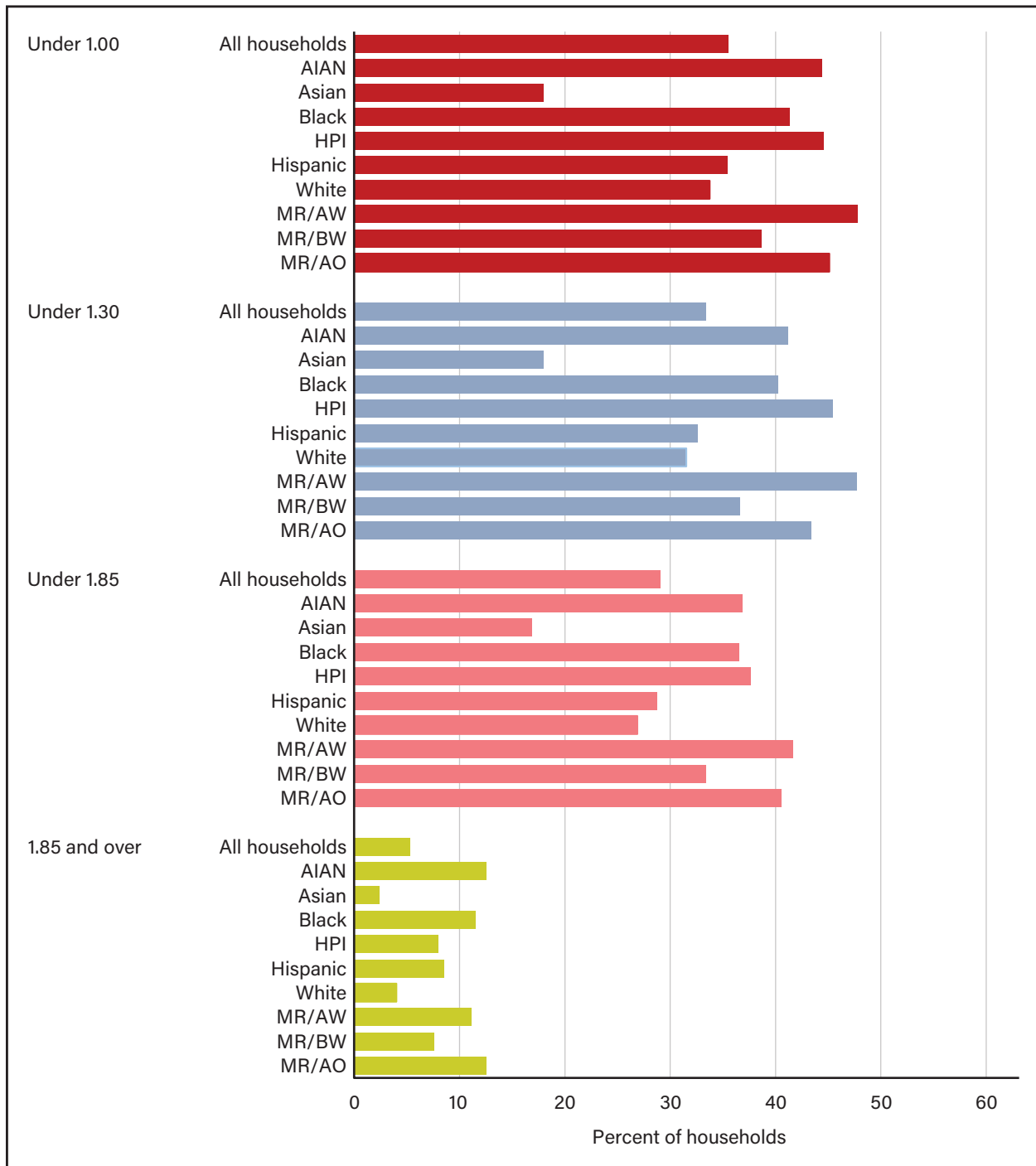
Lower incomes are associated with a higher prevalence of food insecurity because food insecurity is based on a lack of resources to afford enough food. Figure 3 shows that this finding applies to each race and ethnicity examined in this report. Households with incomes at or below 100 percent of the Federal poverty line had the highest prevalence of food insecurity, while households with incomes above 185 percent of the Federal poverty line had the lowest rates of food insecurity. The prevalence of food insecurity for households with incomes at or below 100 percent of the Federal poverty line ranged from 18.0 percent in Asian households to 47.8 percent in MR/AW households. The prevalence of food insecurity for households with incomes above 185 percent of the Federal poverty line ranged from 2.4 percent in Asian households to 12.5 percent in AIAN and MR/AO households. Prevalence rates of food insecurity for all income levels and across all racial and ethnic subgroups were statistically significantly different from the prevalence for all households in the same racial category, meaning the rates were unlikely to occur simply due to sampling variation. The data displayed in figure 3 are also in table 3.

By definition, food insecurity results from a household's lack of resources; however, many factors may affect a household's food security status that are not captured by an annual income measure (e.g., job loss, health expenses, or other unexpected events). Additionally, some households whose incomes are below the poverty line remain food secure, while some households experience food insecurity even though their incomes are above the poverty line. Table 5 presents food security statistics that are similar to those in table 3 but for households with annual incomes below 130 percent of the Federal poverty line.

For households with annual incomes at 130 percent of the poverty line, households with children had significantly higher prevalence rates of food insecurity than the all-household rate for Asian households (25.3 percent compared to 18.0 percent), Hispanic households (45.2 percent compared to 32.6 percent), and White households (38.2 percent compared to 31.5 percent). The prevalence of food insecurity in HPI households with children was significantly lower than the prevalence for all HPI households at incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line (25.5 percent compared to 45.4 percent). In general, disaggregated racial and ethnic groups that had significant differences from the all-household prevalence in the same racial and ethnic category had higher estimates of food insecurity in household compositions that included children and lower estimates in households with no children or with elderly and no children. Two exceptions are Black and Hispanic households that reported higher estimates of food insecurity in men living alone with no children (44.4 percent and 44.9 percent) than the estimates for all households at 130 percent of the poverty line (40.2 percent and 32.6 percent). See table 5 for more estimates of food insecurity by selected characteristics for households with incomes at 130 percent of the poverty line.

Figure 3

**Prevalence of food insecurity by household income-to-poverty ratio, and race and ethnicity, 2016–21**



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

The label “Under 1.00” refers to households with annual incomes below the poverty line. “Under 1.30” and “Under 1.85” represent households with annual incomes below 130 percent and below 185 percent of the poverty line. The label “1.85 and over” refers to households with annual incomes at or above 185 percent of the poverty line.

Bars that do not appear = data are not reported; fewer than 10 households are in the survey with this characteristic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

The prevalence of food insecurity for each race and ethnicity also differs by area of residence and geographic region, as shown in table 3. Some racial and ethnic categories displayed significantly higher food insecurity in the principal cities of metropolitan areas than the all-household rate in the same racial category. This includes Black (23.7 percent), Hispanic (18.3 percent), and MR/BW (22.6 percent) households. Most racial categories saw lower food insecurity in suburban areas (households located inside metropolitan areas but not in the principal cities) when compared to the all-household average, with statistically significant differences for Black, Hispanic, and White households. When differences in the prevalence of food insecurity between nonmetropolitan households and all households were statistically significant, the prevalence was higher in nonmetropolitan areas (outside metro areas). Across geographic regions, some race and ethnic subgroups experienced higher food insecurity in the South compared to the all-household prevalence of food insecurity in the same race and ethnic category. This higher prevalence in the South includes AIAN households (31.0 percent), Black households (23.6 percent), and White households (8.5 percent). White households and MR/BW households experienced lower rates of food insecurity in the West (7.4 percent and 6.5 percent). In the Northeast, both MR/AO and White households had a lower prevalence of food insecurity (11.0 percent and 7.0 percent, respectively) than their all-household prevalence rates, while Hispanic households experienced a higher rate of food insecurity in the Northeast (19.1 percent).

## Prevalence of Household Food Insecurity by Race/Ethnicity and Selected Individual-Level Characteristics

In addition to household-level characteristics (such as household composition, income, and location), individual-level characteristics are associated with food insecurity, previous research showed. These characteristics contribute to the social and economic circumstances of the household and help determine the household's food security status. The characteristics include employment and labor force status, level of education, disability status, veteran status, and citizenship status. Food insecurity statistics across individual-level characteristics are in table 4. Although these are individual-level characteristics, information on all adult individuals in the household is combined in the calculation of three of these variables (employment, education, and disability status).

Employment and labor force participation status combines information on the employment status of all adult members in the household and selects the highest level of labor force participation for each household. More information about the employment variable in the CPS-FSS can be found in the box "Categorizing Employment and Disability Status." Education status and disability status also combine information about all adults in the household. Education status is calculated as the education level of the most highly educated adult household member. Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories. Those categories are defined in the box "How is Disability Defined?" The veteran and citizenship data are calculated using the self-reported veteran and citizenship status of the household reference person.

## Categorizing Employment and Disability Status

How are employment and labor force participation defined?

Employment and labor force participation combine information on the employment status of all adult household members and include the following categories:

- Full-time: one or more adult members were employed full-time.
- Retired: one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full-time.
- Part-time for noneconomic reasons: one or more members were employed part-time by choice, and no one was employed full-time or was retired.
- Part-time for economic reasons: one or more members were employed part-time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full-time or retired.
- Unemployed: one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired.
- Not in labor force, disabled: one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed.
- Other, not in labor force: no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working because of disability.

### How is Disability Defined?

Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories:

- Disabled, not in labor force: one or more adult members were not working due to disability.
- Disabled, adults 18–64: one or more working-age adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. Reported disabilities include deaf or serious difficulty hearing; blind or serious difficulty seeing even when wearing glasses; serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition; serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs; difficulty dressing or bathing; difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition. There were no adults in the household “disabled, not in the labor force.”
- Disabled, adults 65+: one or more elderly adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. There were no adults in the household “disabled, not in the labor force” or “disabled, adults 18–64.”
- Adults not disabled: households with no reported disabilities among adult members.

How does disability measured for employment status differ from disability measured for disability status?

continued on next page ►

## Categorizing Employment and Disability Status—continued

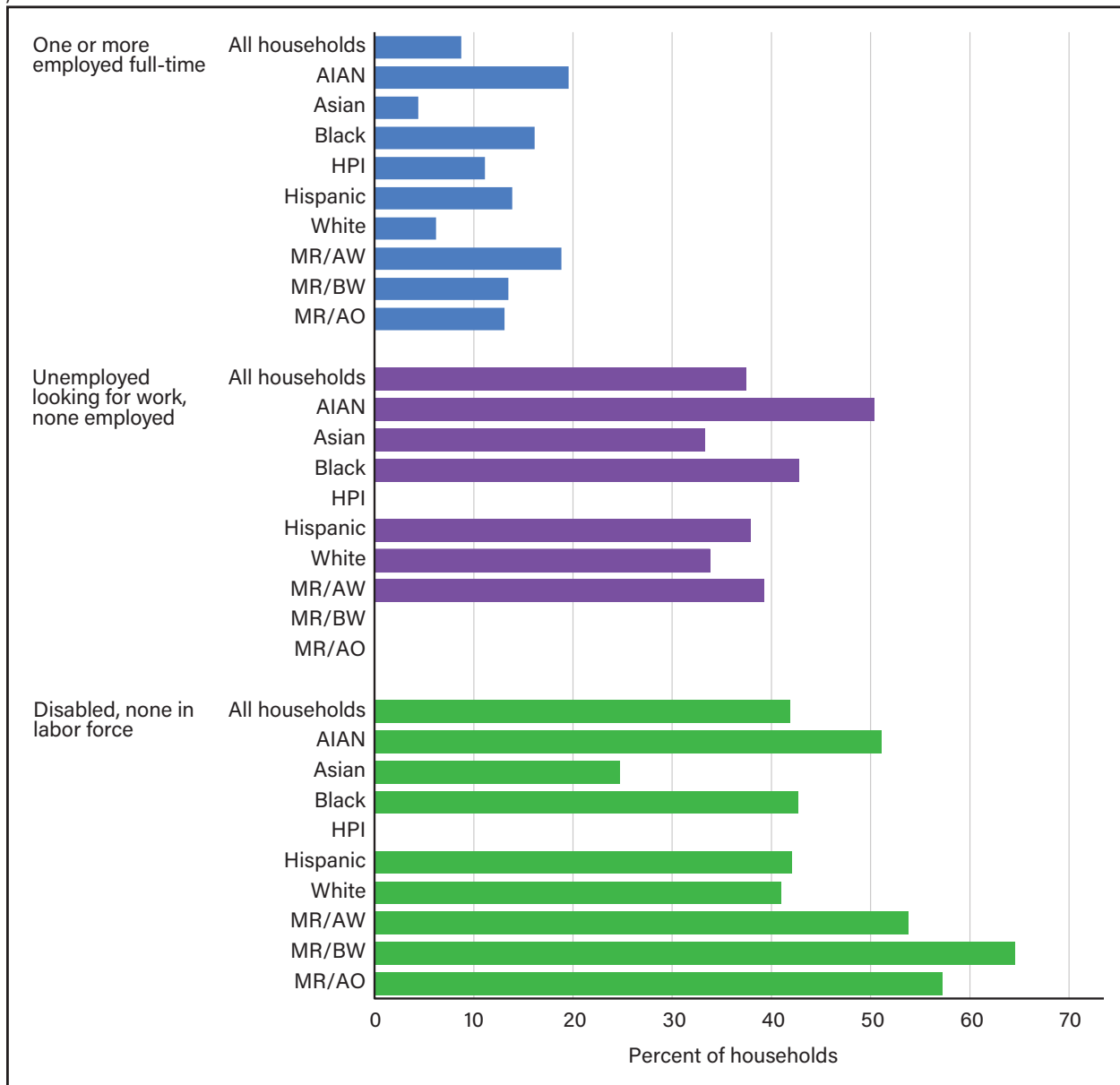
For the disabled, not in the labor force category in both the employment status and disability status variable, the condition is measured the same way. That is, an adult household member is reported to be out of the labor force (or not working or looking for work) because of a disability. The categorization of households across the mutually exclusive categories for these two different variables differs. For the employment status variable, a household is only classified as having a member disabled, not in the labor force, if no other members are employed or retired. For example, for the employment status variable, if a household member with two adults has one adult working full-time and one adult disabled, not in the labor force, the household will be categorized as having a full-time worker for the purposes of employment status. However, for disability status, that household will be classified as having an adult disabled, not in the labor force. As shown in this example, all households that include an adult not in the labor force because of disability are identified as such in the disability status variable, but some of these households are not identified as such in the employment status variable if other adult household members are in the labor force.

Employment (especially full-time employment) is protective of food insecurity, as higher unemployment is related to higher food insecurity rates (Nord et al., 2014; Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2013; Coleman-Jensen, 2011). This report found that from 2016–21, across all race and ethnicity categories, full-time employment was associated with a lower prevalence of food insecurity than the prevalence for all households in the same racial category. This difference was statistically significant across many groups. Food insecurity among households with one or more full-time employed adults ranged from 4.4 percent in Asian-headed households to 19.6 percent in AIAN-headed households. Conversely, households with adults who were unemployed and looking for work (and no other adults were employed or retired) experienced higher food insecurity than the all-household prevalence in the same race category. Food insecurity for households with unemployed adults ranged from 33.3 percent in Asian-headed households to 50.4 percent in AIAN-headed households. Figure 4 displays the prevalence of food insecurity for some categories of household employment. Food insecurity and very low food security for all categories of employment can be found in tables 4 and A.2.



Figure 4

**Prevalence of food insecurity by household employment status, and race and ethnicity, 2016–21**



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Employment combines information on the employment status of all adult household members. "Full-time" = one or more adult members were employed full-time. "Retired" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full-time. "Part-time for noneconomic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time by choice, and no one was employed full-time or was retired. "Part-time for economic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full-time or retired. "Unemployed" = one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired. "Not in labor force" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed. "Other, not in labor force" = no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working due to disability.

Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

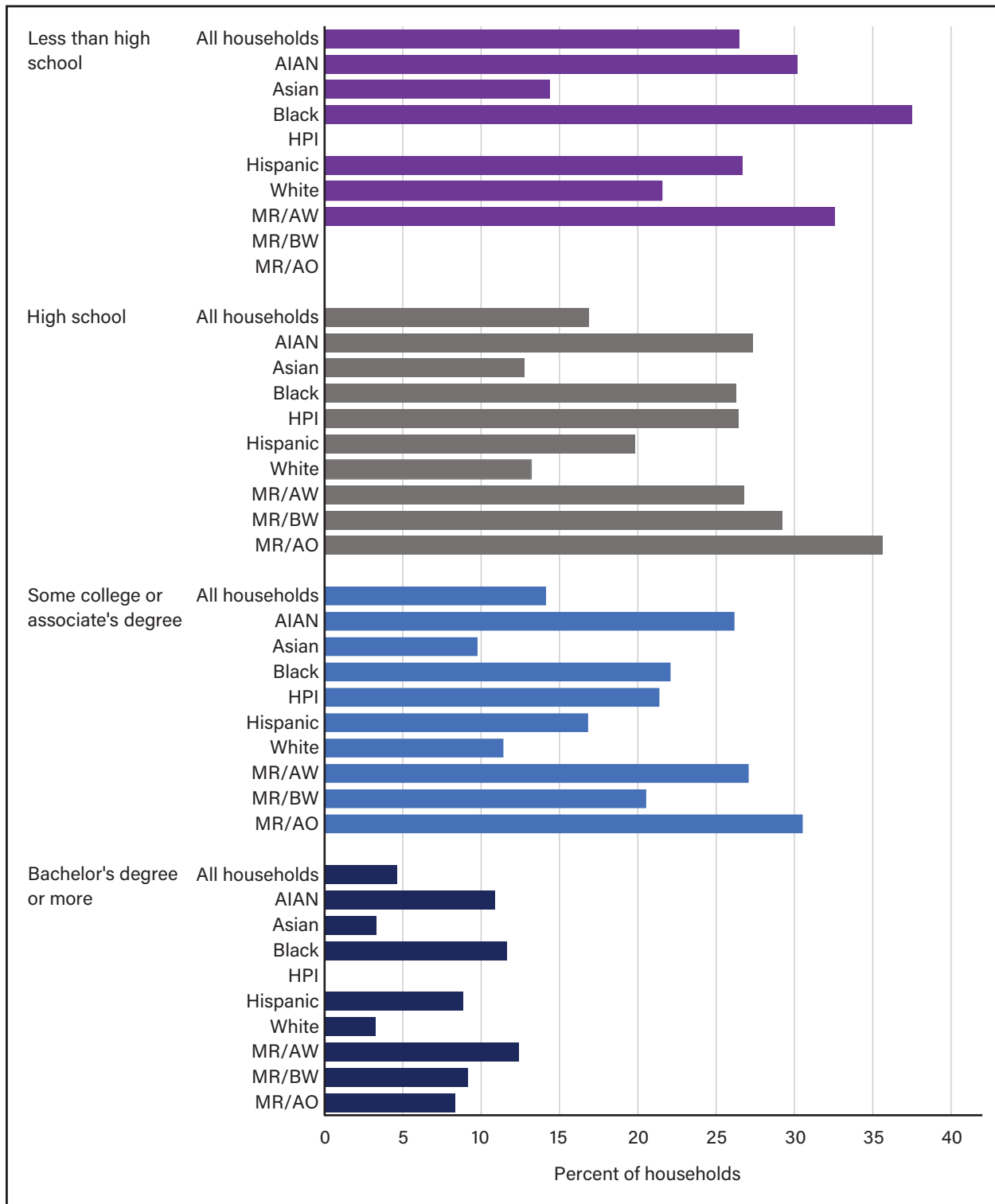
Households with adults who were not in the labor force because of a disability and no other adults in the labor force (labeled “Disabled, none in labor force”) also had high prevalence rates of food insecurity. In most racial categories, food insecurity for households with adults who were disabled and not employed was near or somewhat higher than for households with unemployed adults. For MR/BW households with an adult not in the labor force because of disability and no one working or unemployed, the prevalence of food insecurity was 64.5 percent, nearly 3.5 times higher than the prevalence for all MR/BW households. The prevalence rates in the remaining race and ethnic categories were similarly two to three times higher than the prevalence for all households of the same race. The prevalence rates of food insecurity for households with no adults working or retired and an adult not in the labor force because of disability are 51.1 percent for AIAN households, 24.7 percent for Asian households, 42.7 for Black households, 42.1 percent for Hispanic households, 57.2 percent for MR/AO households, 40.9 percent for White households, and 53.8 percent for MR/AW households.

Prior research shows that food insecurity is more common in households in which an adult has a work-limiting disability or other types of disabilities, even if those disabilities are not reported to prevent labor force participation (Coleman-Jensen & Nord, 2013; Heflin et al., 2019; Henly et al., 2023). Households with adults not in the labor force because of their disability and households with adults ages 18–64 who were not out of the labor force because of disability had higher rates of food insecurity than households with no adults with disabilities. This finding was true for all race and ethnic subgroups. Households with adults with disabilities also had higher food insecurity prevalence rates than the all-household prevalence in nearly all racial categories. Note that some categories of race and ethnicity had small sample sizes and could not be shown. Food insecurity in households with no adults with disabilities ranged from 4.5 percent in Asian households to 18.2 percent in AIAN households. Food insecurity in households where adults were not in the labor force because of disability ranged from 16.8 percent in Asian households to 50.1 percent in MR/BW households. Food insecurity in households where adults ages 18–64 had other disabilities ranged from 15.7 percent in Asian households to 53.2 percent in MR/BW households.

Food insecurity by a household’s level of education varied considerably by race and ethnicity from 2016–21. However, some consistent patterns exist across all racial subgroups. Food insecurity was highest in households in which the education of the most highly educated adult was less than a high school diploma and lowest in households in which the education of the most highly educated adult was a bachelor’s degree or higher. In other words, in households with higher educational attainment, the prevalence of food insecurity was lower. For all racial subgroups, the prevalence of food insecurity in households with a bachelor’s degree or more was statistically significantly lower than the prevalence for all households in the same racial subgroup. Black-headed households had the highest prevalence of food insecurity in households with adults with less than a high school diploma (37.5 percent). MR/AW-headed households had the highest prevalence of food insecurity in households with adults with a bachelor’s degree or more (12.4 percent). Prevalence rates of food insecurity by household level of education and race and ethnicity are displayed in figure 5.

Figure 5

**Prevalence of food insecurity by household level of education, and race and ethnicity, 2016–21**



AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Education level is the education level of the most highly educated adult household member. Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Bars that do not appear = data are not reported; fewer than 10 households are in the survey with this characteristic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Research on veteran status shows that food insecurity prevalence varies across different characteristics of veterans (Rabbitt & Smith, 2021; Pooler et al., 2021). Statistics show that veterans have lower food insecurity prevalence than the average within most race and ethnic groups, including AIAN, Black, Hispanic, White, and MR/AW. Some racial and ethnic subgroups had small enough sample sizes of veterans that estimates could not be reported. In this report, veteran status is only for the household reference person. White-headed households had the largest share of veterans in the sample (505 of 868 veterans who responded to the survey).

Citizenship status has also been shown to be associated with food insecurity. Research has shown that Hispanic immigrants who are noncitizens have higher food insecurity rates than naturalized immigrants (Rabbitt et al., 2016). Recent research using the CPS-FSS data shows that immigrants are more likely to be food insecure, but the relationship between immigration and food security status differs by origin. Immigrants from Mexico and West Africa are more likely to be food insecure than similar native households, while immigrants from China and India are less likely to be food insecure relative to similar native households (Berning et al., 2023). For AIAN, MR/AW, MR/AO, and MR/BW households surveyed, nearly all were native-born citizens, and there were too few households to report estimates for naturalized citizens and noncitizens. For the remaining racial subgroups, the prevalence of food insecurity by citizenship status varied considerably. Among Asian households, naturalized citizens had a higher food insecurity prevalence than all Asian households. Among Black and among White households, naturalized citizens had a lower food insecurity prevalence than all households for each racial group. The largest share of naturalized citizens or noncitizens were of Hispanic ethnicity (515 out of 1,057 naturalized citizens and 1,054 out of 1,381 noncitizens). The pattern of food insecurity in Hispanic-headed households was unique among racial subgroups. The prevalence of food insecurity was highest among households headed by noncitizens (21.8 percent), and that prevalence was also significantly higher than the prevalence for all Hispanic households (16.9 percent). Hispanic reference persons who reported having noncitizen status comprised about one-third of all food-insecure Hispanic households in the study. Hispanic households headed by citizens (15.8 percent) and naturalized citizens (13.5 percent) had significantly lower food insecurity than the Hispanic all-household prevalence rate (16.9 percent).

## Prevalence of Food Insecurity by Hispanic and Asian Countries of Origin

Survey respondents who identify as Hispanic or Asian are further asked to identify an origin group. “Origin” refers to different groups based on the individual’s place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors.

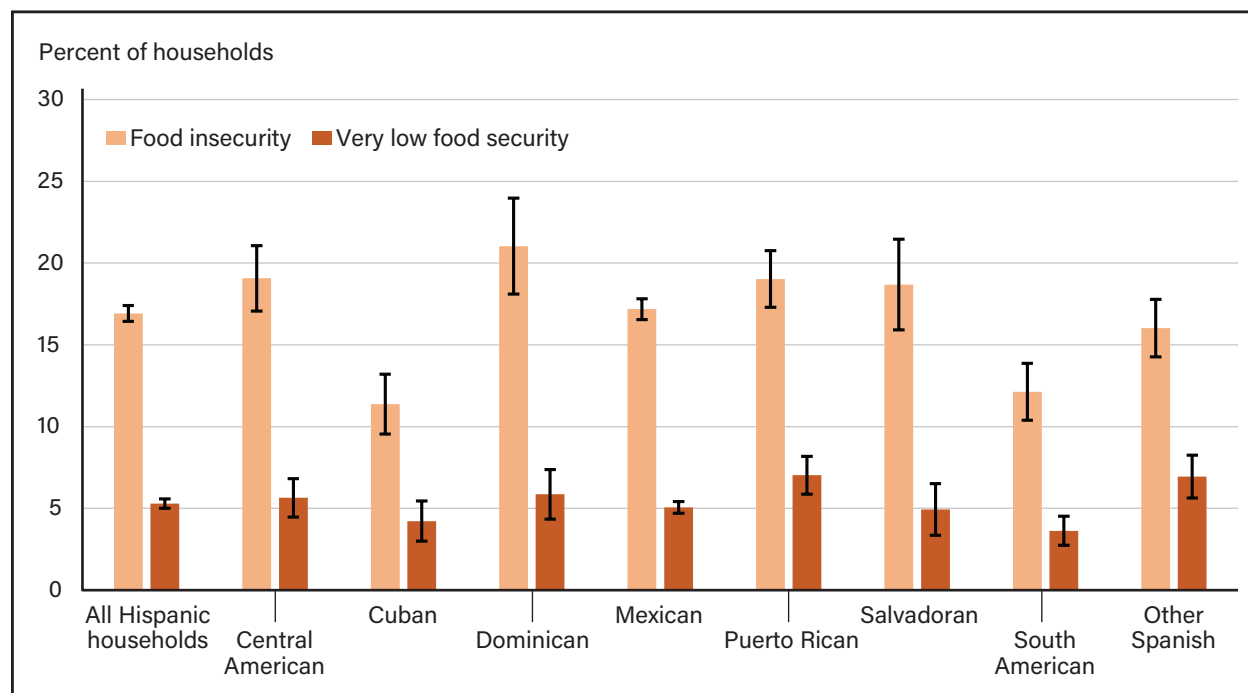
Hispanic origin groups include Central American, Cuban, Dominican, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Salvadoran, South American, and other Spanish. Mexican households comprise the largest share of reported origins at 58.0 percent of the Hispanic households in the study. Salvadorans comprise the smallest share at 3.2 percent. More information about the measurement of Hispanic and Asian origin groups can be found in the box “Categorization of Race and Ethnicity.”

Food insecurity varied substantially among Hispanic-origin groups, from 11.4 percent in Cuban households to 21.0 percent in Dominican households (figure 6 and table 6). Central American (19.1 percent), Dominican (21.0 percent), and Puerto Rican (19.0 percent) households had significantly higher food insecurity than the prevalence for all Hispanic households (16.9 percent). Cuban (11.4 percent) and South American (12.1 percent) households had significantly lower food insecurity than the prevalence for all Hispanic households (16.9 percent).

Very low food security ranged from 3.6 percent in South American households to 7.0 percent in Puerto Rican households. Puerto Rican (7.0 percent) and other Spanish (6.9 percent) households experienced a significantly higher prevalence of very low food security than the prevalence for all Hispanic households (5.3 percent). South American households (3.6 percent) had a significantly lower prevalence of food insecurity than the prevalence for all Hispanic households (5.3 percent).

Figure 6

**Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security by Hispanic origin, 2016–21**



Note: "Origin" is used to refer to different groups based on the individual's place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors.

Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

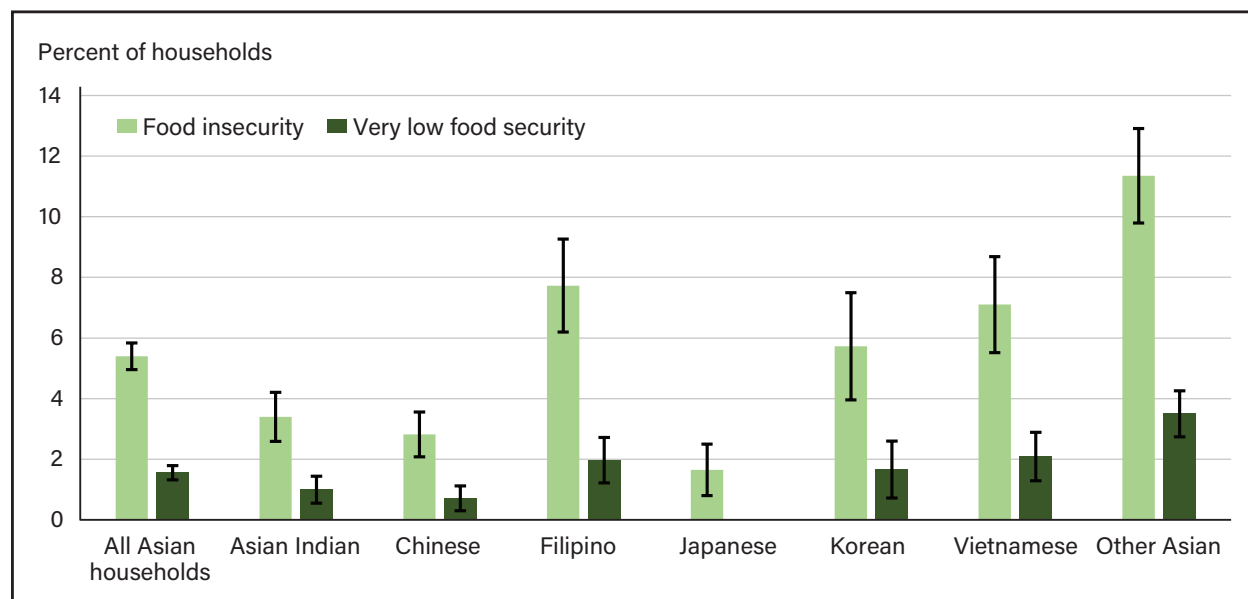
Asian origin groups include Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and other Asian. Asian Indians make up the largest share of Asian origin groups at 23.4 percent; Japanese households make up the smallest share at 5.8 percent (figure 7 and table 7).

Food insecurity among Asian-origin subgroups ranged from 1.7 percent in Japanese households to 11.4 percent in other Asian households, more than twice the prevalence for all Asian households (5.4 percent). Japanese households represent very few food-insecure households, so estimates were not available for low and very low food security in that origin group. Filipino (7.7 percent), Vietnamese (7.1 percent), and other Asian (11.4 percent) households had significantly higher prevalence rates of food insecurity than the prevalence for all Asian households (5.4 percent). Asian Indian (3.4 percent), Chinese (2.8 percent), and Japanese (1.7 percent) households experienced significantly lower food insecurity than the prevalence for all Asian households (5.4 percent).

Very low food security ranged from 0.7 percent in Chinese households to 3.5 percent in other Asian households. Asian Indian (1.0 percent) and Chinese (0.7 percent) households had significantly lower prevalence rates of very low food security than the prevalence for all Asian households (1.6 percent). Other Asian (3.5 percent) households had a significantly higher prevalence of very low food security than all Asian households (1.6 percent).

Figure 7

**Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security by Asian origin, 2016–21**



Note: “Origin” refers to different groups, based on the individual’s place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors.

Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

## Conclusion

Studying differences in the prevalence of food insecurity across race and ethnic groups is important foundational work to understand how or why outcomes may differ across groups. This report extends previous USDA, ERS research by adding information on more race and ethnic groups and by examining population subgroups within each race and ethnic group. Documenting and understanding disparities across groups is essential for promoting health and well-being for the entire U.S. population.

These statistics show that some racial/ethnic groups have higher rates of food insecurity than other groups. The following households all had higher food insecurity rates than the national average: American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN), Hawaiian Pacific Islander (HPI), Multiracial, All Other Combinations (MR/AO), Multiracial, American Indian-White (MR/AW), and Multiracial, Black-White (MR/BW). Variations exist in the prevalence of food insecurity within race and ethnic groups. Many of these patterns are similar across groups, such as the increased prevalence of food insecurity for single-parent households. However, while the increased risk of food insecurity is similar, the actual prevalence rates still vary across race and ethnicity. For example, the authors found that low household income is related to a higher prevalence of food insecurity for all race and ethnic groups, but the prevalence of food insecurity for households below the Federal poverty line varies from 18 percent to 47.8 percent across race and ethnic groups. Even focusing within specific subgroups, such as households with incomes below the Federal poverty line, differences in the prevalence of food insecurity across race and ethnicity are evident and meaningful. In other words, among households with incomes below the Federal poverty line, about one in five Asian households experienced food insecurity, while about one in two American Indian-White households experienced food insecurity. Such findings show that it is important to understand variation in food insecurity within and across race and ethnic groups.

A limitation of this study is that 6 years of data were combined to provide a large enough sample size to produce estimates for all nine race and ethnic groups included. Yet, even with those 6 years of data, some statistics were suppressed because of small sample sizes. The advantage of combining multiple years of data is that more information on smaller population groups is provided. This information is important but is limited by the timeliness of the estimates, given that the study uses 6 years of surveys dating to 2016. Combining multiple years of data also decreases the study's ability to examine broader economic trends or policies that occur during the study period that may affect prevalence over time. Larger survey sample sizes—either overall or of smaller racial/ethnic sub-populations (oversampling)—may be helpful in the future to overcome research challenges that arise because of sample constraints. Additionally, to overcome data limitations, USDA, ERS could continue to produce reports combining multiple years of data to examine underrepresented racial and ethnic groups that exhibit elevated prevalence rates of household food insecurity.

An additional limitation of this study is that origin information is only available in the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Current Population Survey for those who identify their race as Asian or their ethnicity as Hispanic. However, differences in the prevalence of food insecurity may exist across origin groups for other race categories as well. For example, there is no designation for Caribbean, African, or other ethnicities who identify as Black. This is a systemic issue that could be considered for CPS and other national surveys.

Future research could examine the probability of food insecurity across race and ethnic groups while controlling for differences in income and other demographic and economic factors across groups. Such research could help to understand whether and to what extent are the differences by race and ethnicity because of observed characteristics or other factors. Continued research may inform the development of programs and policies aimed at reducing food insecurity for all race and ethnic groups.

## Data Tables

Table 2  
Food security status of households by race and ethnicity of household reference person, 2016–21

Category	Total <sup>1</sup>		Food secure		All		Food insecure		Very low food security	
	Thousands	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	
All households	129,173	114,873	88.9	14,301	11.1	8,797	6.8	5,503	4.3	
American Indian/Alaskan Native	926	710	76.7 ▼	216	23.3 ▲	113	12.2 ▲	103	11.2 ▲	
Asian	6,753	6,389	94.6 ▲	365	5.4 ▼	260	3.9 ▼	105	1.6 ▼	
Black	16,509	13,041	79.0 ▼	3,468	21.0 ▲	2,073	12.6 ▲	1,395	8.5 ▲	
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	275	232	84.4 ▼	43	15.6 ▲	29	10.6 ▲	14	5.1	
Hispanic	18,002	14,956	83.1 ▼	3,046	16.9 ▲	2,094	11.6 ▲	951	5.3 ▲	
White	85,023	78,188	92.0 ▲	6,835	8.0 ▼	4,059	4.8 ▼	2,776	3.3 ▼	
Multiracial, American Indian-White	606	475	78.4 ▼	131	21.7 ▲	62	10.3 ▲	69	11.3 ▲	
Multiracial, Black-White	453	372	82.0 ▼	81	18.0 ▲	44	9.8 ▲	37	8.2 ▲	
Multiracial, All Other Combinations	626	511	81.6 ▼	115	18.4 ▲	63	10.0 ▲	53	8.4 ▲	

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category, with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.



Table 3a

**Prevalence of household food insecurity by race/ethnicity and selected household demographic characteristics, 2016–21 (single race and ethnic categories)**

Category	All households		AIAN		Asian		Black		HPI		Hispanic		White	
	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	14,301	11.1	216	23.3	365	5.4	3,468	21.0	43	15.6	3,046	16.9	6,835	8.0
Household composition <sup>2</sup>														
With children <18	5,484	14.5 ▲	96	27.8 ▲	155	6.5 ▲	1,290	25.1 ▲	22	20.6	1,578	19.5 ▲	2,228	10.6 ▲
With children <6	2,420	15.0 ▲	45	27.4	64	6.2	583	25.2 ▲	8	16.3	725	20.3 ▲	948	10.8 ▲
Married-couple families	2,134	8.7 ▼	36	23.8	101	5.0	255	13.8 ▼	12	16.8	753	15.4 ▼	932	6.1 ▼
Female head, no spouse	2,701	28.4 ▲	38	31.9 ▲	42	16.5 ▲	896	33.0 ▲	8	34.1 ▲	642	27.9 ▲	1,022	26.1 ▲
Male head, no spouse	558	17.5 ▲	20	30.4	11	11.5 ▲	124	24.3	NA	NA	163	19.2	222	14.0 ▲
With no children <18	8,817	9.6 ▼	120	20.7	210	4.8	2,178	19.2 ▼	21	12.5	1,467	14.8 ▼	4,608	7.2 ▼
More than one adult	3,966	7.3 ▼	61	18.9 ▼	124	4.2 ▼	811	15.6 ▼	11	10.4	823	12.8 ▼	2,049	5.3 ▼
Women living alone	2,711	13.2 ▲	33	23.3	47	6.6	730	21.2	7	20.8	354	21.0 ▲	1,461	10.3 ▲
Men living alone	2,140	12.8 ▲	27	22.7	38	5.9	637	23.4 ▲	NA	NA	291	16.2	1,097	9.8 ▲
With elderly	2,921	6.9 ▼	40	16.3 ▼	97	5.8	693	17.0 ▼	3	6.0 ▼	546	15.5 ▼	1,489	5.0 ▼
Household income-to-poverty ratio														
Under 1.00	4,300	35.5 ▲	85	44.4 ▲	102	18.0 ▲	1,154	41.3 ▲	13	44.6 ▲	1,004	35.4 ▲	1,846	33.8 ▲
Under 1.30	5,693	33.4 ▲	98	41.2 ▲	138	18.0 ▲	1,473	40.2 ▲	18	45.4 ▲	1,358	32.6 ▲	2,478	31.5 ▲
Under 1.85	7,836	29.1 ▲	124	36.9 ▲	200	16.8 ▲	1,906	36.5 ▲	26	37.6 ▲	1,826	28.7 ▲	3,580	26.9 ▲
1.85 and over	3,710	5.3 ▼	46	12.5 ▼	92	2.4 ▼	776	11.5 ▼	12	8.0 ▼	634	8.5 ▼	2,047	4.0 ▼
Area of residence <sup>3</sup>														
Inside metro area	12,005	10.8 ▼	132	24.4	354	5.3	3,101	20.7	39	15.1	2,852	16.8	5,255	7.5 ▼
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	4,967	13.1 ▲	50	26.4	204	6.0	1,752	23.7 ▲	26	20.9	1,375	18.3 ▲	1,445	7.7 ▼
Not in principal cities	4,996	8.9 ▼	46	20.9	135	4.6	993	16.5 ▼	11	10.0	1,205	15.1 ▼	2,502	6.6 ▼
Outside metro area	2,296	12.6 ▲	84	21.8	10	8.3	368	24.4 ▲	4	22.6	194	18.6	1,580	10.6 ▲
Census geographic region														
Northeast	2,197	10.8 ▼	11	21.8	73	5.2	495	19.6	NA	NA	496	19.1 ▲	1,089	7.0 ▼
Midwest	6,099	13.1 ▲	78	22.6	81	5.3	2,004	20.8	NA	NA	1,183	16.5	2,614	8.6 ▲
South	2,992	8.9	51	31.0 ▲	52	5.9	685	23.6 ▲	NA	NA	267	16.8	1,853	8.5 ▲
West	3,013	12.6 ▲	76	20.8	160	5.4	283	19.9	33	18.6	1,099	16.6	1,279	7.4 ▼

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 U.S. Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

The label "Under 1.00" refers to households with annual incomes below the poverty line. "Under 1.30" and "Under 1.85" represent households with annual incomes below 130 percent and below 185 percent of the poverty line. The label "1.85 and over" refers to households with annual incomes at or above 185 percent of the poverty line.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 3b

**Prevalence of household food insecurity by race/ethnicity and selected household demographic characteristics, 2016–21 (multiple race categories)**

Category	All households		MR/AW		MR/BW		MR/AO	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	14,301	11.1	131	21.7	81	18.0	115	18.4
Household composition <sup>2</sup>								
With children <18	5,484	14.5	42	24.8	34	19.6	39	19.8
With children <6	2,420	15.0	14	19.8	19	21.2	14	18.7
Married-couple families	2,134	8.7	22	21.2	8	11.2	14	12.6 ▼
Female head, no spouse	2,701	28.4	16	34.6	19	30.8 ▲	17	27.4
Male head, no spouse	558	17.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	6	29.4
With no children <18	8,817	9.6	89	20.4	48	17.0	76	17.8
More than one adult	3,966	7.3	37	16.5	22	13.9	28	12.1 ▼
Women living alone	2,711	13.2	36	29.3 ▲	19	23.8	24	24.6
Men living alone	2,140	12.8	16	17.8	NA	NA	24	24.5
With elderly	2,921	6.9	21	11.5 ▼	10	16.0	22	18.9
Household income-to-poverty ratio								
Under 1.00	4,300	35.5	42	47.8 ▲	23	38.7 ▲	31	45.1 ▲
Under 1.30	5,693	33.4	62	47.7 ▲	31	36.6 ▲	38	43.4 ▲
Under 1.85	7,836	29.1	75	41.7 ▲	45	33.4 ▲	55	40.6 ▲
1.85 and over	3,710	5.3	36	11.1 ▼	19	7.6 ▼	49	12.5 ▼
Area of residence <sup>3</sup>								
Inside metro area	12,005	10.8	93	21.1	76	18.5	104	18.2
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	4,967	13.1	23	21.2	44	22.6	48	17.4
Not in principal cities	4,996	8.9	43	19.6	20	11.6 ▼	43	18.6
Outside metro area	2,296	12.6	38	23.2	6	12.9	12	20.6
Census geographic region								
Northeast	2,197	10.8	10	19.3	11	14.6	9	11.0 ▼
Midwest	6,099	13.1	55	21.7	32	21.5	45	22.8
South	2,992	8.9	29	22.5	32	24.7	21	22.6
West	3,013	12.6	37	21.7	7	6.5 ▼	40	15.9

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 U.S. Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

The label "Under 1.00" refers to households with annual incomes below the poverty line. "Under 1.30" and "Under 1.85" represent households with annual incomes below 130 percent and below 185 percent of the poverty line. The label "1.85 and over" refers to households with annual incomes at or above 185 percent of the poverty line.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 4a

**Prevalence of household food insecurity by race/ethnicity and selected characteristics, 2016–21 (single race and ethnic categories)**

Category	All households		AIAN		Asian		Black		HPI		Hispanic		White	
	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	14,301	11.1	216	23.3	365	5.4	3,468	21.0	43	15.6	3,046	16.9	6,835	8.0
Employment and labor force status of adults <sup>2</sup>														
One or more employed full-time	7,396	8.7 ▼	108	19.6 ▼	227	4.4 ▼	1,635	16.1 ▼	23	11.1	1,894	13.9 ▼	3,330	6.2 ▼
Retired, no full-time	1,941	7.0 ▼	23	13.8 ▼	54	6.2	469	16.9 ▼	NA	NA	300	15.8	1,063	4.9 ▼
Part-time non-economic reasons, no full-time	989	17.5 ▲	11	27.8	18	6.5	227	27.6 ▲	10	41.3 ▲	187	25.0 ▲	509	14.0 ▲
Part-time economic reasons, no full-time	463	40.6 ▲	6	47.1 ▲	12	21.9 ▲	118	49.0 ▲	NA	NA	144	46.1 ▲	176	35.4 ▲
Unemployed looking for work, none employed	766	37.4 ▲	15	50.4 ▲	21	33.3 ▲	226	42.8 ▲	NA	NA	147	37.9 ▲	337	33.8 ▲
Disabled, none in labor force	2,083	41.8 ▲	40	51.1 ▲	12	24.7 ▲	566	42.7 ▲	NA	NA	237	42.1 ▲	1,175	40.9 ▲
None in labor force for reasons other than disability	663	23.5 ▲	11	28.1	21	7.0	228	33.5 ▲	NA	NA	138	30.4 ▲	243	18.9 ▲
Education of most highly educated adult <sup>3</sup>														
Less than high school	1,825	26.5 ▲	19	30.2	32	14.4 ▲	485	37.5 ▲	NA	NA	710	26.7 ▲	555	21.5 ▲
High school	4,649	16.9 ▲	75	27.3	76	12.8 ▲	1,178	26.3 ▲	16	26.4 ▲	1,001	19.8 ▲	2,215	13.2 ▲
Some college/associate's	5,130	14.1 ▲	99	26.2	90	9.8 ▲	1,173	22.1	21	21.4	894	16.8	2,709	11.4 ▲
Bachelor's or more	2,697	4.6 ▼	23	10.9 ▼	167	3.3 ▼	632	11.6 ▼	NA	NA	440	8.8 ▼	1,357	3.2 ▼
Disability status of adults in households <sup>4</sup>														
No adult with disabilities	8,257	8.3 ▼	108	18.2 ▼	267	4.5 ▼	2,065	17.0 ▼	30	13.5	2,110	14.4 ▼	3,514	5.4 ▼
Not in labor force due to disability	3,547	31.2 ▲	70	40.1 ▲	43	16.8 ▲	892	36.5 ▲	6	27.2	501	32.1 ▲	1,949	29.0 ▲
Other disability among adults 18–64	1,576	22.9 ▲	28	34.8 ▲	29	15.7 ▲	315	34.6 ▲	6	30.6	294	32.4 ▲	844	18.2 ▲
Other disability among adults 65+	920	8.2 ▼	10	13.1 ▼	26	7.4	196	19.5	NA	NA	142	16.7	529	6.0 ▼
Veteran status of household reference person														
Veteran	868	7.5 ▼	11	11.8 ▼	7	3.5	212	15.0 ▼	NA	NA	96	12.2 ▼	505	5.7 ▼
Nonveteran	13,433	11.4 ▲	205	24.7	358	5.5	3,256	21.6	40	16.4	2,949	17.1	6,331	8.3 ▲
Citizenship status of household reference person														
Citizen	11,863	10.8 ▼	215	23.9	81	4.5	3,132	21.3	24	12.5	1,477	15.8 ▼	6,616	8.1
Citizen, naturalized	1,057	10.0 ▼	NA	NA	194	6.4 ▲	200	16.3 ▼	10	19.0	515	13.5 ▼	130	5.5 ▼
Not a citizen	1,381	16.0 ▲	NA	NA	89	4.6	136	22.4	9	28.7	1,054	21.8 ▲	89	7.2

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Employment combines information on the employment status of all adult household members. "Full-time" = one or more adult members were employed full-time. "Retired" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full-time. "Part-time for noneconomic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time by choice, and no one was employed full-time or was retired. "Part-time for economic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full-time or retired. "Unemployed" = one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired. "Disabled, not in labor force" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed. "Other, not in labor force" = no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working due to disability.

<sup>3</sup> Education status is the education level of the most highly educated adult household member.

<sup>4</sup> Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories. "Disabled, not in labor force:" one or more adult members were not working due to disability. "Disabled, adults 18–64:" one or more working-age adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Disabled, adults 65+:" one or more elderly adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Adults not disabled:" households with no reported disabilities among adult members.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 4b

**Prevalence of household food insecurity by race/ethnicity and selected characteristics, 2016–21  
(multiple race categories)**

Category	All households		MR/AW		MR/BW		MR/AO	
	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	14,301	11.1	131	21.7	81	18.0	115	18.4
Employment and labor force status of adults <sup>2</sup>								
One or more employed full-time	7,396	8.7 ▼	71	18.8	47	13.5	60	13.1 ▼
Retired, no full-time	1,941	7.0 ▼	11	9.8 ▼	NA	NA	14	20.6
Part-time non-economic reasons, no full-time	989	17.5 ▲	11	31.9	9	26.4	NA	NA
Part-time economic reasons, no full-time	463	40.6 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unemployed looking for work, none employed	766	37.4 ▲	7	39.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Disabled, none in labor force	2,083	41.8 ▲	25	53.8 ▲	8	64.5 ▲	17	57.2 ▲
None in labor force for reasons other than disability	663	23.5 ▲	4	48.0 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA
Education of most highly educated adult <sup>3</sup>								
Less than high school	1,825	26.5 ▲	8	32.6	NA	NA	NA	NA
High school	4,649	16.9 ▲	35	26.8	28	29.2 ▲	25	35.6 ▲
Some college/associate's	5,130	14.1 ▲	59	27.1	32	20.5	53	30.5 ▲
Bachelor's or more	2,697	4.6 ▼	29	12.4 ▼	17	9.1 ▼	30	8.3 ▼
Disability status of adults in households <sup>4</sup>								
No adult with disabilities	8,257	8.3 ▼	48	13.5 ▼	45	12.5 ▼	71	14.2 ▼
Not in labor force due to disability	3,547	31.2 ▲	47	42.1 ▲	16	50.1 ▲	24	47.0 ▲
Other disability among adults 18–64	1,576	22.9 ▲	29	39.7 ▲	18	53.2 ▲	13	30.0
Other disability among adults 65+	920	8.2 ▼	7	10.4 ▼	NA	NA	8	21.8
Veteran status of household reference person								
Veteran	868	7.5 ▼	10	12.0 ▼	NA	NA	18	27.9
Nonveteran	13,433	11.4 ▲	121	23.2	76	18.3	97	17.3
Citizenship status of household reference person								
Citizen	11,863	10.8 ▼	131	21.6	75	17.7	112	18.9
Citizen, naturalized	1,057	10.0 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Not a citizen	1,381	16.0 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

NA= Not reported; fewer than 10 households are in the survey with this characteristic.

Note: Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Employment combines information on the employment status of all adult household members. "Full-time" = one or more adult members were employed full-time. "Retired" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full-time. "Part-time for noneconomic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time by choice, and no one was employed full-time or was retired. "Part-time for economic reasons" = one or more members were employed part-time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full-time or retired. "Unemployed" = one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired. "Disabled, not in labor force" = one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed. "Other, not in labor force" = no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working due to disability.

<sup>3</sup> Education status is the education level of the most highly educated adult household member.

<sup>4</sup> Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories. "Disabled, not in labor force:" one or more adult members were not working due to disability. "Disabled, adults 18–64:" one or more working-age adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Disabled, adults 65+:" one or more adults age 65+ reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Adults not disabled:" households with no reported disabilities among adult members.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 5a  
**Food security status of households with annual income below 130 percent of the poverty line, by selected household characteristics and race and ethnicity, 2016–21 (single race and ethnic categories)**

Category	All households		AIAN		Asian		Black		HPI		Hispanic		White	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,693	33.4	98	41.2	138	18.0	1,473	40.2	18	45.4	1,358	32.6	2,478	31.5
Household composition <sup>2</sup>														
With children <18	2,464	36.8 ▲	47	45.2	62	25.3 ▲	643	42.7	13	25.5 ▼	777	45.2 ▲	875	38.2 ▲
With children <6	1,164	34.6	22	37.7	32	28.2 ▲	308	38.4	NA	NA	373	37.7	408	36.2 ▲
Married-couple families	773	29.8 ▼	11	35.9	38	22.6	83	35.2	6	55.7	338	35.9	288	30.9
Female head, no spouse	1,408	42.4 ▲	22	42.1	18	32.4 ▲	490	43.9 ▲	6	66.6	359	42.1 ▲	482	45.3 ▲
Male head, no spouse	249	36.6 ▲	13	65.2 ▲	NA	NA	60	46.3	NA	NA	74	65.2 ▲	89	36.3 ▲
With no children <18	3,229	31.2 ▼	51	38.0	77	14.6 ▼	830	38.5	5	25.5 ▼	580	38.0	1,603	28.8 ▼
More than one adult	1,150	28.9 ▼	21	39.2	33	12.0 ▼	234	35.5 ▼	NA	NA	289	39.2	545	26.9 ▼
Women living alone	1,152	31.4 ▼	14	31.9	26	16.6	302	36.1 ▼	NA	NA	156	31.9	610	29.7 ▼
Men living alone	928	34.5	15	44.9	17	19.2	293	44.4 ▲	NA	NA	135	44.9 ▲	448	30.0
With elderly	1,106	24.8 ▼	20	31.9 ▼	43	17.3	269	39.2	NA	NA	246	31.9	505	20.8 ▼
Area of residence <sup>3</sup>														
Inside metro area	4,596	33.3	51	43.6	135	17.9	1,267	40.4	15	43.8	1,258	43.6 ▲	1,766	31.1
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	2,045	34.8 ▲	20	50.6	84	18.9	751	41.5	10	48.9	654	50.6 ▲	484	30.1
Not in principal cities	1,718	31.5 ▼	15	40.4	42	16.4	364	39.5	4	32.9	481	40.4	777	30.5
Outside metro area	1,097	34.0	47	38.8	4	20.9	206	39.2	3	55.1	100	38.8 ▲	712	32.8
Census geographic region														
Northeast	821	32.1	NA	NA	36	20.7	159	35.7 ▼	NA	NA	219	28.6	393	30.3
Midwest	2,546	34.5	35	41.4	30	18.3	884	40.8	NA	NA	534	41.4 ▲	1,003	32.4
South	1,158	34.1	25	56.3 ▲	18	16.7	320	40.4	NA	NA	109	56.3 ▲	653	31.7
West	1,167	31.6 ▼	34	35.7	56	16.9	110	43.1	12	44.9	496	35.7	429	30.5

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 U.S. Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 5b

**Food security status of households with annual income below 130 percent of the poverty line, by selected household characteristics and race and ethnicity, 2016–21 (multiple race categories)**

Category	All households		MR/AW		MR/BW		MR/AO	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,693	33.4	62	47.7	31	36.6	38	43.4
With children <18	2,464	36.8	20	46.3	12	32.4	14	49.3
With children <6	1,164	34.6	9	37.9	7	30.6	NA	NA
Married-couple families	773	29.8	7	42.2	NA	NA	NA	NA
Female head, no spouse	1,408	42.4	11	61.5	9	37.7	10	56.1
Male head, no spouse	249	36.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
With no children <18	3,229	31.2	42	48.4	18	40.1	24	40.5
More than one adult	1,150	28.9	14	47.9	NA	NA	6	28.9
Women living alone	1,152	31.4	21	56.6	10	58.0	10	38.8
Men living alone	928	34.5	7	35.0	NA	NA	8	61.5
With elderly	1,106	24.8	10	36.9	NA	NA	NA	NA
Inside metro area	4,596	33.3	41	51.6	29	39.8	34	42.7
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	2,045	34.8	11	52.8	20	67.6 ▲	12	35.2
Not in principal cities	1,718	31.5	19	52.8	NA	NA	12	46.8
Outside metro area	1,097	34.0	20	41.4	NA	NA	4	50.8
Northeast	821	32.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Midwest	2,546	34.5	24	44.9	15	47.7	18	46.3
South	1,158	34.1	16	42.5	10	45.4	7	54.2
West	1,167	31.6	17	56.2	NA	NA	11	43.6

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

1 Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

2 Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

3 Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 U.S. Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

4 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category, with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 6

## Food security status of households with Hispanic reference persons by Hispanic origin category, 2016–21

Origin <sup>1</sup>	Food insecure								
	Total <sup>2</sup>	Food secure Thou- sands	All		Low food security		Very low food security		
			Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All Hispanic households	18,002	14,956	83.1	3,046	16.9	2,094	11.6	951	5.3
			[82.6, 83.6]		[16.4, 17.4]		[11.2, 12.0]		[5.0, 5.6]
Central American	1,044	845	80.9 ▼	199	19.1 ▲	140	13.4	59	5.6
			[78.9, 83.0]		[17.1, 21.1]		[11.6, 15.2]		[4.5, 6.8]
Cuban	952	844	88.6 ▲	108	11.4 ▼	68	7.1 ▼	40	4.2
			[86.8, 90.5]		[9.5, 13.2]		[5.7, 8.6]		[3.0, 5.4]
Dominican	684	540	79.0 ▼	144	21.0 ▲	104	15.2 ▲	40	5.9
			[76.0, 81.9]		[18.1, 24.0]		[12.6, 17.7]		[4.4, 7.4]
Mexican	10,424	8,633	82.8	1,791	17.2	1,264	12.1	527	5.1
			[82.2, 83.5]		[16.5, 17.8]		[11.6, 12.7]		[4.7, 5.4]
Puerto Rican	1,868	1,513	81.0 ▼	355	19.0 ▲	224	12.0	131	7.0 ▲
			[79.2, 82.7]		[17.3, 20.8]		[10.7, 13.3]		[5.9, 8.2]
Salvadoran	578	470	81.3	108	18.7	80	13.7	29	4.9
			[78.5, 84.1]		[15.9, 21.5]		[11.3, 16.2]		[3.4, 6.5]
South American	1,346	1,183	87.9 ▲	163	12.1 ▼	114	8.5 ▼	49	3.6 ▼
			[86.1, 89.6]		[10.4, 13.9]		[7.1, 9.9]		[2.7, 4.5]
Other Spanish	1,103	926	84.0	177	16.0	100	9.1 ▼	77	6.9 ▲
			[82.2, 85.7]		[14.3, 17.8]		[7.7, 10.4]		[5.6, 8.2]

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

<sup>1</sup>“Origin” is used to refer to different groups based on the individual’s place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors.

<sup>2</sup>Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ). Confidence intervals for estimates are included in brackets.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table 7

**Food security status of households with Asian reference persons by Asian origin category, 2016–21**

Origin <sup>1</sup>	Food insecure								
	Total <sup>2</sup>	Food secure		All		Low food security		Very low food security	
		Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All Asian households	6,753	6,389	94.6	365	5.4	260	3.9	105	1.6
			[94.2, 95.0]		[5.0, 5.8]		[3.5, 4.2]		[1.3, 1.8]
Asian Indian	1,580	1,526	96.6 ▲	54	3.4 ▼	38	2.4 ▼	16	1.0 ▼
			[95.8, 97.4]		[2.6, 4.2]		[1.7, 3.1]		[0.6, 1.4]
Chinese	1,798	1,748	97.2 ▲	51	2.8 ▼	38	2.1 ▼	13	0.7 ▼
			[96.4, 97.9]		[2.1, 3.6]		[1.5, 2.7]		[0.3, 1.1]
Filipino	827	764	92.3 ▼	64	7.7 ▲	48	5.8 ▲	16	2.0
			[90.7, 93.8]		[6.2, 9.3]		[4.5, 7.0]		[1.2, 2.7]
Japanese	393	387	98.3 ▲	6	1.7 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA
			[97.5, 99.2]		[0.8, 2.5]		[NA]		[NA]
Korean	537	506	94.3	31	5.7	22	4.1	9	1.7
			[92.5, 96.0]		[4.0, 7.5]		[2.6, 5.6]		[0.7, 2.6]
Vietnamese	574	533	92.9 ▼	41	7.1 ▲	29	5.0	12	2.1
			[91.3, 94.5]		[5.5, 8.7]		[3.5, 6.5]		[1.3, 2.9]
Other Asian	1,043	925	88.6 ▼	118	11.4 ▲	82	7.9 ▲	37	3.5 ▲
			[87.1, 90.2]		[9.8, 12.9]		[6.5, 9.2]		[2.7, 4.3]

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

<sup>1</sup>“Origin” is used to refer to different groups based on the individual’s place of birth or that of their parents or ancestors.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ). Confidence intervals for estimates are included in brackets.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.



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# Appendix

Table A.1a  
**Prevalence of very low food security by race/ethnicity and selected household demographic characteristics (single race and ethnic categories), 2016–21**

Category	All households		AIAN		Asian		Black		HPI		Hispanic		White		
	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,503	4.3	103	11.2	105	1.6	1,395	8.5	14	5.0	951	5.3	2,776	3.3	
Household composition <sup>2</sup>															
With children <18	1,518	4.0 ▼	33	9.4	34	1.4	392	7.6 ▼	4	4.0	363	4.5 ▼	651	3.1	
With children <6	623	3.9 ▼	13	7.8 ▼	17	1.7	176	7.6	NA	NA	148	4.2 ▼	251	2.9 ▼	
Married-couple families	457	1.9 ▼	11	7.3 ▼	21	1.0 ▼	68	3.7 ▼	NA	NA	142	2.9 ▼	203	1.3 ▼	
Female head, no spouse	866	9.1 ▲	13	11.0	10	4.0 ▲	277	10.2 ▲	NA	NA	175	7.6 ▲	363	9.3 ▲	
Male head, no spouse	170	5.3 ▲	8	11.8	NA	NA	43	8.4	NA	NA	42	4.9	70	4.4 ▲	
With no children <18	3,985	4.4	71	12.2	71	1.6	1,003	8.8	10	5.7	589	6.0 ▲	2,125	3.3	
More than one adult	1,621	3.0 ▼	35	10.8	35	1.2	318	6.1 ▼	5	4.4	292	4.6 ▼	895	2.3 ▼	
Women living alone	1,292	6.3 ▲	20	14.2	20	2.7 ▲	345	10.0 ▲	NA	NA	156	9.3 ▲	700	4.9 ▲	
Men living alone	1,073	6.4 ▲	16	13.8	17	2.6 ▲	340	12.5 ▲	NA	NA	141	7.8 ▲	530	4.7 ▲	
With elderly	896	2.6 ▼	16	8.1	21	1.8	235	6.9 ▼	NA	NA	137	5.3	459	1.7 ▼	
Household income-to-poverty ratio															
Under 1.00	1,888	15.6 ▲	39	20.6 ▲	35	6.1 ▲	506	18.1 ▲	NA	NA	355	12.5 ▲	898	16.4 ▲	
Under 1.30	2,404	14.1 ▲	46	19.1 ▲	45	5.9 ▲	634	17.3 ▲	6	14.5 ▲	453	10.9 ▲	1,150	14.6 ▲	
Under 1.85	3,154	11.7 ▲	54	16.0 ▲	61	5.1 ▲	791	15.2 ▲	8	11.8 ▲	576	9.1 ▲	1,576	11.8 ▲	
1.85 and over	1,244	1.8 ▼	20	5.4 ▼	24	0.6 ▼	277	4.1 ▼	NA	NA	184	2.5 ▼	694	1.4 ▼	
Area of residence <sup>3</sup>															
Inside metro area	4,588	4.1	69	12.9	102	1.5	1,248	8.3	12	4.5	897	5.3	2,130	3.0 ▼	
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	1,917	5.2 ▲	29	15.2	64	1.9	727	9.8 ▲	8	6.8	464	6.2 ▲	620	3.3	
Not in principal cities	1,841	3.3 ▼	22	10.2	33	1.1 ▼	390	6.5 ▼	NA	NA	350	4.4 ▼	994	2.6 ▼	
Outside metro area	916	5.0 ▲	34	8.8	4	2.9	147	9.8	NA	NA	55	5.2	646	4.3 ▲	
Census geographic region															
Northeast	810	3.6 ▼	9	17.5	18	1.3	194	7.7	NA	NA	154	5.9	424	2.7 ▼	
Midwest	2,352	4.4	38	13.4	24	1.6	792	9.8 ▲	NA	NA	362	5.0	1,069	3.5 ▲	
South	1,221	4.7 ▲	22	11.0	14	1.6	286	8.2	NA	NA	90	5.6	767	3.5 ▲	
West	1,120	3.8 ▼	34	9.4	49	1.7	123	8.6	13	7.1	346	5.2	516	3.0 ▼	

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

The label "Under 1.00" refers to households with annual incomes below the poverty line. "Under 1.30" and "Under 1.85" represent households with annual incomes below 130 percent and below 185 percent of the poverty line. The label "1.85 and over" refers to households with annual incomes at or above 185 percent of the poverty line.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table A.1b

**Prevalence of very low food security by race/ethnicity and selected household demographic characteristics (multiple race categories), 2016–21**

Category	All households		MR/AW		MR/BW		MR/AO	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,503	4.3	69	11.3	37	8.2	53	8.4
Household composition <sup>2</sup>								
With children <18	1,518	4.0 ▼	17	9.9	16	9.2	9	4.7 ▼
With children <6	623	3.9 ▼	NA	NA	10	11.6	NA	NA
Married-couple families	457	1.9 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Female head, no spouse	866	9.1 ▲	10	22.1	11	17.4 ▲	NA	NA
Male head, no spouse	170	5.3 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
With no children <18	3,985	4.4	52	11.9	21	7.6	43	10.2
More than one adult	1,621	3.0 ▼	22	9.7	NA	NA	13	5.7
Women living alone	1,292	6.3 ▲	23	18.6 ▲	10	12.9	14	13.9
Men living alone	1,073	6.4 ▲	7	8.2	NA	NA	16	16.9 ▲
With elderly	896	2.6 ▼	10	6.4 ▼	NA	NA	13	14.7
Household income-to-poverty ratio								
Under 1.00	1,888	15.6 ▲	23	25.8 ▲	13	21.7 ▲	17	24.1 ▲
Under 1.30	2,404	14.1 ▲	35	26.8 ▲	17	20.8 ▲	19	21.6 ▲
Under 1.85	3,154	11.7 ▲	43	23.7 ▲	22	16.7 ▲	23	17.3 ▲
1.85 and over	1,244	1.8 ▼	13	4.2 ▼	9	3.5 ▼	20	5.2 ▼
Area of residence <sup>3</sup>								
Inside metro area	4,588	4.1	45	10.2	36	8.9	48	8.5
In principal cities <sup>4</sup>	1,917	5.2 ▲	15	13.6	23	11.8	22	7.9
Not in principal cities	1,841	3.3 ▼	19	8.9	NA	NA	21	9.1
Outside metro area	916	5.0 ▲	24	14.3	NA	NA	NA	NA
Census geographic region								
Northeast	810	3.6 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Midwest	2,352	4.4	28	11.1	18	11.8	19	9.9
South	1,221	4.7 ▲	19	14.7	10	8.1	13	13.7
West	1,120	3.8 ▼	18	10.3	5	5.1	18	7.0

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Totals exclude households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>3</sup> Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2014 and later but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

<sup>4</sup> 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.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

The label "Under 1.00" refers to households with annual incomes below the poverty line. "Under 1.30" and "Under 1.85" represent households with annual incomes below 130 percent and below 185 percent of the poverty line. The label "1.85 and over" refers to households with annual incomes at or above 185 percent of the poverty line.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table A.2a

**Prevalence of very low food security by race/ethnicity and selected characteristics (single race and ethnic categories), 2016–21**

Category	All households		AIAN		Asian		Black		HPI		Hispanic		White		
	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	Thou- sands	Percent	
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,503	4.3	103	11.2	105	1.6	1,395	8.5	14	5.0	951	5.3	2,776	3.3	
Employment and labor force status of adults <sup>2</sup>															
One or more employed full-time	2,432	2.9 ▼	49	8.8	60	1.2 ▼	580	5.7 ▼	7	3.5	512	3.8 ▼	1,154	2.1 ▼	
Retired, no full-time	736	2.6 ▼	10	6.1 ▼	18	2.1	188	6.7 ▼	NA	NA	98	5.1	406	1.9 ▼	
Part-time non-economic reasons, no full-time	375	6.7 ▼	4	10.4	NA	NA	95	11.6 ▲	NA	NA	60	8.0 ▲	198	5.5 ▲	
Part-time economic reasons, no full-time	192	16.8 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	47	19.5 ▲	NA	NA	54	17.3 ▲	84	16.8 ▲	
Unemployed looking for work, none employed	359	17.5 ▲	6	19.9	8	12.2 ▲	111	21.0 ▲	NA	NA	61	15.7 ▲	162	16.2 ▲	
Disabled, none in labor force	1,139	22.9 ▲	26	33.4 ▲	7	13.4 ▲	289	21.8 ▲	NA	NA	118	20.9 ▲	665	23.2 ▲	
None in labor force for reasons other than disability	270	9.6 ▼	4	10.6	NA	NA	86	12.7 ▲	NA	NA	49	10.8 ▲	108	8.4 ▲	
Education of most highly educated adult <sup>3</sup>															
Less than high school	739	10.7	10	15.3	7	3.4	210	16.2 ▲	NA	NA	228	8.6 ▲	271	10.5 ▲	
High school	1,782	6.5 ▼	36	13.2	28	4.6 ▲	474	10.6 ▲	4	7.2	296	5.9	901	5.4 ▲	
Some college/associate's	2,013	5.5 ▼	48	12.6	19	2.0	484	9.1	8	7.6	273	5.1	1,110	4.7 ▲	
Bachelor's or more	970	1.7 ▼	10	4.6 ▼	51	1.0 ▼	227	4.2 ▼	NA	NA	155	3.1 ▼	494	1.2 ▼	
Disability status of adults in households <sup>4</sup>															
No adult with disabilities	2,689	2.7 ▼	45	7.6 ▼	66	1.1 ▼	759	6.2 ▼	6	2.8	552	3.8 ▼	1,193	1.8 ▼	
Not in labor force due to disability	1,742	15.3 ▲	40	23.2 ▲	18	7.1 ▲	409	16.7 ▲	5	22.9	224	14.4 ▲	995	14.8 ▲	
Other disability among adults 18–64	729	10.6	13	15.4	11	6.1 ▲	146	16.0 ▲	NA	NA	135	14.9 ▲	390	8.4 ▲	
Other disability among adults 65+	344	3.0 ▼	5	7.1	9	2.7	82	8.1	NA	NA	41	4.8	198	2.2 ▼	
Veteran status															
Veteran	384	3.3 ▼	6	6.0 ▼	NA	NA	98	6.9 ▼	NA	NA	40	5.0	212	2.4 ▼	
Nonveteran	5,120	4.4 ▼	98	11.8	101	1.5	1,297	8.6	13	5.3	911	5.3	2,564	3.4	
Citizenship status															
Citizen	4,803	4.4 ▼	103	11.5	27	1.5	1,266	8.6	11	6.0	526	5.6	2,715	3.3	
Citizen, naturalized	317	3.0 ▼	NA	NA	49	1.6	72	5.9 ▼	NA	NA	149	3.9 ▼	42	1.8 ▼	
Not a citizen	384	4.4 ▼	NA	NA	28	1.5	58	9.4	NA	NA	276	5.7	19	1.5 ▼	

AIAN = American Indian Alaska Native; HPI = Hawaiian Pacific Islander; MR/AO = Multiracial, All Other Combinations; MR/AW = Multiracial, American Indian-White; MR/BW = Multiracial, Black-White.

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Employment combines information on the employment status of all adult household members. "Full-time": one or more adult members were employed full time. "Retired": one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full time. "Part-time for noneconomic reasons": one or more members were employed part time by choice, and no one was employed full time or was retired. "Part-time for economic reasons": one or more members were employed part time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full time or retired. "Unemployed": one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired. "Disabled, none in labor force": one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed. "Other, not in labor force": no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working due to disability.

<sup>3</sup> Education status is the education level of the most highly educated adult household member.

<sup>4</sup> Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories. "Disabled, not in labor force": one or more adult members were not working due to disability. "Disabled, adults 18–64": one or more working-age adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Disabled, adults 65+": one or more elderly adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Adults not disabled": households with no reported disabilities among adult members.

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table A.2b

**Prevalence of very low food security by race/ethnicity and selected characteristics  
(multiple race categories), 2016–21**

Category	All households		MR/AW		MR/BW		MR/AO	
	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent	Thousands	Percent
All food-insecure households <sup>1</sup>	5,503	4.3	69	11.3	37	8.2	53	8.4
Employment and labor force status of adults <sup>2</sup>								
One or more employed full-time	2,432	2.9 ▼	31	8.3	17	4.8 ▼	22	4.8 ▼
Retired, no full-time	736	2.6 ▼	7	6.1 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA
Part-time non-economic reasons, no full-time	375	6.7 ▼	6	17.0	NA	NA	NA	NA
Part-time economic reasons, no full-time	192	16.8 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Unemployed looking for work, none employed	359	17.5 ▲	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Disabled, none in labor force	1,139	22.9 ▲	16	35.7 ▲	NA	NA	9	29.6 ▲
None in labor force for reasons other than disability	270	9.6 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Education of most highly educated adult <sup>3</sup>								
Less than high school	739	10.7	5	20.7	NA	NA	NA	NA
High school	1,782	6.5 ▼	18	13.7	14	14.7	10	14.8
Some college/associate's	2,013	5.5 ▼	30	13.5	19	12.1	24	13.6 ▲
Bachelor's or more	970	1.7 ▼	16	7.0 ▼	NA	NA	14	3.9 ▼
Disability status of adults in households <sup>4</sup>								
No adult with disabilities	2,689	2.7 ▼	18	5.2 ▼	21	5.7	29	5.8 ▼
Not in labor force due to disability	1,742	15.3 ▲	29	26.3 ▲	9	27.5 ▲	11	22.1 ▲
Other disability among adults 18–64	729	10.6	18	24.1 ▲	NA	NA	8	18.4
Other disability among adults 65+	344	3.0 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Veteran status								
Veteran	384	3.3 ▼	7	8.7	NA	NA	13	20.8 ▲
Nonveteran	5,120	4.4 ▼	61	11.8	35	8.4	39	7.0
Citizenship status								
Citizen	4,803	4.4 ▼	68	11.3	34	7.9	52	8.8
Citizen, naturalized	317	3.0 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Not a citizen	384	4.4 ▼	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Note: Prevalence rates are 6-year average estimates (2016–21). Respondents who identify as Hispanic or Latino are classified as Hispanic, regardless of the racial category selected. All other racial categories are non-Hispanic.

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

<sup>1</sup> Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because household respondents did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale.

<sup>2</sup> Employment combines information on the employment status of all adult household members. "Full-time:" one or more adult members were employed full-time. "Retired:" one or more members were out of the labor force due to retirement, and no household members were employed full-time. "Part-time for noneconomic reasons:" one or more members were employed part-time by choice, and no one was employed full-time or was retired. "Part-time for economic reasons:" one or more members were employed part-time because that was the only job available, and no one was employed full-time or retired. "Unemployed:" one or more members were unemployed looking for work, and no members were employed or retired. "Disabled, none in labor force:" one or more members were out of the labor force due to disability, and no one was employed, retired, or unemployed. "Other, not in labor force:" no adult members were employed, retired, unemployed, or not working due to disability.

<sup>3</sup> Education status is the education level of the most highly educated adult household member.

<sup>4</sup> Disability status combines information on all adult household members into mutually exclusive categories. "Disabled, not in labor force:" one or more adult members were not working due to disability. "Disabled, adults 18-64:" one or more working-age adults reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Disabled, adults 65+:" one or more adults age 65+ reported a disability but were not out of the labor force due to disability. "Adults not disabled:" households with no reported disabilities among adult members.

Abbreviations: American Indian Alaska Native (AIAN), Hawaiian Pacific Islander (HPI), Multiracial, American Indian-White (MR/AW), Multiracial Black-White (MR/BW), Multiracial, All Other Combinations (MR/AO).

▲▼ Prevalence rate is statistically significantly different from the prevalence rate for all food-insecure households within the same racial category with 90 percent confidence ( $t > 1.645$ ).

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2016–21 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.