

Appendix E. Food Insecurity With Hunger During 30 Days Prior to Food Security Survey

The annual food security survey is designed primarily to assess households' food security during the 12-month period prior to the survey. For a subset of the food security questions, however, information is also collected for the 30-day period prior to the survey. Households that respond affirmatively to the 12-month question are asked whether the same behavior, experience, or condition occurred during the last 30 days. Responses to these questions are used to identify households that were food insecure with hunger during the 30 days prior to the survey (see Nord, 2002, for detailed information about the 30-day measure).

The 30-day food security scale identifies households that were food insecure with hunger, but does not measure the less severe range of food insecurity. The questions about less severe conditions of food insecurity are asked only with respect to the previous 12 months and are not followed up to determine whether the reported conditions occurred during the previous 30 days.

About 2.9 million households (2.6 percent) were food insecure with hunger at some time during the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2003 (table E-1).³⁹ The 30-day prevalence was just under three-fourths (74.2 percent) that for the entire 12 months prior to the survey, a proportion similar to that observed in November/December 2002 (76.2 percent). The corresponding statistics for other 30-day periods in earlier years' surveys were: 72.8 percent in July/August 1998, 66.1 percent in March/April 1999, and 74.4 percent in August/September 2000. Taken together, these statistics imply that, on average, households that were food insecure with hunger at some time during the year experienced this condition in 8 or 9 months of the year.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the survey varied across household types following the same general pattern as the 12-month measure. The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger was lowest for married-couple families with children, households with two or more adults without children, households that included an elderly person, and households with incomes higher than 185 percent of the poverty line. Prevalences of food insecurity with hunger were highest for single women with children, Blacks, and households with incomes below the poverty line. Single women with children who were food insecure with hunger at any time during the year were more likely than other households to have been insecure with hunger during the previous 30 days (82 percent). The ratios of prevalence rates of hunger for the two reference periods ranged from 64.9 percent for households with elderly present to 82.3 percent for single women with children.⁴⁰

The 30-day measure of food insecurity with hunger facilitates a more temporally precise analysis of the relationship between households' food insecurity and their use of Federal and community food assistance programs. That is, measured food insecurity with hunger and reported use of food assistance programs are more likely to refer to contemporaneous

³⁹ The food security survey was conducted in the third week of December in 2003.

⁴⁰ Only 13 interviewed households in the category "Other household with child" registered hunger on the 12-month measure, so comparison of the 30-day and 12-month measures was not considered reliable.

Table E-1—Prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during 12 months and 30 days prior to food security survey, by selected household characteristics, 2003¹

Category	Total ²	Food insecure with hunger				
		Previous 12 months		Previous 30 days		Previous 30 days as percentage of previous 12 months
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	Percent
All households	112,214	3,920	3.5	2,907	2.6	74.2
Household composition:						
With children < 18	40,286	1,546	3.8	1,222	3.0	79.0
With children < 6	18,110	661	3.6	519	2.9	78.5
Married-couple families	27,484	535	1.9	415	1.5	77.6
Female head, no spouse	9,623	841	8.7	692	7.2	82.3
Male head, no spouse	2,475	137	5.5	95	3.8	69.3
Other household with child ³	704	33	4.7	20	2.8	60.6
With no children < 18	71,928	2,373	3.3	1,685	2.3	71.0
More than one adult	42,553	960	2.3	687	1.6	71.6
Women living alone	16,724	728	4.4	504	3.0	69.2
Men living alone	12,651	686	5.4	494	3.9	72.0
With elderly	25,946	450	1.7	292	1.1	64.9
Elderly living alone	10,574	223	2.1	153	1.4	68.6
Race/ethnicity of households:						
White non-Hispanic	81,080	2,178	2.7	1,714	2.1	78.7
Black non-Hispanic	13,156	895	6.8	588	4.5	65.7
Hispanic ⁴	12,034	653	5.4	449	3.7	68.8
Other non-Hispanic	5,944	193	3.2	156	2.6	80.8
Household income-to-poverty ratio:						
Under 1.00	12,739	1,610	12.6	1,115	8.8	69.3
Under 1.30	18,143	2,053	11.3	1,442	7.9	70.2
Under 1.85	27,104	2,640	9.7	1,900	7.0	72.0
1.85 and over	62,145	755	1.2	618	1.0	81.9
Income unknown	22,965	524	2.3	388	1.7	74.0
Area of residence:						
Inside metropolitan area	90,708	3,194	3.5	2,353	2.6	73.7
In central city ⁵	27,682	1,297	4.7	903	3.3	69.6
Not in central city ⁵	47,243	1,368	2.9	1,050	2.2	76.8
Outside metropolitan area	21,505	725	3.4	554	2.6	76.4
Census geographic region:						
Northeast	21,306	696	3.3	546	2.6	78.4
Midwest	25,941	829	3.2	625	2.4	75.4
South	40,554	1,541	3.8	1,065	2.6	69.1
West	24,412	853	3.5	671	2.7	78.7

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the third week of December 2003.

²Totals exclude households in which food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2003, these represented 381,000 households (0.3 percent of all households.)

³Households with children in complex living arrangements—e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

⁴Hispanics may be of any race.

⁵Metropolitan area subtotals do not add to metropolitan area totals because central-city residence is not identified for about 17 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2003 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

conditions when both are referenced to the previous 30 days than when one or both is referenced to the previous 12 months. For households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year, the 30-day measure of food security can also provide information about their food security status after they left the program.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey among households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year (12.0 percent) was nearly twice that of households that did not receive food stamps at any time during the year (6.7 percent) and was about the same as that of households that received food stamps during the 30 days prior to the survey (11.5 percent; table E-2). This implies that not all households that left the Food Stamp Program did so because their economic situations had improved to a level that assured access to enough food without food stamps. Associations of 30-day prevalence rates of hunger with use of other food assistance programs were similar to those of the 12-month measure reported in table 11, although the contrasts between users and non-users were generally slightly greater for the 30-day measure.

Table E-2—Prevalence rates of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey, by participation in selected Federal and community food assistance programs, 2003¹

Category	Food insecure with hunger
	<i>Percent</i>
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line	
Received food stamps previous 30 days	11.5
Received food stamps previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (food stamp leavers)	12.0
Did not receive food stamps previous 12 months	6.7
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household:	
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	9.5
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	4.2
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:	
Received WIC previous 30 days	7.1
Did not receive WIC previous 30 days	5.7
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:	
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	28.6
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	6.0
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	40.1
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	6.8

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the third week of December 2003.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2003 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.