

## Household Food Security in the United States in 2023

Good afternoon, everyone, my name is Valerie Negron – your host for today’s webinar. On behalf of USDA’s Economic Research Service (ERS), welcome and thank you for joining us. Today’s webinar presents our latest insights into Household Food Security in the United States in 2023. A copy of this annual report can be found in the resources tab at the bottom left-hand corner of your screen along with other related publications for added context.

Before we begin, let me quickly note that this webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the ERS website next week. If you have any questions, please enter them into the chat feature at the bottom, left-hand corner of the screen and our presenter will answer them during a Q&A session after the presentation.

Now, I’d like to introduce Matthew Rabbitt – our speaker today. Matt is an Economist with our Food Economics Division where his research focuses on food security measurement and methodology, behavioral responses to food insecurity, and U.S. social safety net program participation. He also has a secondary line of research on measuring other forms of material hardships, such as housing security. Matt’s primary fields of interest are applied econometrics and psychometrics, health economics, and labor economics.

Thank you for joining us today, Matt. I’ll turn it over to you now.

Thank you, Valerie. Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us today to discuss the key findings from this year’s food security report.

The statistics in this report provide information on how many U.S. households had difficulty putting enough food on the table in 2023. This report examines the prevalence and severity of and trends in food insecurity among U.S. households in 2023. In addition, this report examines weekly food expenditures, and the use of Federal and community nutrition assistance programs by the food security status of U.S. households.

Before moving forward, I would like to acknowledge my coauthors, Madeline Reed-Jones and Laura Hales of the Economic Research Service, and Michael Burke of USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service. I would also like to acknowledge the many people behind the scenes who helped make the release of this year’s report, and this webinar happen.

I am going to begin today’s webinar by providing a high-level summary of the findings from this year’s food security report before moving into a discussion of the food security measure, survey data, and findings.

Food insecurity affected 13.5 percent of U.S. households in 2023, including 5.1 percent with very low food security. The percentage of U.S. households that were food insecure in 2023 increased from the previous three years, 2020 through 2022.

While the prevalence of food insecurity increased in 2023, very low food security, the most severe range of food insecurity, was not statistically significantly different from 2022. However, the percentage of U.S. households that were very low food secure in 2023 was statistically significantly higher than in 2020 and 2021.

Children were food insecure at times during 2023 in 8.9 percent of U.S. households, statistically similar to the 8.8 percent in 2022.

The prevalence of food insecurity is determined by many factors, including the economy; Federal, State, and local policies; and the individual circumstances of U.S. households. This report does not provide an analysis of possible causal explanations for the prevalence of or trends in food insecurity. Additional economic research reports are available on the Economic Research Service website that examine the factors that determine the prevalence of or trends in food insecurity. You are welcome to reach out to the Economic Research Service communications team if you encounter any issues searching for any related economic research reports.

Today's webinar will be structured as follows; I will begin by providing some background on how food security among U.S households is measured. I will then provide a brief overview of the survey data used to create the food-security statistics in this year's food security report. Then, I will discuss the findings for this year's report and provide a summary of the key findings. Finally, I will address questions from the audience about the report.

USDA defines food security as access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members. Food insecurity occurs when a household is unable, at some time during the year, to provide adequate food for one or more household members because of a lack of resources. Very low food security occurs when the normal eating patterns of some household members is disrupted at times during the year, and their food intake is reduced because they could not afford enough food. Food insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition. Hunger is an individual-level physiological condition that is not measured directly. Very low food security describes the severe range of food insecurity, a condition which may lead to hunger. Very low food security describes the subset of food-insecure households in the severe range of food insecurity.

Food security is conceptualized as a continuum that captures increasing levels of the severity of food insecurity among U.S. households. Early research showed that food insecurity is a "managed process," meaning households have some control over how food insecurity is experienced within a household. As food security deteriorates households may become anxious about the household food supply and try to stretch their food and food budget to meet their food needs. They may try to adjust household spending to maintain their food security.

As food insecurity worsens, households may reduce the quality and variety of food, or rely on low-cost foods to meet their food needs. As food insecurity becomes more severe, adults may reduce their own food intake while trying to ensure children get enough to eat, and in the most severe situations we observe reductions in food intake among children.

U.S. households are asked a series of 10 questions about food security for the household as a whole and adults in the household. Households with children are asked an additional 8 questions about children's food security. These questions capture the full range of severity of food insecurity. All households must respond affirmatively to at least 3 questions indicating food insecurity to be considered food insecure. To be classified as very low food secure, households without children must respond affirmatively to at least 6 of the food-insecurity questions. Households with children must respond affirmatively to at least 8 of the food-insecurity questions to be classified as very low food secure.

The data underlying these food-insecurity estimates is drawn from a supplement to the Current Population Survey. The Current Population Survey is also the official source of Federal poverty and unemployment statistics. The U.S. Census Bureau conducts the Food Security Supplement for USDA's Economic Research Service in December each year as a supplement to the monthly Current Population Survey. The 2023 Food Security Supplement surveyed 30,863 households and was a representative sample of the U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population.

Note, the Economic Research Service implemented a series of enhancements to the Food Security Supplement survey instrument beginning in 2022 and continuing in 2023. These enhancements included modifications to the ordering of sections, updated language on food spending, and revised questions on community nutrition assistance use. Prior to implementing any of these enhancements, Economic Research Staff collaborated with the U.S. Census Bureau to test the impact of these changes on statistics produced based on the Food Security Supplement. A split-ballot test of the Food Security Supplement was conducted in September of 2020. This test data was analyzed by Economic Research Service researchers, and findings from these analyses were published in a Technical Bulletin in September of 2023. These analyses demonstrated that the enhancements to the Food Security Supplement implemented in 2022 did not affect the comparability of statistics based on food spending, food security, and Federal nutrition assistance programs with prior years. Statistics based on the community nutrition assistance program questions, however, are not comparable with statistics from prior years.

Additional details about the testing of these changes by the Economic Research Service and their impact on statistics based on the Food Security Supplement are available in the Technical Bulletin titled, "Analysis of the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement Split-Panel Test." This technical bulletin is available on the Economic Research Service website.

Now that we have covered some background on the food security measure and underlying survey data, we can move into a discussion of the findings from this year's food security report. 86.5 percent of U.S. households were food secure throughout the year in 2023. "Food secure" means they had consistent access to adequate food for an active healthy living for all household members throughout the year. We examine the range of the severity of food insecurity experienced by U.S. households in this report using two categories. These are food insecurity and very low food security, which is a more severe form of food insecurity. Note, food insecurity includes both low food security and very low food security.

13.5 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in 2023. Food-insecure households were unable, at some time during the year, to provide adequate quantity or quality of food for one or more household members due to a lack of resources. For most food-insecure households, "inadequate" food meant primarily inadequate in quality, variety, or desirability, not in quantity of food. These households reported acquisition problems, but few, if any, indications of reduced food intake.

8.4 percent of all households are labeled "low food security" on the chart and are represented by the teal blue slice. For roughly a third of food-insecure households, "inadequate" food meant not enough food. This subset of food-insecure households was in the more severe range of food insecurity described as very low food security, represented by the grayish blue slice in the chart.

5.1 percent of all U.S. households experienced very low food security in 2023. Households classified as having very low food security reported that the normal eating patterns of some household members were disrupted at times during the year, and their food intake reduced below levels they considered appropriate. Most households with very low food security reported that a household adult had been hungry at times but did not eat because there wasn't enough money for food.

Turning to trends in food insecurity and very low food security, we observe the following: In 2023, food insecurity increased to 13.5 percent of all U.S. households. Looking back, food insecurity increased from 11.1 percent in 2007 to 14.6 percent in 2008 with the onset of the Great Recession. In 2011, food insecurity rates peaked at 14.9 percent of all U.S. households. By 2021 food insecurity declined to 10.2 percent of all U.S. households. In 2023, 5.1 percent of U.S. households were very low food secure. Previously, the percentage of U.S. households classified as very low food secure increased during the Great Recession, from 4.1 percent in 2007 to 5.7 percent in 2008. By 2021, very low food security declined to 3.8 percent.

The following chart shows the prevalence of food insecurity by household characteristics. There are two key takeaways from this chart. First, the chart shows which household characteristics are related to a higher prevalence of food insecurity. The patterns of groups with a relatively high prevalence of food insecurity are generally the same from year to year. These statistics are displayed separately for 2022 and 2023 in the columns labeled "Percent of Households."

Rates of food insecurity in 2023 were statistically significantly higher than the national average for the following types of households: All households with children; women living alone; households with a Black, non-Hispanic and Hispanic reference person; households with incomes below 185 percent of the Federal poverty line; households in principal cities and nonmetropolitan areas; and households in the South.

Conversely, rates of food insecurity in 2023 were statistically significantly below the national average for the following types of households: married couples with children; households without children; households with adults aged 65 and older and adults aged 65 and older living alone; households with a White, non-Hispanic reference person; households with incomes at or above 185 percent of the Federal poverty threshold; households in metropolitan areas outside of principal cities, and households in the Northeast.

Second, this chart shows changes in the prevalence of food insecurity by household characteristics between 2022 and 2023. Changes in the prevalence of food insecurity are listed for each type of household in the column labeled "Percentage Point Change." And I apologize, it turns out to be a chart that is not showing the individual year estimates. We can either share that with a link now or we can provide it later. Its also in the report as well.

The asterisk after the percentage point change indicates which year to year changes are statistically significant. Examples of statistically significant changes in food insecurity between 2022 and 2023 are listed to the right of this chart. Note, statistical significance is related both to the size of the change and the margins of error around the prevalence estimates.

Food insecurity among a subset of U.S. households increased between 2022 and 2023. However, food insecurity did not decrease for any households between these years. If you are interested in reviewing any of the food-security statistics discussed in this chart in more detail, you can find these in Table 2 of the report released this morning. Detailed food-security statistics for households with children are available in Table 3 of the report.

Up to this point, all food insecurity prevalence estimates have been based on a single year of data. However, the Economic Research Service combines 3 years of survey data to provide more reliable state-level prevalence estimates.

In this year's food security report, data was combined from 2021 to 2023 to produce state-level food insecurity and very low food security prevalence estimates. On the map shown, states shaded in dark orange had higher than average food insecurity rates. In terms of food insecurity, these states were worse off. States shaded in orange had food insecurity rates that were near the national average. For these states, the difference from the national average was not statistically different.

States shaded in yellow had food insecurity rates below the national average. In terms of food insecurity, these states were better off. Research has shown that several factors account for inter-state differences in food insecurity. These include the characteristics of households residing in each state, and a state's economy and policies. The prevalence of food insecurity ranged from 7.4 percent in New Hampshire to 18.9 percent in Arkansas between 2021 and 2023. There were significant increases in the prevalence of food insecurity, when compared to the previous 3-year period, for several states. The prevalence of very low food security ranged from 3.2 percent in Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey and North Dakota to 7.0 percent in South Carolina between 2021 and 2023.

Food insecurity can also impact children. USDA defines food insecurity among children as households that were unable, at some time during the year, to provide adequate, nutritious food for their children. Food insecurity in households with children is more complex than it is in households without children because food insecurity is measured for the household overall and then among adults and children, separately. Very low food security among children occurs when a respondent reports that children were hungry, skipped a meal, or did not eat for a whole day because there was not enough money for food.

In 2023, 17.9 percent of households with children were food insecure. In about half of these households only adults were food insecure. For the remaining food-insecure households with children, 8.9 percent had children who are also food insecure at times during the year in 2023. The quality or quantity of children's diets was affected by food insecurity among these households. Adults often shield children from experiencing very low food security; however, children and adults experienced very low food security in 1.0 percent of households with children in 2023. Respondents in these households reported that children were hungry.

This trend chart shows food insecurity in households with children at the top of the chart. The middle solid yellow line shows food insecurity among children, and the bottom dashed yellow line shows very low food security among children. Like overall trends in food insecurity among U.S. households, food insecurity in households with children increased with the onset of the Great

Recession and then declined until 2019. All three of these categories increased in 2020 and decreased in 2021, except for very low food security among children.

Food insecurity among children increased from 6.2 percent in 2021 to 8.8 percent in 2022. However, the prevalence of food insecurity among children was statistically similar between 2022 and 2023, with 8.9 percent of children experiencing food insecurity at times in 2023. The prevalence of very low food security among children also increased from 0.7 percent in 2021 to 1.0 percent in 2022, which was statistically similar to the 1.0 percent in 2023.

The Food Security Supplement also collects information on U.S. households' weekly food expenditures, and their use of Federal and community nutrition assistance programs. These data provide further context for understanding the food security of U.S. households in 2023.

This table describes median weekly food expenditures by the food security status of U.S. households. Food expenditure was measured using two different methods: median weekly food expenditures per person and food expenditure relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan. The Thrifty Food Plan serves as a national standard for a nutritious, practical, cost-effective diet. It represents a set of "market baskets" of foods and beverages that people in specific age and sex groups commonly consume at home that are lower in price and of higher nutritional quality to maintain a healthful diet that meets current dietary standards, considering the food consumption patterns of U.S. households.

After accounting for the estimated food need of U.S. households, the typical food-secure household spent 16 percent more for food than the typical food-insecure household in 2023. These statistics show that food-secure households spend more on food than do food-insecure households.

The annual food security report also jointly considers Federal nutrition assistance programs and food security. Roughly 58 percent of food-insecure households participated in one of the three largest Federal nutrition assistance programs in 2023. About 42 percent utilized SNAP. Note, these are based off self-reported survey data, which is known to be impacted by underreporting of program participation.

Note, as I mentioned earlier, the community nutrition assistance program questions were revised in 2022. Therefore, these statistics are not comparable with statistics from prior to 2022.

7.1 percent of U.S. households received free groceries in 2023, and this was more common among food-insecure households. Nearly 31 percent of food-insecure households received free groceries, and about 9 percent received free meals.

All the food security statistics up to this point are measured over previous 12 months. However, the Food Security Supplement also collects information on food security during the 30-days prior to the survey, covering mid-November to mid-December. This chart provides estimates of the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in 2023 by reference period. Annual or "12-month" food-security statistics are represented by the columns to the left and labeled "any time during the year." 30-day food-security statistics are represented by the columns to the right and labeled "any time during the 30 days prior to the survey." The dark blue columns represent food insecurity, and the light blue columns represent very low food security.

When food insecurity is measured over a shorter period, such as 30 days, the prevalence is lower. The prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in the 30-day period—from mid-November to mid-December 2023—increased from 2022. In 2023, 7.5 percent of U.S. households were food insecure in the 30 days before the survey, statistically significantly up from 7.0 percent in 2022. Very low food security affected 3.2 percent of U.S. households in the 30 days before the 2023 survey, statistically significantly up from 2.8 percent in 2022.

If you are interested, detailed 30-day food-security statistics by selected household characteristics are available in Table S-4 of the statistical supplement to the report released this morning. This supplement can be accessed on the Economic Research Service website.

There are several key takeaways from this year's food security report. First, food insecurity increased from 12.8 percent in 2022 to 13.5 percent in 2023. However, very low food security rates were statistically similar between 2022 and 2023. Therefore, the increase in food insecurity between 2022 and 2023 can be attributed to households with low food security. As you may recall from earlier in the webinar, for these households with low food security "inadequate" food meant primarily inadequate in quality, variety, or desirability, not in quantity of food. These low food secure households reported acquisition problems, but few, if any, indications of reduced food intake.

Second, the prevalence of food insecurity increased from 2022 to 2023 for a subset of U.S. households. For example, food insecurity increased among households without children during this period. Additional details about which subpopulations experienced an increase in food insecurity between 2022 and 2023 can be obtained from the report text and figure 5 on page 25 of the report.

Finally, child food insecurity rates were statistically similar between 2022 and 2023. However, the prevalence of child food insecurity in 2023 was up from 2020 and 2021. Additional information and resources for food security are available on the Economic Research Service website. The food security data visualizations will be updated later today. These visualizations include additional statistics on food insecurity by educational attainment, and employment and disability status.

We will now open the webinar for questions. I will turn things back over to Valerie.

Thank you for your time today, and I look forward to further discussing the findings from this year's report with you as we address your questions.

Thank you Matt, let's go ahead and open the floor for questions now. As a reminder, questions can be submitted through the chat feature located at the bottom left-hand corner of your screen. Now for our first question. Matt, can you talk to us a little bit more about the economic factors influencing food insecurity.

I apologize I had some audio issues there I just heard your question, but I just want to make sure that you could hear me okay no problem and thank you.

Matt yes, I can hear you okay. Let me go ahead and repeat that question. What economic factors influence food insecurity.

...Federal, states and local policies; and the economy. This report does not provide an analysis of the possible causal explanations for changes in food insecurity from year to year. However, additional information on the determinants of food insecurity is available on the Economic Research Service website.

Matt, it looks like you were in the middle of audio issues when you answered that, apologies, but would you mind giving us a quick response once again? What economic factors influence food insecurity?

Apologies for the audio issues. So, the annual prevalence of food insecurity is determined by many factors, and this is going to include individual household circumstances; Federal, states and local policies; and the economy. However, this report does not provide an analysis of these possible causal explanations for these changes that we're observing. However, there is additional information on the ERS website that will provide those resources and information related to the determining food insecurity.

Wonderful, thank you Matt. For your next question, how does the food spending numbers compared to last year?

The median household food spending relative to the Thrifty Food Plan cost was 1.17 this past year. Therefore, the typical household spent 17 percent more on food than that prescribed for their household in 2023. We have to note, the Thrifty Food Plan adjusts for food price inflation and the food needs of each household based on its age and gender composition. Household food spending relative to the Thrifty Food Plan in 2023 increased from the previous year. In 2022, the median household food spending relative to the Thrifty Food Plan cost was 1.12.

Thank you Matt, next up, did the prevalence of food insecurity decline from 2022 to 2023 for any types of households?

While the prevalence of food insecurity did increase during this period for some household subpopulations, there were no statistically significant decreases in food security between 2022 and 2023 for any household subpopulations.

All right, let's see what other questions we have. Matt, what do you mean by very low food security?

Very low food security is a more severe form of food insecurity where the eating patterns of one or more household members is disrupted, and their food intake reduced because they could not afford enough food.

Wonderful our next question, can you discuss the difference between your numbers and the census monthly pulse survey?

Sure. The household poll survey collects a measure of food hardship known as food insufficiency. This particular question is a single item question, whereas in the CPS food security supplement, we're relying on the household food security supplement survey module which is going to include 18 questions about food hardship and the behaviors and experiences of households that're having difficulty meeting their food needs. So in our report, we're basing off the food security measure which is going to capture a greater range in the severity of food hardship experienced by households

as opposed to when we compare it to the household food security survey. In that case we're typically capturing something more similar to very low food security when we think about food insufficiency.

Thanks Matt. Regionally, how does food insecurity differ? Can you talk to us a little bit more about that?

Regionally, the prevalence of household food insecurity in the Northeast, Midwest, and West was statistically significantly lower than the prevalence in the South. Compared with the national average, food insecurity was statistically significantly below the national average in the Northeast, and above the national average in the South.

Wonderful. Matt, your next question, can you speak to the difference in food insecurity for those who utilize SNAP in 2023 compared to 2022?

The primary objective of the food security report is to document the prevalence and severity of food insecurity and examine how that varies by household characteristics. While we do look at the interactions between a household food security status and their participation in Federal and community nutrition assistance programs, we do not specifically examine the impact of those programs on their food security status. However, we do know that roughly 58 percent of food insecure households are participating in one of the three largest USDA programs.

Thanks Matt. Next up, are we seeing similar increases in food insecurity and other data sources?

Yes, we're seeing similar findings in other data sources that are telling us the exact same story. Or, using the food security measure or similar forms of food hardship, for example we're seeing increases in food insecurity in the Household Pulse Survey with the food insufficiency measure. In addition, we're seeing increases in 30-day food insecurity rates when we look at things like the National Health Interview Survey.

Wonderful. A lot of students are going back to school, so here's a related question, are college students represented in this report? Could you talk to us a little bit more about that?

Sure. That's actually a really good question. One of the challenges that we face with this food security supplement is that it's an address-based survey and the challenge is that we're not going to observe the food security status of a college student unless they are by chance caught in an address that's captured in the sampling frame for the CPS. So, it's going to be challenging to capture college students because they're typically going to be living in dorms or apartments. We're more likely to capture them when they're living with their parents. This data is not designed well to capture producing a national estimate for college student food security.

Thank you for that insight Matt. Here's a question on another group. Do the estimates in this report include active-duty service member households?

Another great question. The food security estimates in this report are based on the current population survey, as I just mentioned, which is designed to be representative of the civilian non-institutionalized population. Therefore, military families that are captured in the survey are by chance and they are not representative of the larger military family population. However, the Economic Research Service has been collaborating closely with the U.S. Department of Defense so that we can expand the USDA food security measurement project to include statistics for military

families for the very first time. ERS Economists and U.S. Army Public Health researchers have used nationally representative data on the military population from the Department of Defense to compare the prevalence and severity of food insecurity among military and civilian households for the very first time. This particular report was released in April of 2024 and is available on the Economic Research Service's website. In this report we provide detailed food security statistics for the military population for the very first time.

Thank you Matt. Your next question, somebody was wondering if you provide more detailed statistics on smaller subpopulations?

Yeah, the Economic Research Service does work closely with other federal agencies to provide detailed food security statistics for smaller populations, and we're always looking at ways to innovate, and to modify the food security report to make sure that we're capturing the most timely and relevant information. Additional food security statistics produced by the Economic Research Service will be made available later this fall for additional subpopulations. This will include food insecurity estimates by veteran status, and for smaller race and ethnicity subpopulations. The statistics for 2023 will be available on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' website as part of the Healthy People 2030 initiative. Currently prior years of data are available on that same web page right now.

Thank you Matt, for your next question. Perhaps this is a good opportunity to discuss the difference between nutrition security and food security, but the question is, do any of the questions that were asked for this survey directly address nutrition and whether someone is getting a balanced nutritious diet?

The food security module as it was developed by USDA is intended to capture economic access to food. So, what it's really targeting is ensuring that we're measuring a single concept which is really the sufficiency of the food that a household has available on hand. So, what they're really talking about when we ask these questions is we're trying to measure this concept where people are asked to evaluate how much food can you afford to purchase relative to how much food that you feel that your household needs to meet its food needs. So, any questions that are in the food security module are designed to meet up with that concept. So, the nutrition security concept is a great and developing concept but it is not captured within the food security module itself.

Thanks Matt. Up next, can you briefly describe the revisions made to the 2022 food security supplement survey instrument?

USDA's Economic Research Service has implemented updates and modifications to the food security supplements instrument and those were first initiated in 2022. These modifications included changing the ordering of sections, updating language on food spending questions, and revising questions on community nutrition assistance programs. We did conduct a split panel test of those changes in September of 2020, just to make sure that they were performing the way that we expected based on our qualitative analyses, and then we have published a report detailing those analyses. Just to give you a brief summary of what we found, we did find that those analyses demonstrated that the food expenditure, food security, and federal nutrition assistance program questions remained comparable with prior years. However, as I mentioned earlier, the community food and nutrition assistance questions are not comparable to prior years of data before 2022.

Thanks Matt. Our next question, does this report include State and county level data?

So, since we rely on the CPS as our main survey vehicle for the food security supplement, we have to be constrained by the confines of the sampling frame. The CPS is designed representative sample at the national and state level, and unfortunately that means that we cannot produce county level statistics. However, we can produce state level statistics. ERS has intentionally, we've intentionally made the decision to pull three years of data to produce state level estimates for food insecurity and very low food security, just because of the fact that we want to ensure that we're accurately reflecting the rates of food insecurity and being able to properly make those comparisons between states.

Wonderful thank you Matt. Here's another question, can you share any trends on food insecurity related to employment or disability status?

So, we will have those statistics coming up later today, so I encourage you to look at those. We've had some fantastic Charts of Notes in past. Typically, as you might expect, when we look at unemployment and food insecurity, unemployment is going to increase the risk for food insecurity. In addition, things like disability status are also going to be risk factors for higher rates of food insecurity.

Thanks Matt. Have there been differences in food security among race and ethnicity from 2022 to 2023?

Yes. If we go back to my one slide where I look at changes in food insecurity between 2022 and 2023, here we can see the percentage point change. The asterisk indicates the change is statistically significantly different. As you see here, we see that for white non-Hispanic households there was an increase by nearly one percentage point of food insecurity between 2022 and 2023.

Thanks Matt, and I'm guessing this may be a follow-up question related to the college student question I asked previously. The question is, "as I understand it, a significant percentage of college students don't live in dorms especially part-time students. Would the non-dorm residents be captured in the data?"

Yes, it is possible that they could be captured in the CPS sampling frame even if they live off of dorms. The challenge would be identifying whether they're currently uh attending school right now.

Thank you for that insight Matt. Where can someone find disaggregated data on all racial categories?

The data from prior years would be available as part of our contribution to Healthy People 2030, on the CDC's website. However, we will be posting the 2023 data in the near future. I don't have a final date for that yet but if you reach out, we can work with you to determine that date.

We have someone here asking if it'd be possible for you to repeat the statistics on the percentage of food insecure households that participate in SNAP, school meals, and WIC.

Sure, just one second. I just want to make sure I got everything pulled up properly. So, as you can see from this table, roughly 58 percent of food insecure households participated in one of the three largest federal nutrition assistance programs in 2023, about 42 percent utilize SNAP. We can see

here that roughly 29 percent utilized the national school lunch program, and then 7 percent utilized WIC

Matt your next question, does the survey capture homeless populations as they have a permanent address?

The CPS does not capture the homeless population.

Are the survey questions available along with data around aggregate responses?

We do provide all data documentation on our website. We can post those links up for easy accessibility, and we also do provide the individual level micro data through our partner at the U.S. Census Bureau, and that should be posted today and available publicly.

Thanks Matt, next question. Why doesn't the food security survey report numbers for Native Americans or Alaskan Native populations?

Yeah, that that's a great question. That's something that we've been working on and so we're evaluating right now whether to transition to breaking out the race and ethnicity categories going into the next year's food security report to where that would include those statistics for Native Americans. However, as I mentioned earlier, we do already provide those statistics for the Healthy People 2030 program right now, so those will be made available for 2023 in the near future, and we do have prior years data available already on their website. Most likely, we're strongly moving towards that direction of breaking out to include those categories going into the future in this report based on OMB's new recommendations about how we report on race and ethnicity categories.

Wonderful, thank you Matt. You may have touched upon this during your presentation, but would you mind just talking to us a little bit more about any statistically significant changes in food insecurity for older adult households.

Apologies, I got lost in the slides here I'm just trying to pull it up. So, between 2022 and 2023 there were no statistically significant changes for older adult households with individuals age 65 and older, or individuals ages 65 and older living alone. The Challenge there is that the difference in those hypothesis is obviously going to depend on the uncertainty around those estimates, and the size of those estimates, and so, since that's a relatively smaller population it is going to be more challenging to detect differences for those populations.

Thank you Matt. Can you talk to us a little bit more about how it's determined what households are in the sample?

Sure. So, the CPS will go and they will interview a household respondent, and based on that respondent's reports they will report who all is residing within the same household. So, the food insecurity status is going to be based on the household respondents reports of their perception of the overall conditions within that household for all household members.

Thanks Matt. For your next question, we observe that in the statistical supplement there was 18 percent increase in food insecurity in the other race category compared to a 1 percent increase between 2021 and 2022. Can you speak to who is in the other category and why we might be seeing that big jump?

So, as I've mentioned before, the purpose of this report is to document differences in the prevalence of food insecurity among subgroups, and the prevalence and severity of food insecurity overall in the United States. So, we don't specifically examine the factors that would lead to changes in food insecurity. However, when it comes to defining that other household, the other race category, it's going to include things like multiple race household respondent reference persons, you're going to include Asians and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and so on. Those will be within that residual other race category.

Wonderful, we're getting close to time here, so let me see if we could squeeze in a few more questions. Matt, you noted that median weekly food expenditures were \$75 for food secure households, and just \$60 for food insecure households. Do these statistics include those who report spending \$0 on food per week.

I will have to double check with you on that, I apologize it's been a very long release morning, but I don't want to give you the wrong facts on that one. So please let me get back to you on that one. Can we get your contact information please?

Perfect, no worries Matt. Let's see, we're getting close to time, so I'll ask you two more questions here. What does the statistical supplement for the report include?

So, the statistical supplement to the food security report complements and expands on the statistics that are provided in the main report. So, the supplement is going to provide detailed information on the component items of the household food security measure, so those responses to the individual 18 questions. It's also going to look at the frequency of occurrence of food insecure conditions, and it's going to look at selected statistics on household food security, food spending, and the use of federal and community nutrition assistance programs.

Thanks Matt. As a quick reminder for folks listening in, we have that statistical supplement that Matt is referencing, along with this year's report, available on the left-hand side of the screen. So, feel free to look at those there or visit the ERS website to see them.

Let's see Matt, for your last question, could you repeat a few key findings from the report?

Sure, absolutely. So, you know the big takeaway from this year's report is that food insecurity increased from 12.8 percent in 2022 to 13.5 percent in 2023. The thing to take away from that is that, that increase in food insecurity appears to be primarily driven by increases in low food security as opposed to very low food security. When we combine that with the fact that we know child food insecurity did not change between 2022 and 2023, we can see that it's the more moderate forms of food insecurity that we're driving that overall increase.

Thank you, Matt, that's all the time we have for today. Thank you for sharing these insights on the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity in 2023. And thank you to our listeners for your interest in ERS research on this topic, and for joining us today.

Now, if you enjoyed this webinar, you may also find interest in attending our upcoming webinar titled International Food Security Assessment 2024-34. This webinar will be hosted on Thursday September 12<sup>th</sup> at 1 p.m. ET. In this webinar, ERS Economist Laya Cardell and Yacob Zereyesus

discuss the drivers of changes in food security measures for 83 low- and middle-income countries that are current or former food aid recipients.

You are also invited to join us tomorrow at 1:00 p.m. ET for our September Farm Income and Financial Forecast webinar with ERS Economist Carrie Litkowski. More details for these are available on the ERS website.

Before closing, I'd like to share a few other ways you can stay up to date with ERS research. In addition to our website, ERS continues to deliver timely research through our Charts of Note Mobile app, which is free and available on Apple and Android devices. you can also follow us on social through LinkedIn and X, formerly known as Twitter. Again, thank you for joining us, and this concludes our webinar.