

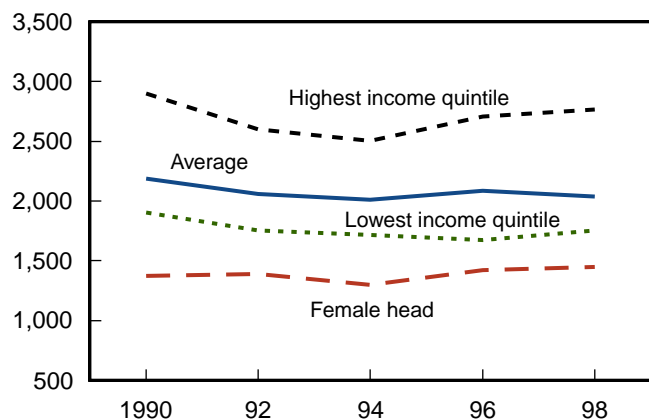
Single Female-Headed Households with Children Spent the Least on Food

Single female-headed households with children spent less per person on food than both the average U.S. household and the poorest U.S. households during 1990-98 (fig. 2). However, single female-headed households did increase their total food spending (in real, inflation-adjusted terms) by about 6 percent (from \$1,374 to \$1,451) between 1990 and 1998. This rise can be attributed to a 24-percent increase in spending for food away from home (from \$404 to \$503) and a 2-percent decline (from \$970 to \$948) in spending for food at home between 1990 and 1998 (fig. 3).

In 1998, female-headed households spent about \$263, or 22 percent, less per person than the average household on food at home (the average was \$1,211) and about \$323, or 39 percent, less on food away from home (the average was \$826) (figs. 4 and 5). Food away from home represented about 35 percent of the per-person food budget in single female-headed households, compared with about 41 percent of the per-person food budget in the average household. The households of the highest income quintile (highest 20 percent of the income distribution) spent about \$256, or 17 percent, more than the average household on food at home and about \$475, or 37 percent, more than the average household on food away from home.

Figure 2
Total food spending: Female-headed households compared with other households, 1990-98

Spending/person (dollars)



1998 prices. A quintile is 20 percent of a surveyed group.

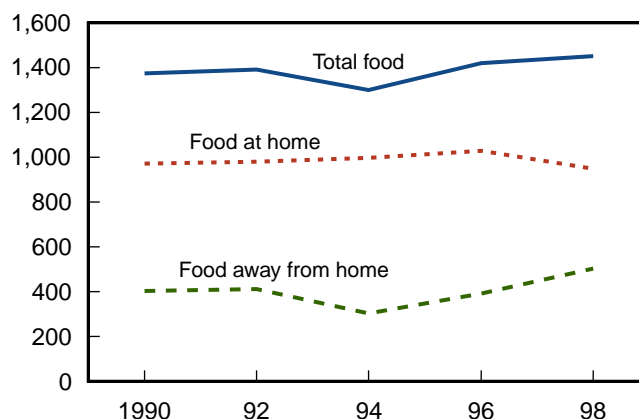
Source: Economic Research Service from Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

For households in the highest income quintile, food-away-from-home expenditures represented about 47 percent of the per-person food budget.

A major factor associated with the disparity in food spending between female-headed households and all other households is income. Female-headed households had an average before-tax income of \$22,860 in 1998 compared with \$42,584 for the average household. However, female-headed households also spent \$303

Figure 3
Food spending by female-headed households

Spending/person (dollars)

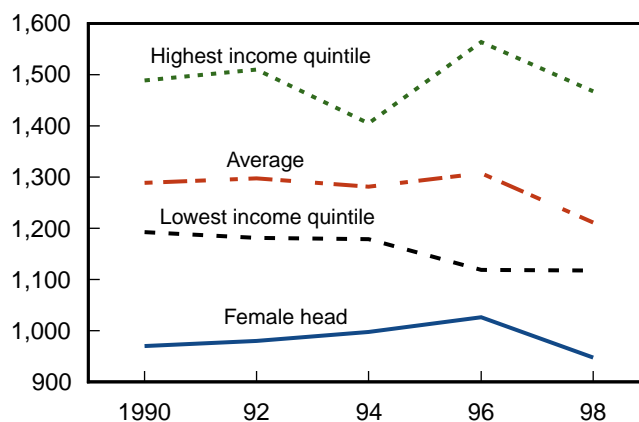


1998 prices.

Source: Economic Research Service from Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Figure 4
At-home food spending: Female-headed households compared with other households

Spending/person (dollars)



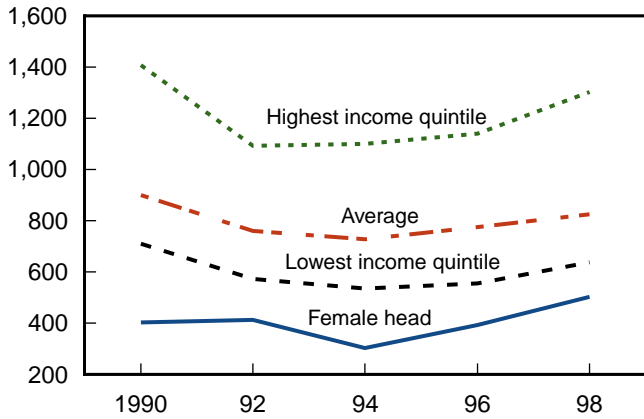
1998 prices. A quintile is 20 percent of a surveyed group.

Source: Economic Research Service from Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

Figure 5

Away-from-home food spending: Female-headed households compared with other households

Spending/person (dollars)



1998 prices. A quintile is 20 percent of a surveyed group.

Source: Economic Research Service from Bureau of Labor Statistics data.

less per person on total food compared with households in the lowest income quintile (the lowest 20 percent of the income distribution), although these households had an average income of just \$7,306. This relationship is partly due to the fact that female-headed households are usually larger than households in the lowest income quintile and usually have more children. Larger households and households with children tend to spend less per person than other types of households.