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Statistical Supplement to Household Food Security in the United States in 2014

Alisha Coleman-Jensen
Matthew P. Rabbitt
Christian Gregory
Anita Singh



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Note to Readers

This Supplement provides statistics that complement those in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014* (ERR-194). That research report provides the primary national statistics on household food security, food spending, and use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs by food-insecure households. This Supplement provides additional statistics on component items of the household food security measure, the frequency of occurrence of food-insecure conditions, and selected statistics on household food security, food spending, and use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs.

Keywords: Food security, food insecurity, food spending, food pantry, soup kitchen, emergency kitchen, material well-being, SNAP, Food Stamp Program, National School Lunch Program, WIC

About the Authors

Alisha Coleman-Jensen is a sociologist and Matthew P. Rabbitt is an economist in the Food Assistance Branch and Christian Gregory is an economist in the Diet, Safety, and Health Economics Branch, Food Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Anita Singh is Chief, SNAP Evaluation Branch, SNAP Research and Analysis Division, Office of Policy Support, Food and Nutrition Service, USDA.

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Errata

On September 17, 2020, Table S9 was revised to correct errors in row labels. Values in the table are unchanged but are now correctly labeled for 8 items from the food security questionnaire: Relied on few kinds of low cost food to feed children; Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals; Child(ren) were not eating enough; Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals; Respondent ate less than felt he/she should; Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford; Respondent lost weight; Adult(s) did not eat for whole day.

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Statistical Supplement to Household Food Security in the United States in 2014

Introduction

This supplement provides statistics on component items of the household food security measure, the frequency of occurrence of food-insecure conditions, and selected statistics on household food security, food spending, and use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs. It complements *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err194.aspx>), which provides the primary national statistics on household food security, food spending, and use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs by food-insecure households.

The statistics presented here are based on data collected in the Current Population Survey (CPS) Food Security Supplement conducted in December 2014. Information about the survey, data, and methods are available in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014*. All statistics were calculated by applying the food security supplement weights to responses of the surveyed households to obtain nationally representative prevalence estimates. Unless otherwise noted, statistical differences described in the text are significant at the 90-percent confidence level.¹

¹Standard errors of estimates were calculated using balanced repeated replication (BRR) methods based on replicate weights computed for the Supplement by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Food Insecurity in Low-Income Households

Table S-1 presents food security statistics for households with annual incomes below 130 percent of the poverty line.² Food insecurity is by definition a condition that results from insufficient household resources. 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 manage to remain food secure.

²The Federal poverty line was \$24,008 annual income for a family of four in 2014. Households with monthly income below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, provided they meet other eligibility criteria. Children were eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs if household income was at or below 130 percent of poverty either annually or monthly.

Table S-1

Households with annual income below 130 percent of the poverty line by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2014

Category	Total ¹	Food secure		All		Food insecure			
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All low-income households	20,783	13,009	62.6	7,774	37.4	4,290	20.6	3,484	16.8
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	8,580	4,932	57.5	3,648	42.5	2,309	26.9	1,339	15.6
With children < 6 yrs	4,466	2,668	59.7	1,798	40.3	1,193	26.7	605	13.5
Married-couple families	3,475	2,223	64.0	1,252	36.0	901	25.9	351	10.1
Female head, no spouse	4,024	2,032	50.5	1,992	49.5	1,183	29.4	809	20.1
Male head, no spouse	940	587	62.4	353	37.6	196	20.9	157	16.7
Other household with child ²	141	90	63.8	51	36.2	29	20.6	NA	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	12,204	8,078	66.2	4,126	33.8	1,981	16.2	2,145	17.6
More than one adult	4,982	3,387	68.0	1,595	32.0	785	15.8	810	16.3
Women living alone	4,315	2,775	64.3	1,540	35.7	767	17.8	773	17.9
Men living alone	2,906	1,915	65.9	991	34.1	429	14.8	562	19.3
With elderly	5,034	3,743	74.4	1,291	25.6	745	14.8	546	10.8
Elderly living alone	2,703	2,075	76.8	628	23.2	355	13.1	273	10.1
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	10,217	6,610	64.7	3,607	35.3	1,744	17.1	1,863	18.2
Black, non-Hispanic	4,436	2,508	56.5	1,928	43.5	1,082	24.4	846	19.1
Hispanic ³	4,761	2,975	62.5	1,786	37.5	1,204	25.3	582	12.2
Other, non-Hispanic	1,370	917	66.9	453	33.1	260	19.0	193	14.1
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	16,343	10,297	63.0	6,046	37.0	3,387	20.7	2,659	16.3
In principal cities ⁵	6,803	4,280	62.9	2,523	37.1	1,470	21.6	1,053	15.5
Not in principal cities	6,433	4,112	63.9	2,321	36.1	1,253	19.5	1,068	16.6
Outside metropolitan area	4,440	2,711	61.1	1,729	38.9	904	20.4	825	18.6
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	3,027	1,798	59.4	1,229	40.6	645	21.3	584	19.3
Midwest	4,236	2,667	63.0	1,569	37.0	854	20.2	715	16.9
South	8,913	5,573	62.5	3,340	37.5	1,832	20.6	1,508	16.9
West	4,607	2,971	64.5	1,636	35.5	959	20.8	677	14.7

¹Totals exclude households for which income was not reported (about 23 percent of households), and those for which food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the food security scale (0.5 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 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous 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: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

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 (tables S-2 and S-3). Within a food-insecure household, different household members may have been affected differently by the household's food insecurity. Some members—particularly young children—may have experienced only mild effects or none at all, while adults were more severely affected. 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.”

Table S-2

Number of individuals by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2014

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	313,305	265,170	84.6	48,135	15.4	30,922	9.9	17,213	5.5
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	159,302	128,327	80.6	30,975	19.4	21,432	13.5	9,543	6.0
With children < 6 yrs	73,636	58,275	79.1	15,361	20.9	10,951	14.9	4,410	6.0
Married-couple families	109,712	94,869	86.5	14,843	13.5	10,976	10.0	3,867	3.5
Female head, no spouse	35,969	22,854	63.5	13,115	36.5	8,384	23.3	4,731	13.2
Male head, no spouse	11,504	8,978	78.0	2,526	22.0	1,703	14.8	823	7.2
Other household with child ²	2,117	1,626	76.8	491	23.2	370	17.5	121	5.7
With no children < 18 yrs	154,003	136,844	88.9	17,159	11.1	9,489	6.2	7,670	5.0
More than one adult	119,658	107,545	89.9	12,113	10.1	6,921	5.8	5,192	4.3
Women living alone	19,062	16,149	84.7	2,913	15.3	1,541	8.1	1,372	7.2
Men living alone	15,283	13,150	86.0	2,133	14.0	1,027	6.7	1,106	7.2
With elderly	68,463	61,551	89.9	6,912	10.1	4,525	6.6	2,387	3.5
Elderly living alone	12,792	11,608	90.7	1,184	9.3	704	5.5	480	3.8
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	199,215	177,084	88.9	22,131	11.1	13,287	6.7	8,844	4.4
Black, non-Hispanic	38,387	27,735	72.3	10,652	27.7	6,823	17.8	3,829	10.0
Hispanic ³	51,622	39,340	76.2	12,282	23.8	8,843	17.1	3,439	6.7
Other, non-Hispanic	24,080	21,010	87.3	3,070	12.7	1,969	8.2	1,101	4.6
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	42,711	25,175	58.9	17,536	41.1	10,297	24.1	7,239	16.9
Under 1.30	56,611	34,703	61.3	21,908	38.7	13,107	23.2	8,801	15.5
Under 1.85	84,989	55,308	65.1	29,681	34.9	18,349	21.6	11,332	13.3
1.85 and over	159,302	148,710	93.4	10,592	6.6	7,393	4.6	3,199	2.0
Income unknown	69,015	61,153	88.6	7,862	11.4	5,180	7.5	2,682	3.9
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	266,826	227,378	85.2	39,448	14.8	25,461	9.5	13,987	5.2
In principal cities ⁵	87,684	72,545	82.7	15,139	17.3	10,098	11.5	5,041	5.7
Not in principal cities	136,517	119,112	87.3	17,405	12.7	10,846	7.9	6,559	4.8
Outside metropolitan area	46,479	37,794	81.3	8,685	18.7	5,460	11.7	3,225	6.9
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	55,493	47,678	85.9	7,815	14.1	5,006	9.0	2,809	5.1
Midwest	66,767	57,173	85.6	9,594	14.4	5,980	9.0	3,614	5.4
South	117,265	97,406	83.1	19,859	16.9	12,707	10.8	7,152	6.1
West	73,780	62,915	85.3	10,865	14.7	7,228	9.8	3,637	4.9

¹Totals exclude individuals in households for 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 2014, these exclusions represented about 853,000 individuals (0.3 percent of the U.S. population).

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 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous 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 16 percent of individuals living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-3

Number of children by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2014

Category	Total ¹	In food-secure households		In food-insecure households ²		In households with food-insecure children ³		In households with very low food security among children	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All children	73,368	58,045	79.1	15,323	20.9	7,949	10.8	914	1.2
Household composition:									
With children < 6 yrs	36,124	28,065	77.7	8,059	22.3	4,037	11.2	468	1.3
Married-couple families	49,055	42,183	86.0	6,872	14.0	3,323	6.8	325	.7
Female head, no spouse	18,372	11,263	61.3	7,109	38.7	3,897	21.2	455	2.5
Male head, no spouse	5,155	3,997	77.5	1,158	22.5	645	12.5	119	2.3
Other household with child ⁴	786	602	76.6	184	23.4	85	10.8	NA	NA
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	41,173	35,011	85.0	6,162	15.0	3,074	7.5	323	.8
Black, non-Hispanic	10,448	6,852	65.6	3,596	34.4	1,922	18.4	216	2.1
Hispanic ⁵	15,777	11,231	71.2	4,546	28.8	2,470	15.7	278	1.8
Other, non-Hispanic	5,971	4,952	82.9	1,019	17.1	483	8.1	97	1.6
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	14,706	8,075	54.9	6,631	45.1	3,857	26.2	555	3.8
Under 1.30	18,601	10,606	57.0	7,995	43.0	4,518	24.3	586	3.2
Under 1.85	26,286	15,939	60.6	10,347	39.4	5,677	21.6	706	2.7
1.85 and over	33,636	30,814	91.6	2,822	8.4	1,163	3.5	69	.2
Income unknown	13,446	11,291	84.0	2,155	16.0	1,109	8.2	139	1.0
Area of residence: ⁶									
Inside metropolitan area	62,580	49,952	79.8	12,628	20.2	6,546	10.5	748	1.2
In principal cities ⁷	20,152	15,250	75.7	4,902	24.3	2,533	12.6	318	1.6
Not in principal cities	32,531	27,053	83.2	5,478	16.8	2,861	8.8	352	1.1
Outside metropolitan area	10,788	8,092	75.0	2,696	25.0	1,403	13.0	166	1.5
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	11,900	9,600	80.7	2,300	19.3	1,051	8.8	121	1.0
Midwest	15,817	12,769	80.7	3,048	19.3	1,706	10.8	144	.9
South	27,925	21,403	76.6	6,522	23.4	3,443	12.3	355	1.3
West	17,727	14,273	80.5	3,454	19.5	1,749	9.9	294	1.7

NA = Not reported; fewer than 10 households in the survey with this characteristic had very low food security among children.

¹Totals exclude households for 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 2014, these exclusions represented 282,000 children (0.4 percent).

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

³Households with food-insecure children are those with low or very low food security among children.

⁴Households with children in complex living arrangements (e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder).

⁵Hispanics may be of any race.

⁶Metropolitan area residence is based on 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous years.

⁷Households 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: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Security During the 30 Days Prior to the Food Security Survey

The annual food security survey was designed with the primary objective of assessing households' food security during the 12-month period prior to the survey, but information is also collected with reference to the 30-day period prior to the survey. Households that responded affirmatively to each 12-month question were asked whether the same behavior, experience, or condition occurred during the last 30 days. Responses to these questions were used to assess the food security status of households during the 30 days prior to the survey, following the same protocols that were used for the 12-month measure. The 30-day food security measurement protocol was revised in 2005, so 30-day statistics for 2014 are directly comparable with those for 2005 and later years, but not with those reported for 2004 and earlier years.

An estimated 92.1 percent of households were food secure throughout the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2014 (table S-4).³ An estimated 7.9 percent (9.8 million households) were food insecure at some time during that 30-day period, including 3.4 percent (4.2 million) with very low food security. The national-level prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security were essentially unchanged from the corresponding 30-day period in 2013 (8.0 percent and 3.3 percent, respectively). However, there were a few statistically significant changes in prevalence rates for some subpopulations.⁴ From 2013 to 2014, 30-day food insecurity declined for married couple families (from 7.2 percent to 6.2 percent). From 2013 to 2014, 30-day very low food security declined for other households with children.

The number of households that were food insecure at some time during the 30 days from mid-November to mid-December 2014 was 56 percent of the number that were food insecure at some time during the entire 12 months prior to the survey; the corresponding statistic for very low food security was 60 percent. If food insecurity during this 30-day period was similar to that for other 30-day periods throughout the year, then these comparisons imply that the average household that was food insecure at some time during the year experienced this condition in 7 months of the year. Likewise, the average household with very low food security experienced that condition in 7 months of the year.⁵ However, analysis of food insecurity in different months suggests that food insecurity is somewhat more prevalent in the summer months (July-September) than in March-April and November-December (Cohen et al., 2002; Nord and Romig, 2006; Nord and Kantor, 2006), so typical frequencies may be somewhat higher than the 7 months implied by the December data.

³The food security survey was conducted December 14-22, 2014.

⁴Changes from 2013 in the prevalence of food insecurity by area of residence should be interpreted with caution. Revised metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) and principal cities within them were delineated by the Office of Management and Budget in 2013, based on revised standards developed by the U.S. Census Bureau in collaboration with other Federal agencies. The revised delineations were implemented beginning with the 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement. Food security prevalence statistics by area of residence for 2014 are not precisely comparable with corresponding statistics from 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.

⁵The number of months is estimated as the monthly rate divided by the annual rate multiplied by 12.

Table S-4

Households by food security status during the 30 days prior to the food security survey and selected household characteristics, 2014¹

Category	Total ¹	Food insecure							
		Food secure		All		With low food security		With very low food security	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All households	124,034	114,210	92.1	9,824	7.9	5,659	4.6	4,165	3.4
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	39,077	35,002	89.6	4,075	10.4	2,750	7.0	1,325	3.4
With children < 6 yrs	17,211	15,452	89.8	1,759	10.2	1,215	7.1	544	3.2
Married-couple families	25,376	23,804	93.8	1,572	6.2	1,120	4.4	452	1.8
Female head, no spouse	9,910	7,904	79.8	2,006	20.2	1,306	13.2	700	7.1
Male head, no spouse	3,237	2,820	87.1	417	12.9	267	8.2	150	4.6
Other household with child ²	554	474	85.6	80	14.4	57	10.3	23	4.2
With no children < 18 yrs	84,957	79,206	93.2	5,751	6.8	2,910	3.4	2,841	3.3
More than one adult	50,621	47,800	94.4	2,821	5.6	1,505	3.0	1,316	2.6
Women living alone	19,062	17,332	90.9	1,730	9.1	883	4.6	847	4.4
Men living alone	15,274	14,074	92.1	1,200	7.9	522	3.4	678	4.4
With elderly	34,269	32,655	95.3	1,614	4.7	963	2.8	651	1.9
Elderly living alone	12,792	12,152	95.0	640	5.0	366	2.9	274	2.1
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	84,125	79,083	94.0	5,042	6.0	2,725	3.2	2,317	2.8
Black, non-Hispanic	15,415	13,249	85.9	2,166	14.1	1,221	7.9	945	6.1
Hispanic ³	16,148	14,098	87.3	2,050	12.7	1,362	8.4	688	4.3
Other, non-Hispanic	8,346	7,779	93.2	567	6.8	351	4.2	216	2.6
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	15,810	11,919	75.4	3,891	24.6	2,064	13.1	1,827	11.6
Under 1.30	20,781	16,010	77.0	4,771	23.0	2,535	12.2	2,236	10.8
Under 1.85	31,374	25,043	79.8	6,331	20.2	3,472	11.1	2,859	9.1
1.85 and over	64,200	62,178	96.9	2,022	3.1	1,291	2.0	731	1.1
Income unknown	28,460	26,989	94.8	1,471	5.2	896	3.1	575	2.0
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	104,922	96,942	92.4	7,980	7.6	4,665	4.4	3,315	3.2
In principal cities ⁵	35,663	32,659	91.6	3,004	8.4	1,812	5.1	1,192	3.3
Not in principal cities	51,892	48,307	93.1	3,585	6.9	2,059	4.0	1,526	2.9
Outside metropolitan area	19,112	17,267	90.3	1,845	9.7	994	5.2	851	4.5
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	22,154	20,455	92.3	1,699	7.7	1,023	4.6	676	3.1
Midwest	27,252	25,105	92.1	2,147	7.9	1,239	4.5	908	3.3
South	46,868	42,915	91.6	3,953	8.4	2,174	4.6	1,779	3.8
West	27,760	25,735	92.7	2,025	7.3	1,223	4.4	802	2.9

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted December 14-22, 2014. Totals exclude households for which food security status is unknown because they did not give a valid response to any of the questions in the 30-day food security scale. In 2014, these exclusions represented 318,000 households (0.3 percent of all households). The 30-day statistics for 2004 and earlier years were based on a different methodology and are not comparable with these statistics.

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 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous 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: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Household Responses to Questions in the Food Security Scale

The 18 questions used for the food security measure ask about conditions, experiences, and behaviors that range widely in severity. Those indicating less severe food insecurity are observed in a larger proportion of households and the proportion declines as severity increases (table S-5).

The two least severe questions refer to uncertainty about having enough food and the experience of running out of food. The remaining 16 items indicate reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diets and increasingly severe disruptions of normal eating patterns and reductions in food intake. (See box on page 12 for the complete wording of these questions.) Three or more affirmative responses are required for a household to be classified as food insecure. Thus, all households in that category affirmed at least one item indicating reduced diet quality or disruption of normal eating patterns or reduction in food intake, and most food-insecure households reported multiple indicators of these conditions (table S-6).

A large majority of households (68.7 percent of households with children and 80.8 percent of those without children) reported no problems or concerns in meeting their food needs. Households that reported only one or two indications of food insecurity (12.1 percent of households with children and 7.5 percent of households without children) are also classified as food secure. Most of these households affirmed one or both of the first two items, indicating uncertainty about having enough food or about exhausting their food supply, but did not indicate actual disruptions of normal eating patterns or reductions in food intake. Although these households are classified as food secure, the food security of some of them may have been marginal at times, especially in the sense that they lacked “assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways,” a condition that the Life Sciences Research Office includes in its definition of food security (Anderson, 1990, p. 1,598).⁶ Research examining health and children’s development in these marginally food-secure households generally indicate that outcomes are either intermediate between those in highly food-secure and food-insecure households or more closely resemble those in food-insecure households (Radimer and Nord, 2005; Winicki and Jemison, 2003; Wilde and Peterman, 2006).

⁶The Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) is a nonprofit organization based in Bethesda, MD. Concepts and definitions of food security and related conditions developed by LSRO for the American Institute of Nutrition (Anderson, 1990) provided key parts of the theoretical underpinnings of the household food security measure.

Table S-5

Responses to items in the food security scale, 2011-14¹

Scale item ²	Households affirming item ³			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
	<i>Percent</i>			
Household items:				
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	19.7	19.5	18.9	18.7
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	16.2	15.7	15.6	15.5
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	15.2	15.0	14.8	14.8
Adult items:				
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	9.2	8.9	8.7	8.7
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	9.2	9.0	8.9	8.8
Adult(s) cut size or skipped meals in 3 or more months	7.1	6.8	6.7	6.7
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.8
Respondent lost weight	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.8
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.6	1.7	1.7	1.7
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day in 3 or more months	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
Child items:				
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	17.5	17.0	16.4	15.5
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	10.4	10.6	10.0	9.9
Child(ren) were not eating enough	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.5
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.0	2.3	2.3	2.2
Child(ren) were hungry	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.4
Child(ren) skipped meals	.7	.8	.8	.8
Child(ren) skipped meals in 3 or more months	.6	.6	.5	.6
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.2	.1	.2	.2

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals.

²The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "... because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food" or "... because there wasn't enough money for food." (See box on page 12 for the complete wording of these questions.)

³Households not responding to item are omitted from the calculations. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of child-referenced items.

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

Table S-6

Percentage of households by food security raw score, 2014

Panel A: Households with children—18-item household food security scale			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households ¹	Cumulative percent of households ¹	Food security status
0	68.74	68.74	Food secure (80.84 percent)
1	6.66	75.40	
2	5.44	80.84	
3	4.11	84.94	Low food security (13.17 percent)
4	3.09	88.03	
5	2.17	90.19	
6	2.10	92.29	
7	1.72	94.01	
8	1.41	95.42	Very low food security (5.99 percent)
9	1.29	96.70	
10	1.03	97.73	
11	.78	98.51	
12	.60	99.11	
13	.30	99.40	
14	.23	99.63	
15	.16	99.79	
16	.03	99.82	
17	.13	99.95	
18	.05	100.00	
Panel B: Households with children—8-item child food security scale			
0	82.68	82.68	Children food secure (90.62 percent)
1	7.94	90.62	Low food security among children (8.30 percent)
2	4.86	95.48	
3	2.39	97.87	
4	1.05	98.92	
5	.54	99.46	Very low food security among children (1.08 percent)
6	.12	99.58	
7	.28	99.86	
8	.14	100.00	
Panel C: Households with no children—10-item adult food security scale			
0	80.77	80.77	Food secure (88.31 percent)
1	4.35	85.12	
2	3.19	88.31	
3	3.09	91.39	Low food security (6.28 percent)
4	1.73	93.13	
5	1.46	94.59	
6	1.66	96.25	Very low food security (5.41 percent)
7	1.49	97.74	
8	1.07	98.81	
9	.46	99.27	
10	.73	100.00	

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

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 there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes/No)
8. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn’t 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 were asked only if the household included children age 0-17)

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)

Frequency of Occurrence of Behaviors, Experiences, and Conditions That Indicate Food Insecurity

Most of the questions used to calculate the food security scale also elicit information about how often the food-insecure behavior, experience, or condition occurred. The food security scale does not take all of this frequency-of-occurrence information into account, but analysis of these responses can provide insight into the frequency and duration of food insecurity. Frequency-of-occurrence information is collected in the CPS Food Security Supplements using two different methods:

- **Method 1:** A condition is described, and the respondent is asked whether this was often, sometimes, or never true for his or her household during the past 12 months.
- **Method 2:** Respondents who answer “yes” to a yes/no question are asked, “How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?”

Table S-7 presents responses to each food security question broken down by reported frequency of occurrence for all households interviewed in the December 2014 survey. Questions using Method 1 are presented in the top panel of the table and those using Method 2 are presented in the bottom panel. Most households that responded affirmatively to Method 1 questions reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “sometimes,” while 16 to 27 percent (depending on the specific question), reported that it occurred “often.”

In response to Method 2 questions, conditional on affirming the general question, 32 to 38 percent of respondents reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “in almost every month;” 39 to 44 percent reported that it occurred in “some months, but not every month;” and 22 to 25 percent reported that it occurred “in only 1 or 2 months.”

Table S-8 presents the same frequency-of-occurrence response statistics for households classified as having very low food security.

Table S-7

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2014¹

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence			
		Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
		— Percent of all households —		Percent of "ever during the year"	
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	18.7	4.9	13.8	26	74
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	15.5	3.4	12.1	22	78
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	14.8	4.1	10.7	27	73
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	15.5	3.7	11.8	24	76
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	9.9	1.6	8.3	16	84
Child(ren) were not eating enough	4.5	.8	3.7	18	82

Condition ²	Frequency of occurrence						
	Ever during the year	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months
	— Percent of all households —				Percent of "ever during the year"		
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	8.6	3.1	3.6	2.0	36	41	23
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	8.8	2.9	3.8	2.1	33	43	24
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.8	1.7	1.9	1.1	37	40	24
Respondent lost weight	2.8	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.7	.7	.7	.4	38	39	23
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.2	.7	1.0	.5	32	44	24
Child(ren) were hungry	1.4	.5	.5	.3	35	40	25
Child(ren) skipped meals	.8	.3	.3	.2	37	41	22
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA = Frequency of occurrence information was not collected for these conditions.

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals. Households not responding to an item or not responding to the followup question about frequency of occurrence are omitted from the calculation of percentages for that item. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of percentages for child-referenced items.

²The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-8

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by households with very low food security, 2014¹

Condition ²	Ever during the year	Frequency of occurrence			
		Often	Sometimes	Often	Sometimes
		— Percent of all households —		Percent of "ever during the year"	
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	98.1	53.5	44.6	55	45
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	96.9	40.9	56.0	42	58
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	96.9	45.1	51.7	47	53
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	90.8	38.2	52.5	42	58
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	83.2	22.1	61.1	27	73
Child(ren) were not eating enough	53.3	12.9	40.5	24	76

Condition ²	Frequency of occurrence						
	Ever during the year	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months	Almost every month	Some months but not every month	In only 1 or 2 months
	— Percent of all households —				Percent of "ever during the year"		
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	96.2	46.8	42.1	7.3	49	44	8
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	95.7	44.3	41.3	10.0	46	43	10
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	69.3	29.7	28.0	11.7	43	40	17
Respondent lost weight	45.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	29.6	11.9	12.1	5.6	40	41	19
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	31.5	11.0	14.2	6.3	35	45	20
Child(ren) were hungry	21.9	8.1	8.7	5.0	37	40	23
Child(ren) skipped meals	12.9	5.2	5.7	2.0	40	45	15
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	3.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA = Frequency-of-occurrence information was not collected for these conditions.

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals. Households not responding to an item or not responding to the followup question about frequency of occurrence are omitted from the calculation of percentages for that item. Households without children are omitted from the calculation of percentages for child-referenced items.

²The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Monthly and Daily Occurrence of Food-Insecure Conditions

Respondents also reported whether the behaviors and experiences that indicate food insecurity had occurred during the 30 days prior to the survey. For seven of these behaviors and experiences respondents also reported how many days the condition had occurred during that period. Responses to these questions are summarized in table S-9.⁷

No direct measure of the daily prevalence of very low food security has yet been developed. However, the ratio of daily prevalence to monthly prevalence of the various indicator conditions provides a basis for approximating the average daily prevalence of very low food security during the reference 30-day period. For adult referenced items, the daily prevalence is calculated by multiplying the 30-day prevalence of the condition by the number of days on which that experience occurred, and dividing that product by 30 to get the average daily prevalence of each condition. The estimate of the daily prevalence of very low food security was based on the the conditions with the highest and lowest ratio of the daily prevalence divided by the monthly prevalence.

For the adult-referenced items, daily prevalence ranged from 22 to 34 percent of their prevalence at any time during the month (analysis not shown, based on table S-9). The corresponding ranges for daily prevalence of the child-referenced items were 24 to 25 percent of monthly prevalence. These findings are generally consistent with those of Nord et al. (2000), and are used to estimate upper and lower bounds of the daily prevalence of very low food security described in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err194.aspx>).

⁷Average daily prevalence is calculated as the product of the 30-day prevalence and the average number of days divided by 30.

Table S-9

Monthly and daily occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2014¹

Condition ²	For households reporting condition at any time during previous 30 days					Average daily prevalence
	Ever during previous 30 days	Number of days out of previous 30 days			Monthly average occurrence	
		1- 7 days	8-14 days	15-30 days		
	Percent ³			Days ³	Percent ³	
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	8.89	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	7.83	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	8.58	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	5.95	66	15	19	8.1	1.60
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	5.38	55	17	28	10.3	1.84
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	3.15	59	16	25	9.4	.99
Respondent lost weight	1.93	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.19	70	16	14	6.7	.26
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	8.56	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	5.48	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Child(ren) were not eating enough	2.62	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	1.53	68	15	17	7.7	.39
Child(ren) were hungry	.94	68	17	15	7.5	.23
Child(ren) skipped meals	.55	68	18	14	7.1	.13
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.19	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

NA = Number of days of occurrence was not collected for these conditions.

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals. The 30-day and daily statistics refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted December 14-22, 2014.

²The full wording of each question includes explicit reference to resource limitation, e.g., "...because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food," or "...because there wasn't enough money for food."

³Households without children are excluded from the denominator of child-referenced items.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Spending by Food-Secure and Food-Insecure Households

Food-secure households typically spent more on food than food-insecure households of similar age-gender composition. The pattern of higher median food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan by food-secure households was consistent across household structure, race/ethnicity, income, metropolitan residence, and geographic region (table S-10).

Table S-10

**Weekly household food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP)
by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2014**

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to TFP ¹	
	Food secure	Food insecure
	<i>Ratio (cost of TFP = 1.0)</i>	
All households	1.18	0.94
Household composition:		
With children < 18 yrs	1.09	.88
At least one child < 6 yrs	1.08	.90
Married couple families	1.12	.84
Female head, no spouse	.99	.89
Male head, no spouse	1.03	.93
Other household with child ²	.99	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	1.25	.99
More than one adult	1.18	.88
Women living alone	1.31	1.08
Men living alone	1.49	1.05
With elderly	1.17	.88
Elderly living alone	1.23	1.01
Race/ethnicity of households:		
White, non-Hispanic	1.25	.95
Black, non-Hispanic	1.08	.94
Hispanic ³	1.05	.90
Other, non-Hispanic	1.13	.91
Household income-to-poverty ratio:		
Under 1.00	.98	.87
Under 1.30	.97	.87
Under 1.85	.98	.89
1.85 and over	1.33	1.08
Income unknown	1.16	.90
Area of residence: ⁴		
Inside metropolitan area	1.21	.95
In principal cities ⁵	1.25	.94
Not in principal cities	1.22	.96
Outside metropolitan area	1.11	.87
Census geographic region:		
Northeast	1.25	.96
Midwest	1.16	.90
South	1.18	.92
West	1.25	.94

NA=Median not reported; fewer than 100 interviewed households in the category.

¹Statistics exclude households that did not answer the questions about spending on food or reported zero usual food spending and those that did not provide valid responses to any of the questions on food security. These exclusions represented 8.8 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 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous 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 16 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Use of Food Pantries and Emergency Kitchens

The December 2014 CPS food security survey included questions about the use of two types of community-based food and nutrition assistance programs (see box below, “Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs,” for descriptions of these facilities). All households with incomes below 185 percent of the Federal poverty threshold were asked these questions. In order to minimize the burden on respondents, households with incomes above that range were not asked the questions unless they indicated some level of difficulty in meeting their food needs on preliminary screener questions. The questions analyzed in this supplement are:

- “In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever get emergency food from a church, a food pantry, or food bank?” The use of these resources any time during the last 12 months is referred to as “food pantry use.” Households that reported using a food pantry in the last 12 months were asked, “How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?” Households reporting that they did not use a food pantry in the last 12 months were asked, “Is there a church, food pantry, or food bank in your community where you could get emergency food if you needed it?”
- “In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever eat any meals at a soup kitchen?” The use of this resource is referred to as “use of an emergency kitchen” in the following discussion.

Table S-11 presents estimates of the number of households that obtained emergency food from food pantries or ate at an emergency kitchen one or more times during the 12-month period ending in December 2014. Estimates of the proportion of households using emergency kitchens based on the CPS food security surveys almost certainly understate the proportion of the population that actually uses these providers. The CPS selects households to interview from an address-based list and therefore interviews only persons who occupy housing units. People who are homeless at the time of

Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs

Food pantries and emergency kitchens are the main direct providers of emergency food assistance. These agencies are locally based and rely heavily on volunteers. The majority of them are affiliated with faith-based organizations (see Ohls et al., 2002, for more information). Most of the food distributed by food pantries and emergency kitchens comes from local resources, but USDA supplements these resources through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). In fiscal year 2014, TEFAP supplied 780 million pounds of commodities to community emergency food providers. Over half of all food pantries and emergency kitchens received TEFAP commodities in 2000, and these commodities accounted for about 14 percent of all food distributed by them (Ohls et al., 2002). Pantries and kitchens play different roles, as follows:

- Food pantries distribute unprepared foods for offsite use. An estimated 32,737 pantries operated in 2000 (the last year for which nationally representative statistics are available) and distributed, on average, 239 million pounds of food per month. Households using food pantries received an average of 38.2 pounds of food per visit.
- Emergency kitchens (sometimes referred to as soup kitchens) provide individuals with prepared food to eat at the site. In 2000 an estimated 5,262 emergency kitchens served a total of 474,000 meals on an average day.

the survey are not included in the sample, and those in tenuous housing arrangements (for instance, temporarily doubled up with another family) also may have been missed. These two factors—exclusion of the homeless and under representation of those who are tenuously housed—bias estimates of emergency kitchen use downward, especially among certain subgroups of the population. This is much less true for food pantry users because they need cooking facilities to make use of most items from a food pantry.⁸

The food security of households that used food pantries and emergency kitchens is compared with low-income households that did not use those facilities in table S-12. Use of food pantries by household composition, race and Hispanic ethnicity, income, and residence is provided in table S-13.

Table S-11

Use of food pantries and emergency kitchens, 2014

Category	Pantries			Kitchens		
	Total ¹	Users		Total ¹	Users	
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	123,621	6,775	5.5	123,622	684	.6
All persons in households	311,954	18,770	6.0	312,028	1,560	.5
Adults in households	239,078	12,619	5.3	239,096	1,207	.5
Children in households	72,875	6,151	8.4	72,932	353	.5
Households by food security status:						
Food-secure households	106,379	2,106	2.0	106,383	163	.2
Food-insecure households	17,178	4,662	27.1	17,173	521	3.0
Households with low food security	10,342	2,154	20.8	10,341	134	1.3
Households with very low food security	6,836	2,508	36.7	6,832	386	5.7

¹Totals exclude households that did not answer the question about food pantries or emergency kitchens. Totals in the bottom section also exclude households that did not answer any of the questions in the food security scale.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-12

Prevalence of food security and food insecurity of households with annual incomes less than 185 percent of the poverty line, by use of food pantries and emergency kitchens, 2014

Category	Food secure	Food insecure		
		All	With low food security	With very low food security
		Percent		
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:				
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	30.9	69.1	31.0	38.1
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	73.2	26.8	16.8	10.0
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	22.4	77.6	19.6	58.0
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	67.2	32.8	19.1	13.7

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁸Previous studies of emergency kitchen users and food pantry users confirm these assumptions. For example, a nationally representative survey of people who use food pantries and emergency kitchens found that about 36 percent of emergency kitchen clients and 8 percent of households that received food from food pantries were homeless in 2001 (Briefel et al., 2003).

Table S-13

Use of food pantries, by selected household characteristics, 2014

Category	Total ¹	Pantry users	
	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	123,621	6,775	5.5
Household composition:			
With children < 18 yrs	38,855	2,886	7.4
At least one child < 6 yrs	17,083	1,363	8.0
Married-couple families	25,261	1,079	4.3
Female head, no spouse	9,812	1,419	14.5
Male head, no spouse	3,232	333	10.3
Other household with child ²	550	56	10.2
With no children < 18 yrs	84,766	3,888	4.6
More than one adult	50,551	1,845	3.6
Women living alone	19,010	1,208	6.4
Men living alone	15,205	836	5.5
With elderly	34,179	1,244	3.6
Elderly living alone	12,767	582	4.6
Race/ethnicity of households:			
White, non-Hispanic	83,961	3,496	4.2
Black, non-Hispanic	15,307	1,607	10.5
Hispanic ³	16,051	1,315	8.2
Other, non-Hispanic	8,302	357	4.3
Household income-to-poverty ratio:			
Under 1.00	15,677	3,241	20.7
Under 1.30	20,638	3,868	18.7
Under 1.85	31,156	5,004	16.1
1.85 and over	64,125	815	1.3
Income unknown	28,340	956	3.4
Area of residence: ⁴			
Inside metropolitan area	104,522	5,245	5.0
In principal cities ⁵	35,480	2,103	5.9
Not in principal cities	51,723	2,113	4.1
Outside metropolitan area	19,099	1,529	8.0
Census geographic region:			
Northeast	22,060	1,078	4.9
Midwest	27,173	1,694	6.2
South	46,738	2,462	5.3
West	27,651	1,542	5.6

¹Totals exclude households that did not answer the question about getting food from a food pantry. These exclusions represented 0.6 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 2013 Office of Management and Budget delineation. Prevalence rates by area of residence are not precisely comparable with those of previous 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: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Spending by Households That Received Food and Nutrition Assistance

Median food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan by households that received food and nutrition assistance and by non-recipient households in similar low-income ranges is presented in table S-14.⁹

Table S-14

Weekly household food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) by participation in selected Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs, 2014

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to cost of the TFP
	<i>Ratio</i> (cost of TFP = 1.0)
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:	
Received SNAP ¹ benefits previous 30 days	.89
Did not receive SNAP ¹ benefits previous 30 days	.96
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household:	
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	.83
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	.89
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:	
Received WIC ² previous 30 days	.89
Did not receive WIC ² previous 30 days	.91
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:	
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	.84
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	.97

¹SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

²WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁹Food purchased with SNAP benefits is included in household food spending as calculated here. However, the value of school lunches and food obtained through WIC is not included. Food from these sources supplemented the food purchased by many of these households.

Food Security During the 30 Days Prior to the Food Security Survey in Households That Received Food and Nutrition Assistance

Table S-15 presents prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security during the 30-day period just prior to the food security survey for households that received selected types of food and nutrition assistance and for non-recipient households in similar low-income ranges. This complements table 8 of *Household Food Security in the United States in 2014* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err194.aspx>), which is based on the 12-month measure. Measured food insecurity and reported use of food and nutrition assistance programs are more likely to refer to contemporaneous conditions when both are referenced to the previous 30 days than when one or both is referenced to the previous 12 months.

Table S-15

Prevalence of food insecurity during the 30 days prior to the food security survey, by participation in selected Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs, 2014¹

Category	Food insecurity (low or very low food security)	Very low food security
	Percent	
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:		
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 30 days	33.5	16.4
Received SNAP ² benefits in every month during the previous 12 months	33.2	16.1
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (SNAP leavers)	38.7	19.5
Did not receive SNAP ² benefits previous 12 months	15.0	6.6
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household:		
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	28.2	10.2
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	11.9	4.4
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:		
Received WIC ³ previous 30 days	23.5	7.4
Did not receive WIC ³ previous 30 days	17.5	6.6
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:		
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	57.0	31.8
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	16.5	7.0

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was December 14-22, 2014. The number of interviewed households reporting use of emergency kitchens during the previous 30 days was too small to provide reliable food security prevalence estimates.

²SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

³WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Combined Use of Federal and Community Food and Nutrition Assistance

Both Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs are important resources for low-income households. To design and manage these programs so that they function together effectively as a nutrition safety net, it is important to know how they complement and supplement each other. The extent to which households that participate in Federal food and nutrition assistance programs also receive assistance from community food assistance programs provides information about these relationships (table S-16).

Table S-16

Combined use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs by low-income households,¹ 2014

Category	Share of category that obtained food from food pantry	Share of food pantry users in category	Share of category that ate meal at emergency kitchen	Share of emergency kitchen users in category
	<i>Percent</i>			
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 30 days	31.6	55.0	3.2	51.1
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	22.9	32.2	1.5	19.2
Received WIC ³ previous 30 days	22.9	11.7	1.7	7.7
Participated in one or more of the three Federal programs	26.6	69.4	2.4	57.1
Did not participate in any of the three Federal programs	8.4	30.6	1.3	42.9

¹Analysis is restricted to households with annual incomes less than 185 percent of the poverty line because most households with incomes above that range were not asked whether they participated in food assistance programs.

²SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

³WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, 2014 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

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