

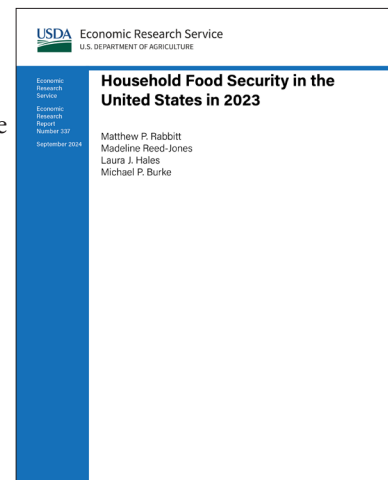


Household Food Security in the United States in 2023

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What Is the Issue?

Most U.S. households have consistent, dependable access to enough food for active, healthy living, meaning, 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 2023. 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 2023, 86.5 percent of U.S. households were food secure. The remaining 13.5 percent (18.0 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 2023 prevalence of food insecurity was statistically significantly higher than the 12.8 percent recorded in 2022 (17.0 million households), 10.2 percent in 2021 (13.5 million households) and the 10.5 percent in 2020 (13.8 million households).
- In 2023, 5.1 percent of U.S. households (6.8 million households) had very low food security, not statistically different from the 5.1 percent (6.8 million households) in 2022, but 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:

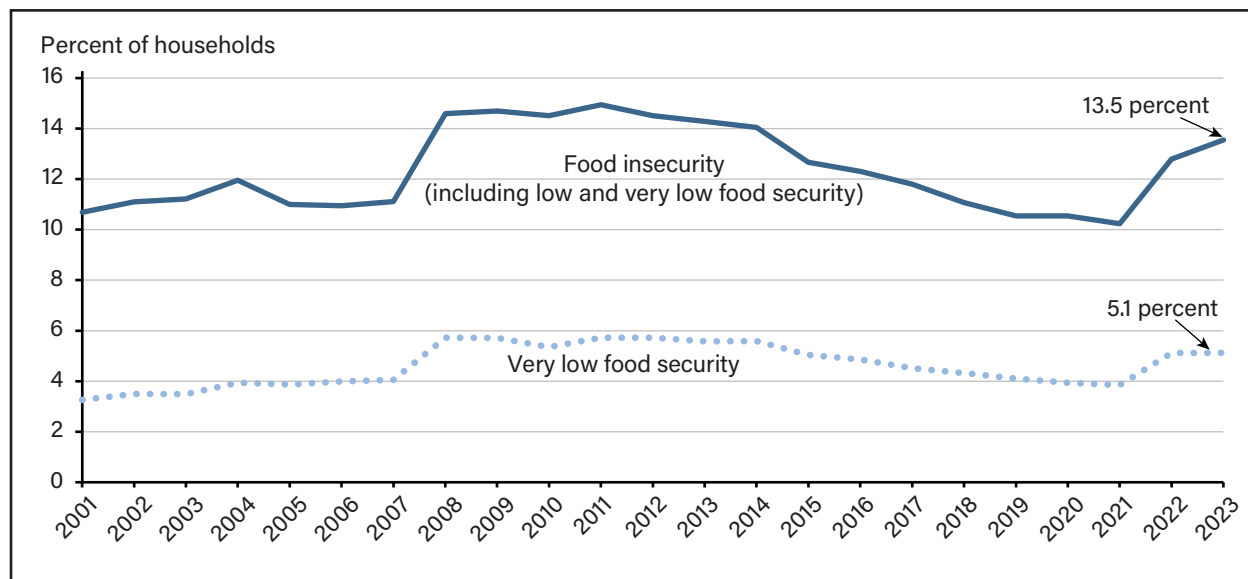
- Children were food insecure at times during 2023 in 8.9 percent of U.S. households with children (3.2 million households), statistically similar to the 8.8 percent (3.3 million households) in 2022, but up from both 6.2 percent (2.3 million households) in 2021 and 7.6 percent (2.9 million households) 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 2023, children, along with adults, experienced instances of very low food security in 1.0 percent of households with children (374,000 households), statistically similar to the 1.0 percent (381,000 households) in 2022 and 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.

How Was the Study Conducted?

Data for the USDA, ERS food security reports came 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 sponsored the annual Food Security Supplement (FSS) and compiled and analyzed the responses. The 2023 FSS included 30,863 households, which comprised a representative sample of the U.S. civilian population of about 133 million households. The FSS asked one adult respondent per household about experiences and behaviors that indicate food insecurity during calendar year 2023, 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 2023 increased from 2022



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