

Household Food Security

Food security—access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life—is one of several conditions necessary for a population to be healthy and well nourished. This section provides information on food security and food insecurity in U.S. households based on the December 2005 food security survey—the 11th annual survey in the Nation’s food security monitoring system.

Methods

The results presented in this report are based on data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) food security surveys for the years 1995-2005. The CPS includes about 55,000 households² and is representative, at State and national levels, of the civilian, non-institutionalized population of the United States. About 47,500 households completed the food security section of the survey in December 2005; the remainder were unable or unwilling to do so. Weighting factors were calculated by the Census Bureau so that, when properly weighted, responses to the food security questions are representative at State and national levels.³ All statistics in this report were calculated by applying the food security supplement weights to responses of the surveyed households to obtain nationally representative prevalence estimates. Household supplement weights were used to calculate household-level statistics and person supplement weights were used to calculate statistics for all individuals, for adults, and for children.

The household food security statistics presented in this report are based on a measure of food security calculated from responses to a series of questions about conditions and behaviors known to characterize households having difficulty meeting basic food needs.⁴ Each question asks whether the condition or behavior occurred at any time during the previous 12 months and specifies a lack of money or other resources to obtain food as the reason. Voluntary fasting or dieting to lose weight are thereby excluded from the measure. The series includes 10 questions about food conditions of the household as a whole and of adults in the household and, if there are children present in the household, an additional 8 questions about their food conditions (see box, “Questions Used to Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Survey”). Responses to the 18 items used to classify households are reported in appendix A.

The food security status of each interviewed household is determined by the number of food-insecure conditions and behaviors the household reports. Households are classified as food secure if they report no food-insecure conditions or if they report only one or two food-insecure conditions. (Food-insecure conditions are indicated by responses of “often” or “sometimes” to questions 1-3 and 11-13, “almost every month” or “some months but not every month” to questions 5, 10, and 17, and “yes” to the other questions.)

They are classified as food insecure if they report three or more food-insecure conditions.⁵

²The size of the CPS sample was increased in 2001; it had been around 50,000 households during the 1990s.

³Reweighting of the Supplement takes into consideration income and other information about households that completed the labor force portion of the survey but not the Food Security Supplement. This corrects, to some extent, biases that could result from nonresponse to the Supplement by households that completed only the labor force part of the survey.

⁴The methods used to measure the extent and severity of food insecurity have been described in several places (Hamilton et al., 1997a, 1997b; Andrews et al., 1998; Bickel et al., 1998; Carlson et al., 1999; Bickel et al., 2000; Nord and Bickel, 2002). See also the recent assessment of the measurement methods by a panel of the Committee on National Statistics (National Research Council, 2006). Further details on the development of the measure are provided in appendix B.

⁵To reduce the burden on higher-income respondents, households with incomes above 185 percent of the Federal poverty line who give no indication of food-access problems on either of two preliminary screening questions are deemed to be food secure and are not asked the questions in the food security assessment series. The preliminary screening questions are as follows:

- People do different things when they are running out of money for food in order to make their food or their food money go further. In the last 12 months, since December of last year, did you ever run short of money and try to make your food or your food money go further?
- Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household—enough of the kinds of food we want to eat, enough but not always the kinds of food we want to eat, sometimes not enough to eat, or often not enough to eat?

Questions Used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Survey

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 you couldn’t afford enough food? (Yes/No)
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn’t have 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)
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 are asked only if the household included children age 0-18)

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)

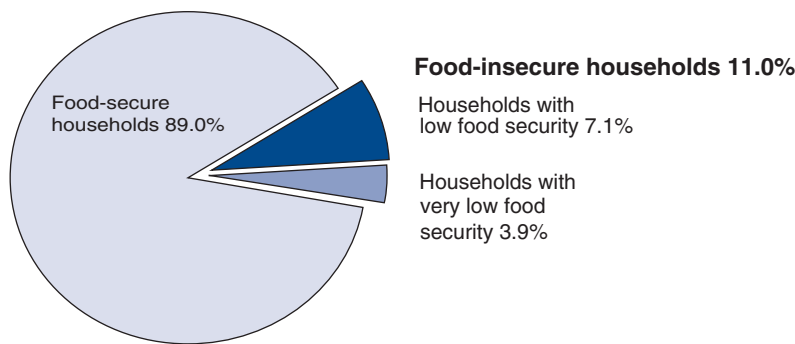
Food-insecure households are further classified as having either low food security or very low food security.⁶ Households without children are classified as having very low food security if they report six or more food-insecure conditions. Households with children are classified as having very low food security if they report eight or more food-insecure conditions, including conditions among both adults and children. Households with children are further classified as having very low food security among children if they report 5 or more food-insecure conditions among the children (that is, if they respond affirmatively to 5 or more of questions 11-18).

Thus, households classified as having low food security have reported multiple indications of food access problems, but typically have reported few, if any, indications of reduced food intake. Households classified as having very low food security have reported multiple indications of reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns due to inadequate resources for food. In most but not all households with very low food security, the survey respondent reported that he or she was hungry but did not eat at some time during the year because there was not enough money for food.

Prevalence of Food Insecurity— National Conditions and Trends

Eighty-nine percent of U.S. households were food secure throughout the entire year 2005 (fig. 1, table 1A). “Food secure” means that all household members had access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.⁷ The remaining 12.6 million U.S. households (11.0 percent of all households) were food insecure at some time during the year. That is, they were, at times, uncertain of having, or unable to acquire, enough food for all household members because they had insufficient money and other resources for food. About two-thirds of food-insecure households avoided substantial reductions or disruptions in food intake, in many cases by relying on a few basic foods and reducing variety in their diets.

Figure 1
U.S. households by food security status, 2005



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁶In previous years' food security reports, households with low food security were described as “food insecure without hunger” and households with very low food security were described as “food insecure with hunger.” Changes in these descriptions have been made at the recommendation of the Committee on National Statistics (National Research Council, 2006). The criteria by which households were classified remained unchanged. See box “What Is ‘Very Low Food Security’?” on page 6 for further information on these changes.

⁷Food security and insecurity, as measured for this report, are based on respondent perceptions of whether the household was able to obtain enough food to meet their needs. The measure does not specifically address whether the household's food intake was sufficient for active, healthy lives. Nonetheless, research based on other surveys has found food security, measured as in this report, to be associated with health, nutrition, and children's development in a manner that generally supports the conceptualized link with sufficiency for active, healthy lives.

Table 1A

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity in U.S. households, 1998-2005

Unit	Total ¹	Food insecurity							
		Food security		All		Low food security		Very low food security	
		1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000
Households:									
1998	103,309	91,121	88.2	12,188	11.8	8,353	8.1	3,835	3.7
1999	104,684	94,154	89.9	10,529	10.1	7,420	7.1	3,109	3.0
2000	106,043	94,942	89.5	11,101	10.5	7,786	7.3	3,315	3.1
2001	107,824	96,303	89.3	11,521	10.7	8,010	7.4	3,511	3.3
2002	108,601	96,543	88.9	12,058	11.1	8,259	7.6	3,799	3.5
2003	112,214	99,631	88.8	12,583	11.2	8,663	7.7	3,920	3.5
2004	112,967	99,473	88.1	13,494	11.9	9,045	8.0	4,449	3.9
2005	114,437	101,851	89.0	12,586	11.0	8,158	7.1	4,428	3.9
All individuals (by food security status of household):²									
1998	268,366	232,219	86.5	36,147	13.5	26,290	9.8	9,857	3.7
1999	270,318	239,304	88.5	31,015	11.5	23,237	8.6	7,779	2.9
2000	273,685	240,454	87.9	33,231	12.1	24,708	9.0	8,523	3.1
2001	276,661	243,019	87.8	33,642	12.2	24,628	8.9	9,014	3.3
2002	279,035	244,133	87.5	34,902	12.5	25,517	9.1	9,385	3.4
2003	286,410	250,155	87.3	36,255	12.7	26,622	9.3	9,633	3.4
2004	288,603	250,407	86.8	38,196	13.2	27,535	9.5	10,661	3.7
2005	291,501	256,373	87.9	35,128	12.1	24,349	8.4	10,779	3.7
Adults (by food security status of household):²									
1998	197,084	174,964	88.8	22,120	11.2	15,632	7.9	6,488	3.3
1999	198,900	179,960	90.5	18,941	9.5	13,869	7.0	5,072	2.5
2000	201,922	181,586	89.9	20,336	10.1	14,763	7.3	5,573	2.8
2001	204,340	183,398	89.8	20,942	10.2	14,879	7.3	6,063	3.0
2002	206,493	184,718	89.5	21,775	10.5	15,486	7.5	6,289	3.0
2003	213,441	190,451	89.2	22,990	10.8	16,358	7.7	6,632	3.1
2004	215,564	191,236	88.7	24,328	11.3	16,946	7.9	7,382	3.4
2005	217,897	195,172	89.6	22,725	10.4	15,146	7.0	7,579	3.5

¹Totals exclude households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 395,000 households (0.3 percent of all households.)

²The food security survey measures food security status at the household level. Not all individuals residing in food-insecure households were directly affected by the households' food insecurity. Similarly, not all individuals in households classified as having very low food security were subject to the reductions in food intake and disruptions in eating patterns that characterize this condition. Young children, in particular, are often protected from effects of the households' food insecurity.

Sources: Calculated by ERS using data from the August 1998, April 1999, September 2000, December 2001, December 2002, December 2003, December 2004, and December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

But 4.4 million households (3.9 percent of all U.S. households) had very low food security—that is, they were food insecure to the extent that eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and their food intake reduced, at least some time during the year, because they couldn't afford enough food.

Children in most food-insecure households—even in households with very low food security—were protected from substantial reductions in food intake. However, in some 270,000 households (0.7 percent of households with children), one or more children were also subject to reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns at some time during the year (table 1B). In some

What Is “Very Low Food Security”?

In this year’s report, USDA has introduced new language to describe ranges of severity of food insecurity. The labels “low food security” and “very low food security” have replaced “food insecurity without hunger” and “food insecurity with hunger,” respectively. USDA made these changes in response to recommendations by an expert panel convened at USDA’s request by the Committee on National Statistics (CNSTAT) of the National Academies. Even though new labels have been introduced, the methods used to assess households’ food security have remained unchanged, so statistics for 2005 are directly comparable with those for 2004 and earlier years for the corresponding categories. (See appendix B for further information on the history and development of the food security measurement methods.)

USDA requested the review by CNSTAT to ensure that the measurement methods USDA uses to assess households’ access—or lack of access—to adequate food and the language used to describe those conditions are conceptually and operationally sound and that they convey useful and relevant information to policy officials and the public. The panel convened by CNSTAT to conduct this study included economists, sociologists, nutritionists, statisticians, and other researchers. One of the central issues the CNSTAT panel addressed was whether the concepts and definitions underlying the measurement methods—especially the concept and definition of hunger and the relationship between hunger and food insecurity—were appropriate for the policy context in which food security statistics are used.

The CNSTAT panel:

- recommended that USDA continue to measure and monitor food insecurity regularly in a household survey
- affirmed the appropriateness of the general methodology currently used to measure food insecurity
- suggested several ways in which the methodology might be refined (contingent on confirmatory research). Research on these issues is currently underway at ERS.

The CNSTAT panel recommended that USDA make a clear and explicit distinction between food insecurity and hunger. Food insecurity—the condition assessed in the food security survey and represented in the statistics in this report—is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food. Hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that may result from food insecurity. The word “hunger,” the panel stated in its final report, “...should refer to a potential consequence of food insecurity that, because of prolonged, involuntary lack of food, results in discomfort, illness, weakness, or pain that goes beyond the usual uneasy sensation.” To measure hunger in this sense would require collection of more detailed and extensive information on physiological experiences of individual household members than could be accomplished effectively in the context of the household-based and labor force-oriented CPS. The panel recommended, therefore, that new methods be developed to measure hunger and that a national assessment of hunger be conducted using an appropriate survey of individuals rather than a survey of households.

The CNSTAT panel recommended that USDA consider alternate labels to convey the severity of food insecurity without using the word “hunger,” since hunger is not adequately assessed in the food security survey. USDA concurs with this recommendation and, accordingly, has introduced the new labels “low food security” and “very low food security.”

The defining characteristic of very low food security is that, at times during the year, the food intake of household members was reduced and their normal eating patterns were disrupted because the household lacked money and other resources for food. Very low food security can be characterized in terms of the conditions that households in this category reported in the food security survey. In the 2005 survey, households classified as having very low food security (representing an estimated 4.4 million households nationwide) reported the following specific conditions:

- 98 percent reported having worried that their food would run out before they got money to buy more.
- 96 percent reported that the food they bought just did not last and they did not have money to get more.
- 94 percent reported that they could not afford to eat balanced meals.
- 96 percent reported that an adult had cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food; 86 percent reported that this had occurred in 3 or more months.
- In 94 percent, respondents reported that they had eaten less than they felt they should because there was not enough money

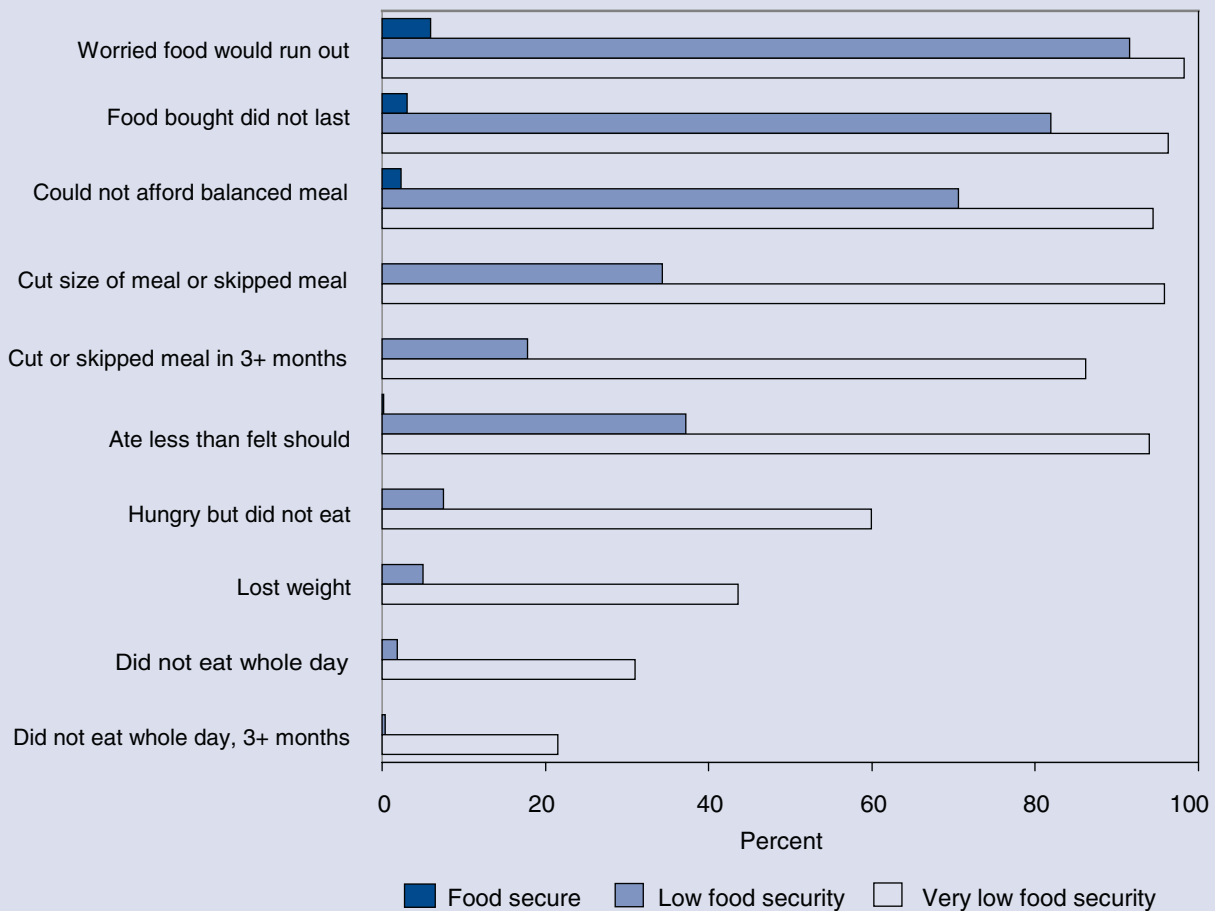
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- In 60 percent, respondents reported that they had been hungry but did not eat because they could not afford enough food.
- In 44 percent, respondents reported having lost weight because they did not have enough money for food.
- 31 percent reported that an adult did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food; 22 percent reported that this had occurred in 3 or more months.
- All of those without children reported at least six of these conditions, and 64 percent reported seven or more. (Conditions in households with children were similar, but the reported food insecure conditions of both adults and children were taken into account.)

A summary of the CNSTAT panel’s report, *Food Insecurity and Hunger in the United States: An Assessment of the Measure*, and link to the full text are available at: www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/NASsummary.htm.

Percentage of households reporting indicators of adult food insecurity, by food security status, 2005



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table 1B

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity in households with children, 1998-2005

Unit	Total ¹ 1,000	Food security		Low or very low food security among adults or children		Very low food security among children	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
Households with children:							
1998	38,036	31,335	82.4	6,701	17.6	331	0.9
1999	37,884	32,290	85.2	5,594	14.8	219	.6
2000	38,113	31,942	83.8	6,171	16.2	255	.7
2001	38,330	32,141	83.9	6,189	16.1	211	.6
2002	38,647	32,267	83.5	6,380	16.5	265	.7
2003	40,286	33,575	83.3	6,711	16.7	207	.5
2004	39,990	32,967	82.4	7,023	17.6	274	.7
2005	39,601	33,404	84.4	6,197	15.6	270	.7
Children (by food security status of household): ²							
1998	71,282	57,255	80.3	14,027	19.7	716	1.0
1999	71,418	59,344	83.1	12,074	16.9	511	.7
2000	71,763	58,867	82.0	12,896	18.0	562	.8
2001	72,321	59,620	82.4	12,701	17.6	467	.6
2002	72,542	59,415	81.9	13,127	18.1	567	.8
2003	72,969	59,704	81.8	13,265	18.2	420	.6
2004	73,039	59,171	81.0	13,868	19.0	545	.7
2005	73,604	61,201	83.1	12,403	16.9	606	.8

¹Totals exclude households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 129,000 households (0.3 percent of all households with children.)

²The food security survey measures food security status at the household level. Not all children residing in food-insecure households were directly affected by the households' food insecurity. Similarly, not all children in households classified as having very low food security among children were subject to the reductions in food intake or disruptions in eating patterns that characterize this condition. Young children, in particular, are often protected from effects of the households' food insecurity.

Sources: Calculated by ERS using data from the August 1998, April 1999, September 2000, December 2001, December 2002, December 2003, December 2004, and December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

households with very low food security among children, only older children may have been subjected to the more severe effects of food insecurity while younger children were protected from those effects.

When interpreting food security statistics, it is important to keep in mind that households are classified as having low or very low food security if they experienced the condition at any time during the previous 12 months. The prevalence of these conditions on any given day is far below the corresponding annual prevalence. For example, the prevalence of very low food security on an average day during the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2005 is estimated to have been between 0.5 and 0.7 percent of households (531,000 to 797,000 households), or about 12 to 18 percent of the annual rate (see box, "When Food Insecurity Occurs in U.S. Households, It Is Usually Recurrent but not Chronic").

The prevalence of food insecurity declined from 11.9 percent of households in 2004 to 11.0 percent in 2005, about the same level as in 2002. The prevalence of very low food security, however, remained at 3.9 percent of households, unchanged from 2004. The prevalence of very low food security among children remained unchanged at 0.7 percent of households with children. This

When Food Insecurity Occurs in U.S. Households, It Is Usually Recurrent but not Chronic

When households experience very low food security in the United States, the resulting instances of reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns are usually occasional or episodic but are not usually chronic. The food security measurement methods used in this report are designed to register these occasional or episodic occurrences. The questions used to assess households' food security status ask whether a condition, experience, or behavior occurred at any time in the past 12 months, and households can be classified as having very low food security based on a single, severe episode during the year. It is important to keep this in mind when interpreting food insecurity statistics.

Analysis of additional information collected in the food security survey on how frequently various food-insecure conditions occurred during the year, whether they occurred during the 30 days prior to the survey, and, if so, on how many days provide further insight into the frequency and duration of food insecurity in U.S. households. These analyses reveal that in 2005:

- About one-third of the households with very low food security at any time during the year experienced the associated conditions rarely or occasionally—in only 1 or 2 months of the year. For two-thirds, the conditions were recurring, experienced in 3 or more months of the year.
- For about one-fifth of food-insecure households and 30 percent of those with very low food security, occurrence of the associated conditions was frequent or chronic. That is, they occurred often, or in almost every month.
- On average, households that were food insecure at some time during the year were food insecure in 6 months during the year (see appendix E). During the 30-day period ending

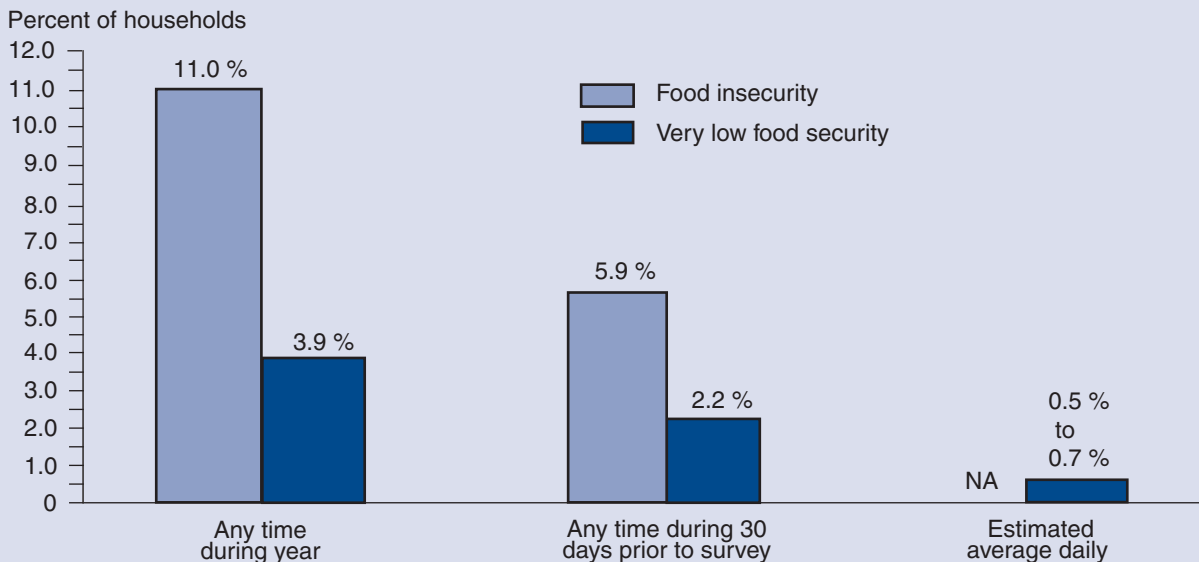
in mid-December 2005, 6.7 million households (5.9 percent) were food insecure—about 53 percent of the number that were food insecure at any time during the year.

- On average, households with very low food security at some time during the year experienced the associated conditions in 7 months during the year (see appendix E). During the 30-day period ending in mid-December 2005, 2.5 million households (2.2 percent) had very low food security—about 57 percent of the number with very low food security at any time during the year.
- Most households that had very low food security at some time during a month experienced the associated conditions in 1 to 7 days of the month. The average daily prevalence of very low food security during the 30-day period ending in mid-December 2005 was probably between 531,000 and 797,000 households (0.5 to 0.7 percent of all households)—about 12 to 18 percent of the annual prevalence.
- The daily prevalence of very low food security among children during the 30-day period ending in early December 2005 was probably between 32,000 and 43,000 households (0.08 to 0.11 percent of households with children)—about 12 to 16 percent of the annual prevalence.

Omitting homeless families and individuals from these daily statistics biases them downward, and the bias may be substantial.

(Appendix A provides information on how often conditions indicating food insecurity occurred as reported by respondents to the December 2005 food security survey. See Nord et al., 2000, for more information about the frequency of food insecurity.)

Prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security, by reference period



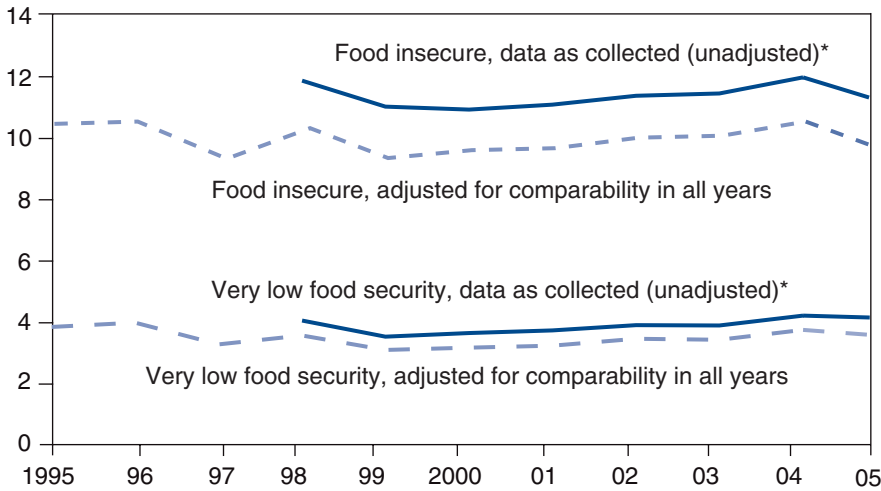
NA = Estimate of average daily occurrence not available

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Figure 2

Trends in prevalence of food insecurity in U.S. households, 1995-2005

Percent of households



*Data as collected in 1995-97 are not directly comparable with data collected in 1998-2005.

Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.

rate has remained in the range of 0.5 to 0.7 percent (with no statistically significant changes) since 1999.

The 2005 decline in the prevalence rate of food insecurity reversed an upward trend from 1999 to 2004 and brought the rate back below the level at which it was first measured in 1995 (fig. 2).⁸ The prevalence of very low food security was also at about the 1995 level. From 1995 to 2000, the prevalence rates reflect a 2-year cyclical component that is associated with data collection schedules (Cohen et al., 2002a). The CPS food security surveys over this period were conducted in April in odd-numbered years and August or September in even-numbered years. Measured prevalence of food insecurity was higher in the August/September collections, suggesting a seasonal response effect. Beginning in 2001, the survey has been conducted in early December. Data collection is planned to continue in December in future years, which will avoid further problems of seasonality effects in interpreting annual changes.⁹

Prevalence of Food Insecurity—Conditions and Trends by Selected Household Characteristics

The prevalence of food insecurity varied considerably among household types (table 2). Rates of food insecurity were well below the national average of 11.0 percent for households with more than one adult and no children (6.7 percent) and for households with elderly persons (6.0 percent).¹⁰ Rates of food insecurity substantially higher than the national average were registered by the following groups:

- households with incomes below the official poverty line (36.0 percent),¹¹

⁸Because of changes in screening procedures used to reduce respondent burden, food security statistics from 1995-97 are not directly comparable with those from 1998-2005. Figure 2 presents statistics for the years 1995-2005, adjusted to be comparable across all years, as well as statistics for 1998-2005 based on data as collected. See Andrews et al. (2000) and Ohls et al. (2001) for detailed information about questionnaire screening and adjustments for comparability.

⁹A smaller food security survey was also conducted in April 2001 to provide a baseline for assessing seasonal effects of data collection in December. Comparison of food security statistics from the April 2001 survey with those from April 1999 and December 2001 suggest that seasonal effects in early December were similar to those in April (Nord et al., 2002a).

¹⁰“Elderly” in this report refers to persons age 65 and older.

¹¹The Federal poverty line was \$19,806 for a family of four in 2005.

Table 2

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity by selected household characteristics, 2005

Category	Total ¹	Food security		Food insecurity					
		1,000	Percent	All	Low food security	Very low food security	1,000	Percent	1,000
All households	114,437	101,851	89.0	12,586	11.0	8,158	7.1	4,428	3.9
Household composition:									
With children < 18	39,601	33,404	84.4	6,197	15.6	4,580	11.6	1,617	4.1
With children < 6	17,615	14,671	83.3	2,944	16.7	2,265	12.9	679	3.9
Married-couple families	26,776	24,130	90.1	2,646	9.9	2,040	7.6	606	2.3
Female head, no spouse	9,659	6,680	69.2	2,979	30.8	2,143	22.2	836	8.7
Male head, no spouse	2,536	2,082	82.1	454	17.9	315	12.4	139	5.5
Other household with child ²	630	510	81.0	120	19.0	83	13.2	37	5.9
With no children < 18	74,836	68,448	91.5	6,388	8.5	3,577	4.8	2,811	3.8
More than one adult	44,267	41,306	93.3	2,961	6.7	1,799	4.1	1,162	2.6
Women living alone	17,019	15,147	89.0	1,872	11.0	1,008	5.9	864	5.1
Men living alone	13,550	11,996	88.5	1,554	11.5	770	5.7	784	5.8
With elderly	26,609	25,017	94.0	1,592	6.0	1,105	4.2	487	1.8
Elderly living alone	10,749	10,063	93.6	686	6.4	473	4.4	213	2.0
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White non-Hispanic	82,144	75,444	91.8	6,700	8.2	4,305	5.2	2,395	2.9
Black non-Hispanic	13,732	10,658	77.6	3,074	22.4	1,894	13.8	1,180	8.6
Hispanic ³	12,397	10,176	82.1	2,221	17.9	1,559	12.6	662	5.3
Other	6,164	5,573	90.4	591	9.6	400	6.5	191	3.1
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	12,646	8,098	64.0	4,548	36.0	2,836	22.4	1,712	13.5
Under 1.30	17,264	11,526	66.8	5,738	33.2	3,555	20.6	2,183	12.6
Under 1.85	27,205	19,515	71.7	7,690	28.3	4,813	17.7	2,877	10.6
1.85 and over	65,030	61,621	94.8	3,409	5.2	2,327	3.6	1,082	1.7
Income unknown	22,202	20,717	93.3	1,485	6.7	1,017	4.6	468	2.1
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	94,945	84,706	89.2	10,239	10.8	6,593	6.9	3,646	3.8
In principal cities ⁵	31,708	27,429	86.5	4,279	13.5	2,661	8.4	1,618	5.1
Not in principal cities	46,998	42,932	91.3	4,066	8.7	2,686	5.7	1,380	2.9
Outside metropolitan area	19,492	17,146	88.0	2,346	12.0	1,565	8.0	781	4.0
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	21,196	19,272	90.9	1,924	9.1	1,338	6.3	586	2.8
Midwest	26,387	23,454	88.9	2,933	11.1	1,859	7.0	1,074	4.1
South	41,653	36,650	88.0	5,003	12.0	3,173	7.6	1,830	4.4
West	25,202	22,475	89.2	2,727	10.8	1,789	7.1	938	3.7

¹Totals exclude households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 395,000 households (0.3 percent of all households.)

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004 but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

⁵Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 17 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

- households with children, headed by a single woman (30.8 percent) or a single man (17.9 percent),
- Black households (22.4 percent), and
- Hispanic households (17.9 percent).

Overall, households with children reported food insecurity at about double the rate for households without children (15.6 vs. 8.5 percent).¹² Among households with children, those headed by a married couple showed the lowest rate of food insecurity (9.9 percent).

The prevalence rates of food insecurity for households located in principal cities of metropolitan areas (13.5 percent) and nonmetropolitan areas (12.0 percent) substantially exceeded the rate for households in suburbs and other metropolitan areas outside principal cities (8.7 percent).¹³ Regionally, the prevalence of food insecurity was higher than the national average in the South (12.0 percent) and lower than the national average in the Northeast (9.1 percent), while prevalence rates in the Midwest (11.1 percent) and West (10.8 percent) were near the national average.

The prevalence rates of very low food security in various types of households followed a pattern similar to that observed for food insecurity. Rates were lowest for married couples with children (2.3 percent), multiple-adult households with no children (2.6 percent), and households with elderly persons (1.8 percent). Very low food security was more prevalent than the national average (3.9 percent) among families with children headed by a single woman (8.7 percent) or a single man (5.5 percent), women living alone (5.1 percent), men living alone (5.8 percent), Black and Hispanic households (8.6 and 5.3 percent, respectively), households with incomes below the poverty line (13.5 percent), and households living in principal cities of metropolitan areas (5.1 percent).

Very low food security among children was least prevalent in married-couple households, White non-Hispanic households, and households with incomes above 185 percent of the poverty line (table 3). Children in households headed by a single woman were more likely to experience very low food security, as were children in households with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty line.

The improvement in food security from 2004 to 2005 appears to have affected primarily households with children (fig. 3). The prevalence of food insecurity declined by statistically significant increments for all households with children, households with children under age 6, and households with children headed by a married couple or a single man. The change for households without children was not statistically significant. Food insecurity improved for households with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty line, in principal cities of metropolitan areas, and in the South and West census regions. The only statistically significant change in the prevalence of very low food security was a decline for households headed by minorities other than Blacks or Hispanics (fig. 4). That category included American Indians, Native Alaskans, Asians, Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and persons who identified themselves as of more than one race. Changes in other categories were within a range that could have resulted from sampling variation.

¹²The higher rate of food insecurity for households with children results, in part, from a difference in the measures applied to households with and without children. Responses to questions about children as well as adults are considered in assessing the food security status of households with children, but for both types of households, a total of three indications of food insecurity is required for classification as food insecure. Even with the child-referenced questions omitted from the scale, however, households with children were 47 percent more likely to be food insecure than were households without children. This measurement issue does not bias comparisons of very low food security because a higher threshold is applied to households with children, consistent with the larger number of questions taken into consideration.

¹³Revised metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and principal cities within them were delineated by the Office of Management and Budget in 2003 based on revised standards developed by the U.S. Census Bureau in collaboration with other Federal agencies. Food security prevalence statistics by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004, but are not precisely comparable with those for earlier years. Principal cities include the incorporated areas of the largest city in each MSA and other cities in the MSA that meet specified criteria based on population size and commuting patterns.

Table 3

**Prevalence of food security and food insecurity in households with children
by selected household characteristics, 2005**

Category	Total ¹	Food-secure households		Food-insecure households ²		Households with very low food security among children	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All households with children	39,601	33,404	84.4	6,197	15.6	270	0.7
Household composition:							
With children < 6	17,615	14,671	83.3	2,944	16.7	94	.5
Married-couple families	26,776	24,130	90.1	2,646	9.9	98	.4
Female head, no spouse	9,659	6,681	69.2	2,978	30.8	153	1.6
Male head, no spouse	2,536	2,082	82.1	454	17.9	19	.7
Other household with child ³	630	511	81.1	119	18.9	0	0.0
Race/ethnicity of households:							
White non-Hispanic	24,962	22,020	88.2	2,942	11.8	111	.4
Black non-Hispanic	5,499	3,995	72.6	1,504	27.4	84	1.5
Hispanic ⁴	6,722	5,267	78.4	1,455	21.6	63	.9
Other	2,417	2,121	87.8	296	12.2	11	.5
Household income-to-poverty ratio:							
Under 1.00	5,619	3,246	57.8	2,373	42.2	138	2.5
Under 1.30	7,424	4,408	59.4	3,016	40.6	158	2.1
Under 1.85	11,753	7,733	65.8	4,020	34.2	182	1.5
1.85 and over	21,522	20,008	93.0	1,514	7.0	62	.3
Income unknown	6,326	5,663	89.5	663	10.5	26	.4
Area of residence: ⁵							
Inside metropolitan area	33,286	28,140	84.5	5,146	15.5	243	.7
In principal cities ⁶	10,453	8,401	80.4	2,052	19.6	114	1.1
Not in principal cities	17,348	15,243	87.9	2,105	12.1	89	.5
Outside metropolitan area	6,315	5,264	83.4	1,051	16.6	27	.4
Census geographic region:							
Northeast	7,074	6,148	86.9	926	13.1	54	.8
Midwest	9,006	7,604	84.4	1,402	15.6	54	.6
South	14,318	11,949	83.5	2,369	16.5	86	.6
West	9,203	7,701	83.7	1,502	16.3	77	.8
Individuals in households with children:							
All individuals in households with children	158,515	133,972	84.5	24,543	15.5	1,141	.7
Adults in households with children	84,911	72,770	85.7	12,141	14.3	536	.6
Children	73,604	61,201	83.1	12,403	16.9	606	.8

¹Totals exclude households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 129,000 households with children (0.3 percent.)

²Food-insecure households are those with low or very low food security among adults or children.

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

⁴Hispanics may be of any race.

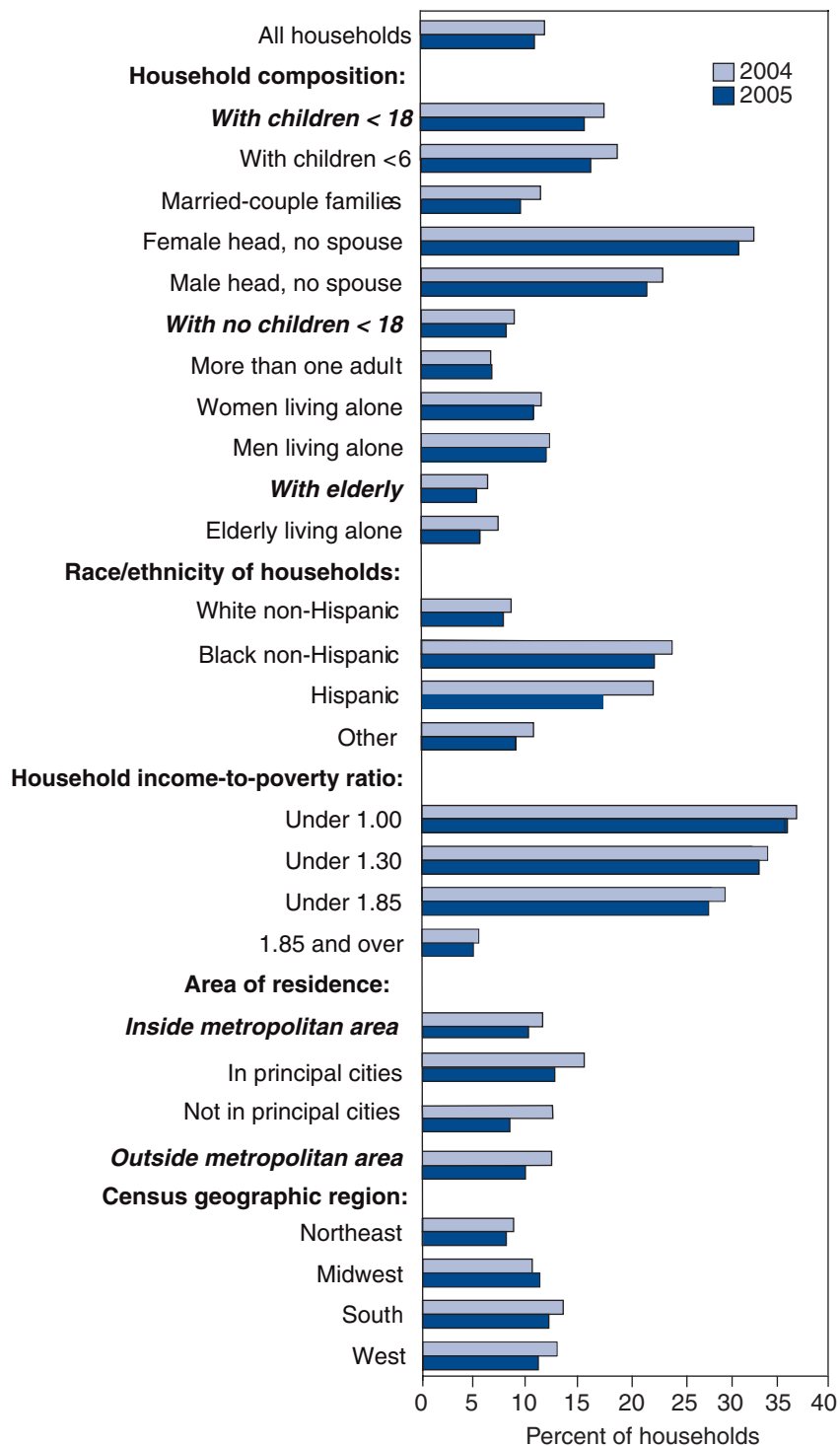
⁵Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004 but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

⁶Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 17 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Figure 3

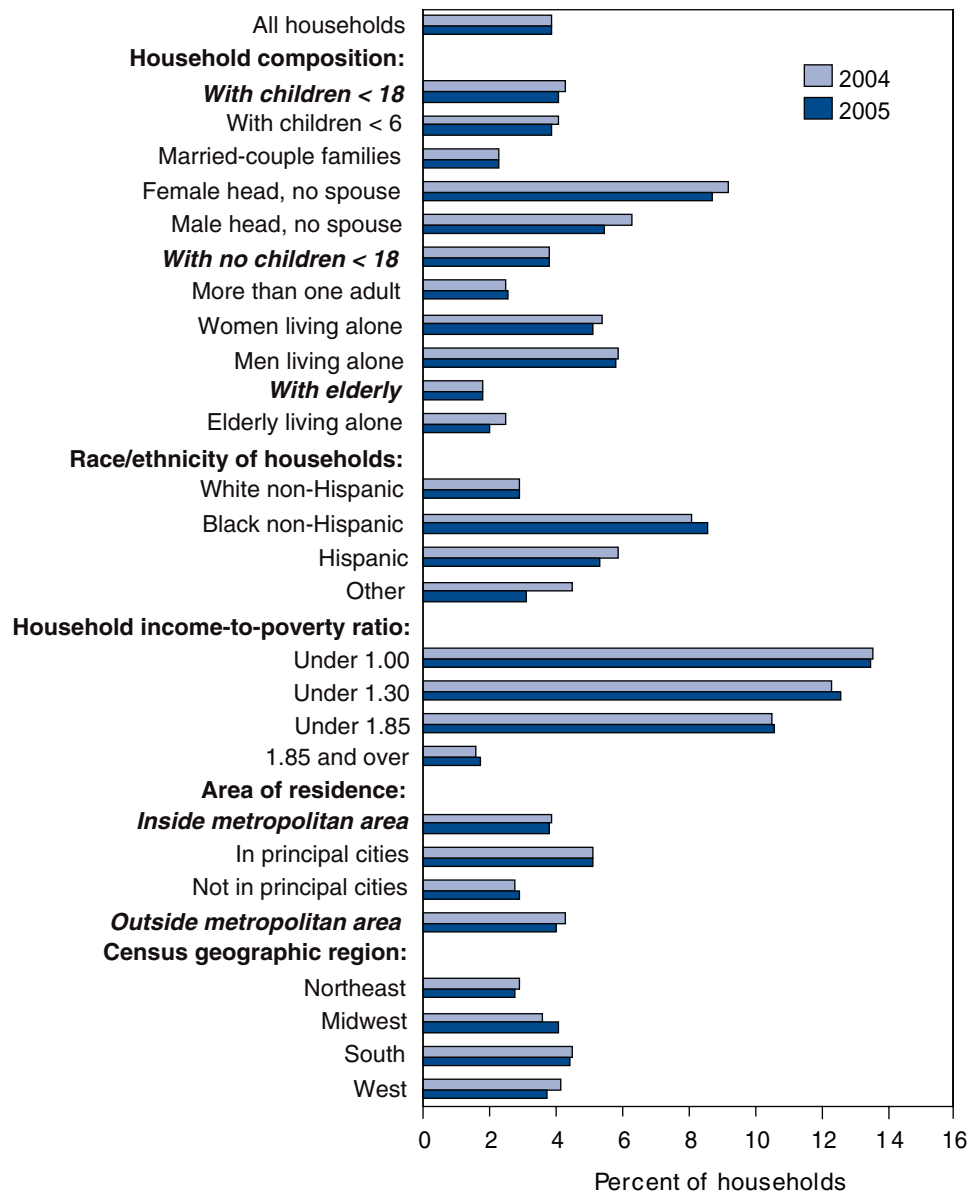
Prevalence of food insecurity, 2004 and 2005



Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data, December 2004 and December 2005.

Figure 4

Prevalence of very low food security, 2004 and 2005



Source: Calculated by ERS based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data, December 2004 and December 2005.

Food Insecurity in Low-Income Households

Food insecurity is by definition a condition that results from insufficient household resources. In 2005, food insecurity was more than five times as prevalent in households with annual incomes below 185 percent of the poverty line as in households with incomes above that range (table 2). However, many factors that might affect a household's food security (such as job loss, divorce, or other unexpected events) are not captured by an annual income measure. Some households experienced episodes of food insecurity, or even very low food security, even though their annual incomes were well above the poverty line (Nord and Brent, 2002; Gundersen and Gruber, 2001). On the other hand, many low-income households (including almost two-thirds of those with incomes below the official poverty line) were food secure.

Table 4 presents food security statistics for households with annual incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line.¹⁴ One in three of these low-income households was food insecure, including 12.6 percent that had very low food security at times during the year. Low-income households with children were more likely to be food insecure than low-income households without children (40.6 percent vs. 27.7 percent), but were less likely to have very low food security (11.3 percent vs. 13.7 percent). Low-income households with children headed by a single woman were especially vulnerable to food insecurity (45.0 percent), although their rate of very low food security (12.2 percent) was near the average for all low-income households.

Number of Persons, by Household Food Security Status and Selected Household Characteristics

The food security survey is designed to measure food security status at the household level. While it is informative to examine the number of persons residing in food-insecure households, these statistics should be interpreted carefully. In some households, different household members may have been affected differently by the households' food insecurity. Some members—particularly young children—may have experienced only mild effects or none at all, while adults experienced severe effects. It is more precise, therefore, to describe these statistics as representing “persons living in food-insecure households” rather than as representing “food-insecure persons.” Similarly, “persons living in households with very low food security” is a more precise description than “persons with very low food security.”

In 2005, 35.1 million people lived in food-insecure households (table 1A). They constituted 12.1 percent of the U.S. civilian noninstitutionalized population and included 22.7 million adults and 12.4 million children. Of these individuals, 7.6 million adults and 3.2 million children lived in households with very low food security, and 606,000 children (0.8 percent of U.S. children) lived in households with very low food security among children (table 1B). Tables 5 and 6 present estimates of the number of people and the number of children in the households in each food security status and household type.

¹⁴Households with income below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible to receive food stamps, provided they meet other eligibility criteria. Children in these households are eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

Table 4

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity in households with income below 130 percent of the poverty line by selected household characteristics, 2005

Category	Total ¹	Food security		Food insecurity					
		1,000	Percent	All	Low food security		Very low food security		
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All low-income households	17,264	11,526	66.8	5,738	33.2	3,555	20.6	2,183	12.6
Household composition:									
With children < 18	7,424	4,409	59.4	3,015	40.6	2,176	29.3	839	11.3
With children < 6	4,111	2,516	61.2	1,595	38.8	1,174	28.6	421	10.2
Married-couple families	2,995	1,927	64.3	1,068	35.7	785	26.2	283	9.4
Female head, no spouse	3,759	2,069	55.0	1,690	45.0	1,230	32.7	460	12.2
Male head, no spouse	539	326	60.5	213	39.5	127	23.6	86	16.0
Other household with child ²	131	86	65.6	45	34.4	34	26.0	11	8.4
With no children < 18	9,841	7,118	72.3	2,723	27.7	1,379	14.0	1,344	13.7
More than one adult	3,728	2,734	73.3	994	26.7	548	14.7	446	12.0
Women living alone	3,819	2,841	74.4	978	25.6	479	12.5	499	13.1
Men living alone	2,295	1,545	67.3	750	32.7	352	15.3	398	17.3
With elderly	4,412	3,630	82.3	782	17.7	520	11.8	262	5.9
Elderly living alone	2,633	2,240	85.1	393	14.9	260	9.9	133	5.1
Race/ethnicity of household:									
White non-Hispanic	8,829	6,133	69.5	2,696	30.5	1,569	17.8	1,127	12.8
Black non-Hispanic	3,883	2,338	60.2	1,545	39.8	948	24.4	597	15.4
Hispanic ³	3,613	2,403	66.5	1,210	33.5	853	23.6	357	9.9
Other	941	654	69.5	287	30.5	185	19.7	102	10.8
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	13,393	8,954	66.9	4,439	33.1	2,727	20.4	1,712	12.8
In principal cities ⁵	5,849	3,809	65.1	2,040	34.9	1,220	20.9	820	14.0
Not in principal cities	4,945	3,460	70.0	1,485	30.0	928	18.8	557	11.3
Outside metropolitan area	3,872	2,573	66.5	1,299	33.5	828	21.4	471	12.2
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	2,618	1,842	70.4	776	29.6	543	20.7	233	8.9
Midwest	3,548	2,274	64.1	1,274	35.9	757	21.3	517	14.6
South	7,346	4,893	66.6	2,453	33.4	1,502	20.4	951	12.9
West	3,752	2,516	67.1	1,236	32.9	753	20.1	483	12.9
Individuals in low-income households (by food security status of household):									
All individuals	46,149	29,591	64.1	16,558	35.9	11,087	24.0	5,471	11.9
Adults	29,880	19,905	66.6	9,975	33.4	6,390	21.4	3,585	12.0
Children	16,269	9,686	59.5	6,583	40.5	4,697	28.9	1,886	11.6

¹Totals exclude households whose income was not reported (about 19 percent of households), and those whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale (0.6 percent of low-income households).

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004 but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

⁵Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 19 percent of low-income households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table 5

Number of individuals by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2005

Category	Total ¹	In food-insecure households							
		In food-secure households		All		In households with low food security		In households with very low food security	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All individuals in households	291,501	256,373	87.9	35,128	12.1	24,349	8.4	10,779	3.7
Household composition:									
With children < 18	158,515	133,972	84.5	24,543	15.5	18,231	11.5	6,312	4.0
With children < 6	74,486	61,692	82.8	12,794	17.2	9,810	13.2	2,984	4.0
Married-couple families	114,423	102,283	89.4	12,140	10.6	9,247	8.1	2,893	2.5
Female head, no spouse	33,199	22,726	68.5	10,473	31.5	7,612	22.9	2,861	8.6
Male head, no spouse	8,589	7,061	82.2	1,528	17.8	1,079	12.6	449	5.2
Other household with child ²	2,304	1,902	82.6	402	17.4	293	12.7	109	4.7
With no children < 18	132,986	122,402	92.0	10,584	8.0	6,118	4.6	4,466	3.4
More than one adult	102,417	95,260	93.0	7,157	7.0	4,339	4.2	2,818	2.8
Women living alone	17,019	15,147	89.0	1,872	11.0	1,008	5.9	864	5.1
Men living alone	13,550	11,996	88.5	1,554	11.5	770	5.7	784	5.8
With elderly	50,843	47,227	92.9	3,616	7.1	2,636	5.2	980	1.9
Elderly living alone	10,749	10,063	93.6	686	6.4	473	4.4	213	2.0
Race/ethnicity of household:									
White non-Hispanic	198,318	181,234	91.4	17,084	8.6	11,858	6.0	5,226	2.6
Black non-Hispanic	35,097	26,823	76.4	8,274	23.6	5,372	15.3	2,902	8.3
Hispanic ³	40,700	32,741	80.4	7,959	19.6	5,840	14.3	2,119	5.2
Other	17,386	15,575	89.6	1,811	10.4	1,280	7.4	531	3.1
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	33,880	20,841	61.5	13,039	38.5	8,906	26.3	4,133	12.2
Under 1.30	46,149	29,591	64.1	16,558	35.9	11,087	24.0	5,471	11.9
Under 1.85	73,231	51,047	69.7	22,184	30.3	14,975	20.4	7,209	9.8
1.85 and over	164,731	155,881	94.6	8,850	5.4	6,446	3.9	2,404	1.5
Income unknown	53,539	49,445	92.4	4,094	7.6	2,928	5.5	1,166	2.2
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	243,242	214,297	88.1	28,945	11.9	19,925	8.2	9,020	3.7
In principal cities ⁵	78,513	66,549	84.8	11,964	15.2	7,993	10.2	3,971	5.1
Not in principal cities	124,560	112,931	90.7	11,629	9.3	8,147	6.5	3,482	2.8
Outside metropolitan area	48,259	42,076	87.2	6,183	12.8	4,425	9.2	1,758	3.6
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	53,812	48,454	90.0	5,358	10.0	3,944	7.3	1,414	2.6
Midwest	64,986	57,467	88.4	7,519	11.6	5,186	8.0	2,333	3.6
South	105,238	91,332	86.8	13,906	13.2	9,382	8.9	4,524	4.3
West	67,466	59,120	87.6	8,346	12.4	5,837	8.7	2,509	3.7

¹Totals exclude individuals in households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 997,000 individuals (0.3 percent of all individuals.)

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004 but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

⁵Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 17 percent of individuals living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table 6

Number of children by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2005

Category	Total ¹	In food-secure households		In food-insecure households ²		In households with very low food security among children	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All children	73,604	61,201	83.1	12,403	16.9	606	0.8
Household composition:							
With children < 6	37,045	30,197	81.5	6,848	18.5	310	0.8
Married-couple families	51,322	45,537	88.7	5,785	11.3	276	.5
Female head, no spouse	17,546	11,788	67.2	5,758	32.8	304	1.7
Male head, no spouse	3,797	3,097	81.6	700	18.4	25	.7
Other household with child ³	938	778	82.9	160	17.1	0	0.0
Race/ethnicity of household:							
White non-Hispanic	45,162	39,665	87.8	5,497	12.2	219	.5
Black non-Hispanic	10,753	7,618	70.8	3,135	29.2	202	1.9
Hispanic ⁴	13,352	10,194	76.3	3,158	23.7	156	1.2
Other	4,338	3,725	85.9	613	14.1	29	.7
Household income-to-poverty ratio:							
Under 1.00	12,135	6,983	57.5	5,152	42.5	357	2.9
Under 1.30	16,269	9,686	59.5	6,583	40.5	417	2.6
Under 1.85	24,404	15,862	65.0	8,542	35.0	454	1.9
1.85 and over	37,827	35,250	93.2	2,577	6.8	108	.3
Income unknown	11,373	10,089	88.7	1,284	11.3	44	.4
Area of residence: ⁵							
Inside metropolitan area	62,032	51,654	83.3	10,378	16.7	528	.9
In principal cities ⁶	19,671	15,479	78.7	4,192	21.3	274	1.4
Not in principal cities	32,499	28,301	87.1	4,198	12.9	174	.5
Outside metropolitan area	11,572	9,548	82.5	2,024	17.5	77	.7
Census geographic region:							
Northeast	12,874	11,055	85.9	1,819	14.1	126	1.0
Midwest	16,271	13,701	84.2	2,570	15.8	90	.6
South	26,725	21,914	82.0	4,811	18.0	197	.7
West	17,734	14,531	81.9	3,203	18.1	193	1.1

¹Totals exclude children in households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. In 2005, these represented 253,000 children (0.3 percent.)

²Food-insecure households are those with low or very low food security among adults or children.

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 residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are comparable with those for 2004, but are not precisely comparable with those of earlier years.

⁶Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 16 percent of children living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Prevalence of Food Insecurity by State, Average 2003-05

The prevalence of food insecurity varied considerably from State to State. Data for 3 years, 2003-05, were combined to provide more reliable statistics at the State level (table 7). Measured prevalence rates of food insecurity during this 3-year period ranged from 6.4 percent in North Dakota to 16.8 percent in New Mexico; measured prevalence rates of very low food security ranged from 1.9 percent in Delaware to 6.3 percent in South Carolina.

The margin of error for the State prevalence rates should be taken into consideration when interpreting these statistics and especially when comparing prevalence rates across States. The margin of error reflects sampling variation—the uncertainty associated with estimates that are based on information from a limited number of households in each State. The margins of error presented in table 7 indicate the range (above or below the estimated prevalence rate) within which the true prevalence rate is 90 percent likely to fall.

In some States, margins of error were larger than 2 percentage points for estimated prevalence rates of food insecurity and larger than 1 percentage point for estimated prevalence rates of very low food security. For example, considering the margin of error, it is not certain (statistically significant) that the rate of food insecurity was higher in New Mexico than in the States with the next seven highest prevalence rates of food insecurity.

Taking into account the margins of error of the State and U.S. estimates, the prevalence of food insecurity was higher (i.e., statistically significantly higher) than the national average in 11 States and lower than the national average in 20 States. In the remaining 19 States and the District of Columbia, differences from the national average were not statistically significant. The prevalence of very low food security was higher than the national average in 11 States, lower than the national average in 15 States, and not significantly different from the national average in 24 States and the District of Columbia.

The 2003-05 State-level food security statistics are compared with those for 2000-02 and 1996-98 in appendix D. The 1996-98 statistics originally published by ERS in *Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998* (Nord et al., 1999) cannot be compared directly with those for later years because of changes over the years in screening procedures used to reduce respondent burden in the food security surveys. The 1996-98 statistics presented in appendix D have been adjusted for these screening differences.

Table 7

Prevalence of household-level food insecurity and very low food security by State, average 2003-05¹

State	Number of households		Food insecurity (low or very low food security)		Very low food security	
	Average 2003-05 ²	Interviewed	Prevalence	Margin of error ³	Prevalence	Margin of error ³
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percentage points</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percentage points</i>
U.S.	113,206,000	142,185	11.4	0.15	3.8	0.15
AK	239,000	1,837	12.2	0.96	4.9*	1.08
AL	1,848,000	1,874	12.3	1.30	3.4	0.69
AR	1,102,000	1,762	14.7*	0.95	5.6*	0.59
AZ	2,130,000	1,908	12.2	2.01	3.8	0.52
CA	12,785,000	9,712	11.7	0.40	3.6	0.28
CO	1,830,000	2,958	12.0	1.13	3.9	0.54
CT	1,341,000	2,582	8.2*	1.16	2.6*	0.64
DC	276,000	1,900	11.4	1.03	3.8	0.90
DE	321,000	2,015	6.6*	1.10	1.9*	0.55
FL	7,006,000	5,946	9.4*	0.50	3.5	0.48
GA	3,440,000	2,522	12.4	1.43	5.1*	0.68
HI	429,000	1,748	7.8*	1.03	2.8*	0.75
IA	1,208,000	2,737	10.9	1.37	3.5	0.73
ID	519,000	1,738	14.1*	1.58	3.7	0.66
IL	4,948,000	4,671	9.1*	0.39	3.2*	0.44
IN	2,469,000	2,629	11.1	0.71	4.1*	0.34
KS	1,082,000	2,432	12.3	1.19	4.6*	0.53
KY	1,698,000	2,031	12.8*	1.03	4.2	0.85
LA	1,642,000	1,366	12.8	1.72	3.6	0.94
MA	2,551,000	2,482	7.8*	1.14	3.0*	0.43
MD	2,130,000	2,780	9.4*	0.74	3.6	0.47
ME	543,000	2,956	12.3	0.96	4.6*	0.61
MI	3,941,000	3,731	11.5	0.60	4.1	0.76
MN	1,997,000	3,118	7.7*	1.07	3.0*	0.54
MO	2,342,000	2,480	11.7	0.95	4.0	0.30
MS	1,092,000	1,326	16.5*	1.01	4.4	0.81
MT	393,000	1,727	11.2	1.44	4.6	1.16
NC	3,361,000	3,041	13.2*	0.69	4.5*	0.63
ND	263,000	2,147	6.4*	0.93	2.2*	0.45
NE	700,000	2,362	10.3*	0.87	4.0	0.57
NH	504,000	2,651	6.5*	0.60	2.2*	0.71
NJ	3,203,000	2,909	8.1*	1.30	2.6*	0.39
NM	747,000	1,493	16.8*	2.76	5.7*	1.11
NV	869,000	2,398	8.4*	0.68	3.0*	0.37
NY	7,448,000	6,072	10.4*	0.46	3.1*	0.31
OH	4,582,000	4,325	12.6*	0.79	3.8	0.46
OK	1,419,000	1,884	14.6*	1.69	4.8*	0.59
OR	1,421,000	2,125	11.9	1.19	3.9	0.73
PA	4,907,000	4,894	9.8*	0.77	2.9*	0.27
RI	426,000	2,411	12.4	1.34	4.1	0.59
SC	1,647,000	1,931	15.5*	1.52	6.3*	1.06
SD	319,000	2,384	9.5*	1.04	3.2*	0.39
TN	2,378,000	1,877	13.0	1.80	4.2	1.07
TX	8,243,000	6,217	16.0*	0.69	5.1*	0.22
UT	782,000	1,715	14.5*	1.84	5.1	1.70
VA	2,784,000	2,647	8.4*	0.83	2.7*	0.52
VT	257,000	2,159	9.5*	0.93	3.9	0.91
WA	2,459,000	2,602	11.2	1.14	3.9	0.58
WI	2,245,000	2,976	9.5*	1.08	2.7*	0.66
WV	734,000	1,918	8.9*	1.08	3.0	0.91
WY	204,000	2,079	11.1	0.84	4.1	0.51

*Difference from U.S. average was statistically significant with 90-percent confidence ($t > 1.645$).

¹Prevalence rates for 1996-98 reported in *Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998* (Nord et al., 1999) are not directly comparable with the rates reported here because of differences in screening procedures in the CPS Food Security Supplements from 1995 to 1998. Comparable statistics for the earlier period are presented in appendix D.

²Totals exclude households whose food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale. These represented about 0.3 percent of all households in each year.

³Margin of error with 90-percent confidence (1.645 times the standard error of the estimated prevalence rate)

Source: Prepared by ERS using data from the December 2003, December 2004, and December 2005 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.