

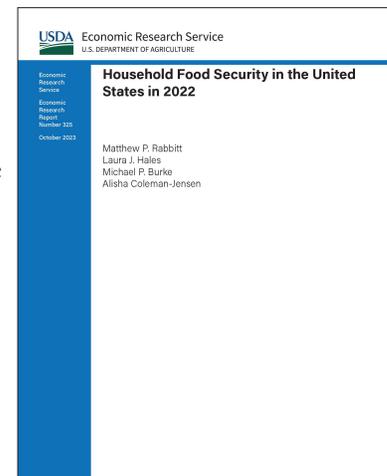


Household Food Security in the United States in 2022

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What Is the Issue?

Most U.S. households have consistent, dependable access to enough food for active, healthy living—they are food secure. However, some households experience food insecurity at times during the year, meaning their ability to acquire adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food and nutrition assistance programs aim to increase food security by providing low-income households access to food for a healthful diet, as well as nutrition education. USDA monitors the extent and severity of food insecurity in U.S. households through an annual, nationally representative survey sponsored and analyzed by USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS). This report presents statistics from the survey that cover household food security, food expenditures, and the use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs in 2022. The prevalence of food insecurity is determined by many factors, including household circumstances, the economy, and Federal, State, and local policies. This report does not provide an analysis of the factors that determine the prevalence or trends in food insecurity.



What Did the Study Find?

- In 2022, 87.2 percent of U.S. households were food secure. The remaining 12.8 percent (17.0 million households) were food insecure. Food-insecure households (those with low and very low food security) had difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all their members because of a lack of resources. The 2022 prevalence of food insecurity was statistically significantly higher than the 10.2 percent recorded in 2021 (13.5 million households) and the 10.5 percent in 2020 (13.8 million households).
- In 2022, 5.1 percent of U.S. households (6.8 million households) had very low food security, statistically significantly higher than the 3.8 percent (5.1 million households) in 2021 and the 3.9 percent (5.1 million households) in 2020. In this more severe range of food insecurity, the food intake of some household members was reduced, and normal eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because of limited resources.

Findings for households with children:

- Children were food insecure at times during 2022 in 8.8 percent of U.S. households with children (3.3 million households), up from both 6.2 percent (2.3 million households) in 2021 and 7.6 percent (2.9 million households) in 2020. These households with food insecurity among children were unable at times to provide adequate, nutritious food for their children.

- Children are usually shielded from the disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake that characterize very low food security. However, in 2022, children, along with adults, suffered instances of very low food security in 1.0 percent of households with children (381,000 households), statistically significantly higher than the 0.7 percent (274,000 households) in 2021. These households with very low food security among children reported that children were hungry, skipped a meal, or did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.

Findings for population subgroups that experienced significant changes in food insecurity:

- The prevalence of both food insecurity and very low food security increased from 2021 to 2022 for nearly all subgroups of households described in this report.

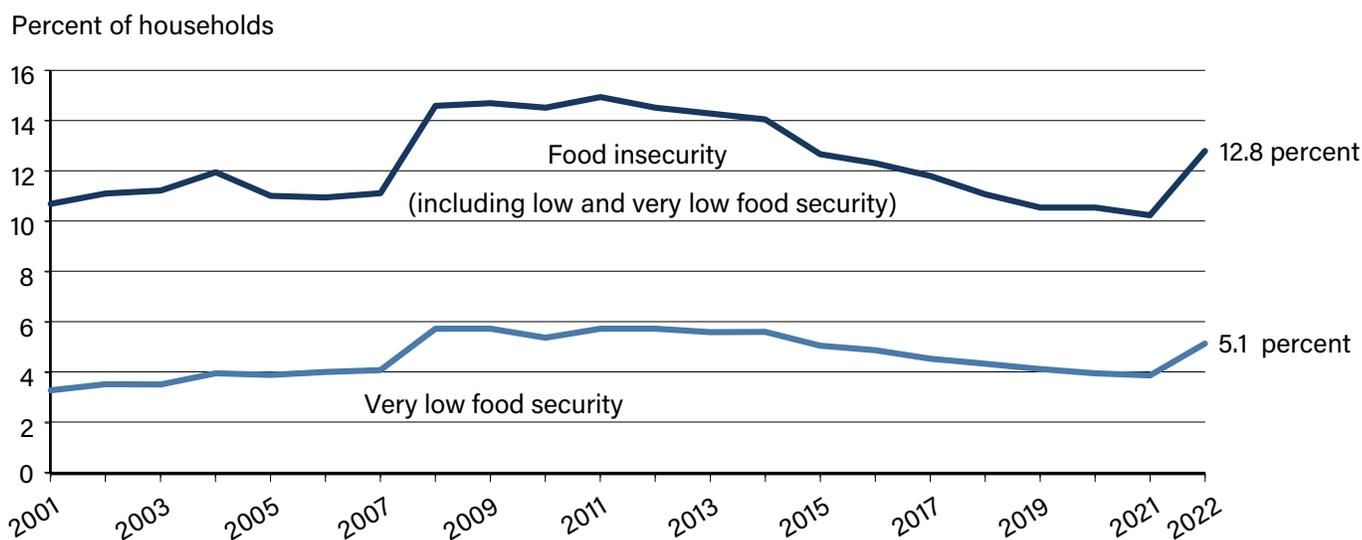
Findings for food spending and Federal nutrition assistance participation:

- The typical (median) food-secure household spent 15 percent more on food than the typical food-insecure household of the same size and composition. These estimates include food purchases made with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.
- About 55 percent of food-insecure households in the survey reported that in the previous month, they participated in one or more of the three largest Federal nutrition assistance programs: SNAP; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); and the National School Lunch Program.

How Was the Study Conducted?

Data for the USDA, ERS food security reports 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 compiles and analyzes the responses. The 2022 Food Security Supplement survey included 31,948 households, which comprise a representative sample of the U.S. civilian population of about 133 million households. The food security survey asked one adult respondent per household about experiences and behaviors that indicate food insecurity during calendar year 2022, such as being unable to afford balanced meals, cutting the size of meals, or being hungry because of too little money for food. The food security status of the household was assigned based on the number of food-insecure conditions reported.

Prevalence of food insecurity in 2022 increased from 2021



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