

Appendix E. Food Insecurity With Hunger During 30 Days Prior to Food Security Survey

The annual food security survey is designed primarily to assess households' food security during the 12-month period prior to the survey. For a subset of the food security questions, however, information is also collected for the 30-day period prior to the survey. Households that respond affirmatively to the 12-month question are asked whether the same behavior, experience, or condition occurred during the last 30 days. Responses to these questions are used to identify households that were food insecure with hunger during the 30 days prior to the survey (see Nord, 2002, for detailed information about the 30-day measure).

The 30-day food security scale identifies households that were food insecure with hunger, but does not measure the less severe range of food insecurity. The questions about less severe conditions of food insecurity are asked only with respect to the previous 12 months and are not followed up to determine whether the reported conditions occurred during the previous 30 days.

About 3.4 million households (3.0 percent) were food insecure with hunger at some time during the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2004 (table E-1), up from 2.6 percent in November/December 2003.³⁹ The 30-day prevalence was just over three-fourths (76.8 percent) that for the entire 12 months prior to the survey, a proportion similar to that observed in previous food security surveys conducted in the month of December (78.5, 76.2, and 74.2 percent in 2001, 2002, and 2003, respectively). The corresponding statistics for other 30-day periods in earlier years' surveys were: 72.8 percent in July/August 1998, 66.1 percent in March/April 1999, and 74.4 percent in August/September 2000. Taken together, these statistics imply that, on average, households that were food insecure with hunger at some time during the year experienced this condition in 8 or 9 months of the year.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the survey varied across household types following the same general pattern as the 12-month measure. The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger was lowest for married-couple families with children, households with two or more adults without children, households that included an elderly person, and households with incomes higher than 185 percent of the poverty line. Prevalences of food insecurity with hunger were highest for single parents, Blacks, and households with incomes below the poverty line. Among households that were food insecure with hunger at any time during the year, single women with children and married couples with children were more likely than other households to have been insecure with hunger during the previous 30 days (89 percent).⁴⁰

The 30-day measure of food insecurity with hunger facilitates a more temporally precise analysis of the relationship between households' food insecurity and their use of Federal and community food assistance programs. That is, measured food insecurity with hunger and reported use of

³⁹The food security survey was conducted during the week of December 12-18 in 2004.

⁴⁰Only 9 interviewed households in the category "Other household with child" registered hunger on the 12-month measure, so comparison of the 30-day and 12-month measures was not considered reliable.

Table E-1

Prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during 12 months and 30 days prior to food security survey, by selected household characteristics, 2004¹

Category	Total ²	Food insecure with hunger				Previous 30 days as percentage of previous 12 months
		Previous 12 months		Previous 30 days ¹		
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Percent</i>
All households	112,967	4,449	3.9	3,416	3.0	76.8
Household composition:						
With children < 18	39,990	1,712	4.3	1,402	3.5	81.9
With children < 6	17,922	743	4.1	597	3.3	80.3
Married-couple families	27,065	630	2.3	560	2.1	88.9
Female head, no spouse	9,641	891	9.2	660	6.8	74.1
Male head, no spouse	2,693	169	6.3	151	5.6	89.3
Other household with child ³	592	22	3.7	31	5.2	140.9
With no children < 18	72,977	2,737	3.8	2,013	2.8	73.5
More than one adult	43,177	1,065	2.5	837	1.9	78.6
Women living alone	17,012	918	5.4	649	3.8	70.7
Men living alone	12,788	753	5.9	527	4.1	70.0
With elderly	26,202	465	1.8	355	1.4	76.3
Elderly living alone	10,693	265	2.5	202	1.9	76.2
Race/ethnicity of households:						
White non-Hispanic	81,388	2,373	2.9	1,967	2.4	82.9
Black non-Hispanic	13,509	1,098	8.1	747	5.5	68.0
Hispanic ⁴	12,014	707	5.9	505	4.2	71.4
Other	6,056	271	4.5	197	3.3	72.7
Household income-to-poverty ratio:						
Under 1.00	13,347	1,811	13.6	1,351	10.1	74.6
Under 1.30	18,367	2,255	12.3	1,651	9.0	73.2
Under 1.85	28,081	2,938	10.5	2,186	7.8	74.4
1.85 and over	63,575	994	1.6	850	1.3	85.5
Income unknown	21,311	517	2.4	379	1.8	73.3
Area of residence: ⁵						
Inside metropolitan area	92,474	3,567	3.9	2,736	3.0	76.7
In principal cities ⁶	30,312	1,548	5.1	1,132	3.7	73.1
Not in principal cities	46,444	1,300	2.8	1,021	2.2	78.5
Outside metropolitan area	20,492	882	4.3	679	3.3	77.0
Census geographic region:						
Northeast	21,038	602	2.9	473	2.2	78.6
Midwest	25,957	942	3.6	752	2.9	79.8
South	41,157	1,859	4.5	1,361	3.3	73.2
West	24,815	1,046	4.2	829	3.3	79.3

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 12-18, 2004.

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. In 2004, these represented 404,000 households (0.4 percent of all households.)

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 not precisely comparable with those of previous 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 2004 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

food 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. For households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year, the 30-day measure of food security can also provide information about their food security status after they left the program.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey among households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year (19.1 percent) was more than twice that of households that did not receive food stamps at any time during the year (7.3 percent) and somewhat higher than that of households that received food-stamps during the 30 days prior to the survey (12.5 percent; table E-2). This implies that not all households that left the Food Stamp Program did so because their economic situations had improved to a level that assured access to enough food without food stamps. Associations of 30-day prevalence rates of hunger with use of other food assistance programs were similar to those of the 12-month measure reported in table 11.

Table E-2

Prevalence rates of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey, by participation in selected Federal and community food assistance programs, 2004¹

Category	Food insecure with hunger
	<i>Percent</i>
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:	
Received food stamps previous 30 days	12.5
Received food stamps previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (food stamp leavers)	19.1
Did not receive food stamps previous 12 months	7.3
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household:	
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	9.8
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	5.0
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:	
Received WIC previous 30 days	8.0
Did not receive WIC previous 30 days	5.4
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:	
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	29.1
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	6.7
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	50.5
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	7.4

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 12-18, 2004.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2004 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.