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# Household Food Security in the United States in 2012

## Statistical Supplement

Alisha Coleman-Jensen  
Mark Nord  
Anita Singh



United States Department of Agriculture

## Economic Research Service

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### Note to Readers

This Supplement provides statistics that complement those in the Economic Research Report, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012* (ERR-155). 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

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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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# Household Food Security in the United States in 2012

## Statistical Supplement

Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Mark Nord, and Anita Singh

### 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 2012* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.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 Food Security Supplement conducted in December 2012. Information about the survey, data, and methods are available in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2012*. 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.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Standard 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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<sup>2</sup>The Federal poverty line was \$23,283 for a family of four in 2012. Households with income below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible to receive SNAP benefits, provided they meet other eligibility criteria. Children in these households are eligible for free meals in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.



Table S-1

**Households with income below 130 percent of the poverty line by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2012**

Category	Total <sup>1</sup>	Food secure		Food insecure					
		1,000	Percent	All	With low food security		With very low food security		
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All low-income households	21,797	13,472	61.8	8,325	38.2	4,676	21.5	3,649	16.7
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	9,326	5,282	56.6	4,044	43.4	2,618	28.1	1,426	15.3
With children < 6 yrs	5,040	2,977	59.1	2,063	40.9	1,394	27.7	669	13.3
Married-couple families	3,548	2,150	60.6	1,398	39.4	979	27.6	419	11.8
Female head, no spouse	4,685	2,475	52.8	2,210	47.2	1,344	28.7	866	18.5
Male head, no spouse	883	529	59.9	354	40.1	234	26.5	120	13.6
Other household with child <sup>2</sup>	210	127	60.5	83	39.5	62	29.5	NA	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	12,471	8,191	65.7	4,280	34.3	2,057	16.5	2,223	17.8
More than one adult	5,370	3,557	66.2	1,813	33.8	937	17.4	876	16.3
Women living alone	4,202	2,750	65.4	1,452	34.6	670	15.9	782	18.6
Men living alone	2,899	1,884	65.0	1,015	35.0	450	15.5	565	19.5
With elderly	5,189	3,822	73.7	1,367	26.3	788	15.2	579	11.2
Elderly living alone	2,791	2,176	78.0	615	22.0	345	12.4	270	9.7
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	10,755	6,804	63.3	3,951	36.7	2,056	19.1	1,895	17.6
Black, non-Hispanic	4,540	2,581	56.9	1,959	43.1	1,083	23.9	876	19.3
Hispanic <sup>3</sup>	5,057	3,137	62.0	1,920	38.0	1,271	25.1	649	12.8
Other	1,445	952	65.9	493	34.1	265	18.3	228	15.8
Area of residence: <sup>4</sup>									
Inside metropolitan area	17,153	10,509	61.3	6,644	38.7	3,710	21.6	2,934	17.1
In principal cities <sup>5</sup>	7,516	4,549	60.5	2,967	39.5	1,660	22.1	1,307	17.4
Not in principal cities	6,630	4,024	60.7	2,606	39.3	1,441	21.7	1,165	17.6
Outside metropolitan area	4,644	2,965	63.8	1,679	36.2	965	20.8	714	15.4
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	3,278	2,064	63.0	1,214	37.0	678	20.7	536	16.4
Midwest	4,364	2,658	60.9	1,706	39.1	859	19.7	847	19.4
South	9,175	5,670	61.8	3,505	38.2	2,079	22.7	1,426	15.5
West	4,981	3,082	61.9	1,899	38.1	1,059	21.3	840	16.9

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

<sup>1</sup>Totals exclude households for which income was not reported (about 21 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 (0.7 percent of low-income households).

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

<sup>3</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>5</sup>Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 18 percent of low-income households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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, 2012**

Category	Total <sup>1</sup>	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	308,361	259,395	84.1	48,966	15.9	31,787	10.3	17,179	5.6
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	158,732	126,612	79.8	32,120	20.2	22,575	14.2	9,545	6.0
With children < 6 yrs	73,837	57,969	78.5	15,868	21.5	11,607	15.7	4,261	5.8
Married-couple families	108,584	93,050	85.7	15,534	14.3	11,654	10.7	3,880	3.6
Female head, no spouse	37,076	23,769	64.1	13,307	35.9	8,517	23.0	4,790	12.9
Male head, no spouse	10,838	8,131	75.0	2,707	25.0	1,982	18.3	725	6.7
Other household with child <sup>2</sup>	2,234	1,662	74.4	572	25.6	422	18.9	150	6.7
With no children < 18 yrs	149,629	132,783	88.7	16,846	11.3	9,212	6.2	7,634	5.1
More than one adult	116,861	104,949	89.8	11,912	10.2	6,706	5.7	5,206	4.5
Women living alone	17,903	15,162	84.7	2,741	15.3	1,400	7.8	1,341	7.5
Men living alone	14,865	12,673	85.3	2,192	14.7	1,106	7.4	1,086	7.3
With elderly	63,433	56,963	89.8	6,470	10.2	4,042	6.4	2,428	3.8
Elderly living alone	11,706	10,643	90.9	1,063	9.1	595	5.1	468	4.0
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	198,650	174,821	88.0	23,829	12.0	15,207	7.7	8,622	4.3
Black, non-Hispanic	37,554	27,963	74.5	9,591	25.5	5,792	15.4	3,799	10.1
Hispanic <sup>3</sup>	50,310	37,765	75.1	12,545	24.9	8,809	17.5	3,736	7.4
Other	21,847	18,846	86.3	3,001	13.7	1,979	9.1	1,022	4.7
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	43,437	25,063	57.7	18,374	42.3	11,082	25.5	7,292	16.8
Under 1.30	59,606	35,676	59.9	23,930	40.1	14,560	24.4	9,370	15.7
Under 1.85	86,495	55,462	64.1	31,033	35.9	19,324	22.3	11,709	13.5
1.85 and over	158,489	147,273	92.9	11,216	7.1	7,953	5.0	3,263	2.1
Income unknown	63,376	56,658	89.4	6,718	10.6	4,510	7.1	2,208	3.5
Area of residence: <sup>4</sup>									
Inside metropolitan area	259,781	219,169	84.4	40,612	15.6	26,361	10.1	14,251	5.5
In principal cities <sup>5</sup>	84,359	68,179	80.8	16,180	19.2	10,477	12.4	5,703	6.8
Not in principal cities	132,986	114,710	86.3	18,276	13.7	11,838	8.9	6,438	4.8
Outside metropolitan area	48,579	40,225	82.8	8,354	17.2	5,425	11.2	2,929	6.0
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	54,906	47,927	87.3	6,979	12.7	4,594	8.4	2,385	4.3
Midwest	66,320	56,405	85.0	9,915	15.0	5,939	9.0	3,976	6.0
South	115,021	94,612	82.3	20,409	17.7	13,777	12	6,632	5.8
West	72,114	60,451	83.8	11,663	16.2	7,477	10.4	4,186	5.8

<sup>1</sup>Totals 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 2012, these exclusions represented about 1.3 million individuals (0.4 percent of the U.S. population.)

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

<sup>3</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>5</sup>Households 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: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-3

**Number of children by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2012**

Category	Total <sup>1</sup>	In food-insecure households								
		In food-secure households			In food-insecure households <sup>2</sup>		In households with food-insecure children <sup>3</sup>		In households with very low food security among children	
		1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All children	73,631	57,733	78.4	15,898	21.6	8,290	11.3	977	1.3	
Household composition:										
With children < 6 yrs	36,352	28,106	77.3	8,246	22.7	4,040	11.1	363	1.0	
Married-couple families	48,435	41,389	85.5	7,046	14.5	3,567	7.4	400	.8	
Female head, no spouse	19,359	12,004	62.0	7,355	38.0	4,018	20.8	479	2.5	
Male head, no spouse	5,016	3,711	74.0	1,305	26.0	624	12.4	78	1.6	
Other household with child <sup>4</sup>	821	628	76.5	193	23.5	80	9.7	NA	NA	
Race/ethnicity of households:										
White, non-Hispanic	41,797	34,732	83.1	7,065	16.9	3,481	8.3	326	.8	
Black, non-Hispanic	10,548	7,222	68.5	3,326	31.5	1,783	16.9	264	2.5	
Hispanic <sup>5</sup>	15,925	11,350	71.3	4,575	28.7	2,510	15.8	310	1.9	
Other	5,361	4,428	82.6	933	17.4	516	9.6	78	1.5	
Household income-to-poverty ratio:										
Under 1.00	15,213	8,241	54.2	6,972	45.8	3,808	25.0	514	3.4	
Under 1.30	20,096	11,219	55.8	8,877	44.2	4,865	24.2	698	3.5	
Under 1.85	27,862	16,630	59.7	11,232	40.3	6,112	21.9	823	3.0	
1.85 and over	33,083	30,263	91.5	2,820	8.5	1,271	3.8	99	.3	
Income unknown	12,685	10,839	85.4	1,846	14.6	907	7.2	NA	NA	
Area of residence: <sup>6</sup>										
Inside metropolitan area	62,322	48,966	78.6	13,356	21.4	6,991	11.2	856	1.4	
In principal cities <sup>7</sup>	20,409	14,969	73.3	5,440	26.7	2,942	14.4	334	1.6	
Not in principal cities	32,044	26,030	81.2	6,014	18.8	3,058	9.5	420	1.3	
Outside metropolitan area	11,309	8,767	77.5	2,542	22.5	1,299	11.5	121	1.1	
Census geographic region:										
Northeast	12,054	9,896	82.1	2,158	17.9	1,081	9.0	145	1.2	
Midwest	15,858	12,600	79.5	3,258	20.5	1,747	11.0	234	1.5	
South	27,964	21,302	76.2	6,662	23.8	3,480	12.4	404	1.4	
West	17,756	13,935	78.5	3,821	21.5	1,982	11.2	194	1.1	

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

<sup>1</sup>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 food security scale. In 2012, these exclusions represented 412,000 children (0.6 percent.)

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

<sup>3</sup>Households with food-insecure children are those with low or very low food security among children.

<sup>4</sup>Households with children in complex living arrangements, e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

<sup>5</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>6</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>7</sup>Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 16 percent of children living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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 2012 are directly comparable with those for 2005 and later years, but not with those reported for 2004 and earlier years.

An estimated 91.8 percent of households were food secure throughout the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2012 (table S-4).<sup>3</sup> An estimated 8.2 percent (10.0 million households) were food insecure at some time during that 30-day period, including 3.3 percent (4.1 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 2011 (8.4 percent and 3.4 percent, respectively). However, 30-day food insecurity declined from 2011 to 2012 for several subpopulations including households with children under age 6, Hispanic households, and households in the Northeast and West Census Regions. From 2011 to 2012, 30-day very low food security declined for Hispanic households. The prevalence of 30-day very low food security increased from 2011 to 2012 in the Midwest Census Region.

The number of households that were food insecure at some time during the 30 days from mid-November to mid-December was 57 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 58 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.<sup>4</sup> 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.

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<sup>3</sup>The food security survey was conducted during the week of December 9-15, 2012.

<sup>4</sup>The 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, 2012<sup>1</sup>**

Category	Total <sup>2</sup>	Food secure		Food insecure					
		1,000	Percent	All	With low food security		With very low food security		
	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	
All households	121,536	111,527	91.8	10,009	8.2	5,954	4.9	4,055	3.3
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	39,197	34,814	88.8	4,383	11.2	3,011	7.7	1,372	3.5
With children < 6 yrs	17,325	15,498	89.5	1,827	10.5	1,322	7.6	505	2.9
Married-couple families	25,233	23,456	93.0	1,777	7.0	1,289	5.1	488	1.9
Female head, no spouse	10,369	8,223	79.3	2,146	20.7	1,382	13.3	764	7.4
Male head, no spouse	3,008	2,610	86.8	398	13.2	287	9.5	111	3.7
Other household with child <sup>3</sup>	587	524	89.3	63	10.7	54	9.2	NA	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	82,339	76,713	93.2	5,626	6.8	2,943	3.6	2,683	3.3
More than one adult	49,577	46,758	94.3	2,819	5.7	1,591	3.2	1,228	2.5
Women living alone	17,897	16,338	91.3	1,559	8.7	742	4.1	817	4.6
Men living alone	14,865	13,617	91.6	1,248	8.4	610	4.1	638	4.3
With elderly	31,932	30,414	95.2	1,518	4.8	886	2.8	632	2.0
Elderly living alone	11,706	11,157	95.3	549	4.7	309	2.6	240	2.1
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	83,213	77,922	93.6	5,291	6.4	3,047	3.7	2,244	2.7
Black, non-Hispanic	14,971	12,861	85.9	2,110	14.1	1,172	7.8	938	6.3
Hispanic <sup>4</sup>	15,613	13,546	86.8	2,067	13.2	1,437	9.2	630	4.0
Other	7,740	7,199	93.0	541	7.0	298	3.9	243	3.1
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	15,547	11,757	75.6	3,790	24.4	2,033	13.1	1,757	11.3
Under 1.30	21,797	16,802	77.1	4,995	22.9	2,720	12.5	2,275	10.4
Under 1.85	31,259	24,911	79.7	6,348	20.3	3,576	11.4	2,772	8.9
1.85 and over	64,274	62,064	96.6	2,210	3.4	1,417	2.2	793	1.2
Income unknown	26,003	24,552	94.4	1,451	5.6	961	3.7	490	1.9
Area of residence: <sup>5</sup>									
Inside metropolitan area	101,466	93,149	91.8	8,317	8.2	4,963	4.9	3,354	3.3
In principal cities <sup>6</sup>	33,959	30,589	90.1	3,370	9.9	1,967	5.8	1,403	4.1
Not in principal cities	50,348	46,804	93.0	3,544	7.0	2,188	4.3	1,356	2.7
Outside metropolitan area	20,070	18,378	91.6	1,692	8.4	991	4.9	701	3.5
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	21,689	20,263	93.4	1,426	6.6	867	4.0	559	2.6
Midwest	27,045	24,770	91.6	2,275	8.4	1,225	4.5	1,050	3.9
South	45,731	41,647	91.1	4,084	8.9	2,552	5.6	1,532	3.4
West	27,071	24,846	91.8	2,225	8.2	1,311	4.8	914	3.4

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

<sup>1</sup>The 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 9-15, 2012. 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 2012, these exclusions represented 460,000 households (0.4 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.

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

<sup>3</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>5</sup>Households 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 USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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 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 percent of households with children and 80 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 (12.4 percent of households with children and 7.6 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).<sup>5</sup> 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).

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<sup>5</sup>The 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, 2009-12<sup>1</sup>**

Scale item <sup>2</sup>	Households affirming item <sup>3</sup>			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
	<i>Percent</i>			
<b>Household items:</b>				
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	19.6	19.9	19.7	19.5
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	15.7	15.4	16.2	15.7
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	14.7	14.8	15.2	15.0
<b>Adult items:</b>				
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	9.4	8.7	9.2	8.9
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	9.2	8.9	9.2	9.0
Adult(s) cut size or skipped meals in 3 or more months	7.1	6.7	7.1	6.8
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.7
Respondent lost weight	3.1	2.8	3.1	3.0
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.7
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day in 3 or more months	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.3
<b>Child items:</b>				
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	18.1	17.3	17.5	17.0
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	10.9	10.4	10.4	10.6
Child(ren) were not eating enough	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.2
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.6	2.2	2.0	2.3
Child(ren) were hungry	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5
Child(ren) skipped meals	.9	.7	.8	.8
Child(ren) skipped meals in 3 or more months	.6	.5	.6	.6
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.2	.1	.2	.1

<sup>1</sup>Survey responses weighted to population totals.

<sup>2</sup>The 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.)

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

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2009, December 2010, December 2011, and December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.



Table S-6

**Percentage of households by food security raw score, 2012**

<i>Panel A: Households with children—18-item household food security scale</i>			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households <sup>1</sup>	Cumulative percent of households <sup>1</sup>	Food security status
0	67.57	67.57	Food secure (79.98 percent)
1	7.03	74.59	
2	5.39	79.98	
3	4.10	84.09	Low food security (13.97 percent)
4	3.13	87.22	
5	2.75	89.97	
6	2.35	92.32	
7	1.63	93.96	
8	1.51	95.47	Very low food security (6.04 percent)
9	1.40	96.86	
10	.89	97.76	
11	.72	98.48	
12	.60	99.08	
13	.26	99.34	
14	.26	99.6	
15	.22	99.82	
16	.08	99.90	
17	.05	99.96	
18	.04	100.00	
<i>Panel B: Households with children—8-item child food security scale</i>			
0	81.24	81.24	Children food secure ( 90.03 percent)
1	8.79	90.03	
2	5.49	95.52	Low food security among children ( 8.79 percent)
3	2.37	97.88	
4	.94	98.82	
5	.61	99.43	Very low food security among children (1.18 percent)
6	.22	99.65	
7	.29	99.95	
8	.05	100.00	
<i>Panel C: Households with no children—10-item adult food security scale</i>			
0	80.48	80.48	Food secure (88.12 percent)
1	4.24	84.72	
2	3.39	88.12	
3	3.25	91.37	Low food security (6.32 percent)
4	1.64	93.01	
5	1.42	94.43	
6	1.89	96.33	
7	1.45	97.78	Very low food security (5.57 percent)
8	1.01	98.79	
9	.48	99.27	
10	.73	100.00	

<sup>1</sup>Survey responses weighted to population totals.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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 2012 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 15 to 26 percent (depending on the specific question), reported that it occurred “often.”

In response to Method 2 questions, 27 to 38 percent of households that responded “yes” to the base question reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “in almost every month;” 37 to 45 percent reported that it occurred in “some months, but not every month;” and 20 to 28 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, 2012<sup>1</sup>**

Condition <sup>2</sup>	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	19.5	5.1	14.4	26	74
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	15.7	3.4	12.2	22	78
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	15.0	3.9	11.0	26	74
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	17.0	3.8	13.2	22	78
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	10.6	1.8	8.8	17	83
Child(ren) were not eating enough	4.2	.6	3.5	15	85

Condition <sup>2</sup>	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	8.9	3.0	3.8	2.1	34	43	23
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	9.0	2.9	3.9	2.2	32	44	25
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.7	1.7	1.9	1.1	36	40	24
Respondent lost weight	3.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.7	.7	.6	0.4	39	37	24
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.3	.6	1.0	0.6	27	45	28
Child(ren) were hungry	1.5	.5	.7	0.4	32	44	24
Child(ren) skipped meals	.8	.3	.3	0.2	38	41	20
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

<sup>1</sup>Survey 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.

<sup>2</sup>The 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: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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, 2012<sup>1</sup>**

Condition <sup>2</sup>	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	98.7	52.5	46.3	53	47
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	97.2	40.3	56.9	41	59
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	94.0	42.9	51.1	46	54
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	93.5	35.1	58.5	37	63
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	82.2	22.2	60.0	27	73
Child(ren) were not eating enough	50.4	9.3	41.0	19	81

Condition <sup>2</sup>	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	96.3	44.0	44.6	7.7	46	46	8
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	94.9	42.9	41.5	10.5	45	44	11
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	67.9	28.9	27.3	11.8	43	40	17
Respondent lost weight	46.6	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	28.6	11.6	11.0	5.9	41	39	21
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	31.9	8.6	15.2	8.1	27	48	25
Child(ren) were hungry	23.8	7.9	11.3	4.7	33	47	20
Child(ren) skipped meals	13.0	5.1	5.4	2.5	39	41	20
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	2.4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

<sup>1</sup>Survey 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.

<sup>2</sup>The 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: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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.<sup>6</sup>

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 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 26 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 2012* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.aspx>).

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<sup>6</sup>Average 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, 2012<sup>1</sup>**

Condition <sup>2</sup>	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 <sup>3</sup>			Days <sup>3</sup>	Percent <sup>3</sup>
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	9.23	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	8.08	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	8.78	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	6.15	67	14	19	8.0	1.63
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	5.55	56	16	28	10.1	1.87
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford food	3.16	60	16	24	9.2	.97
Respondent lost weight	1.90	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.12	73	11	16	6.8	.25
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	9.37	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	6.21	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Child(ren) were not eating enough	2.55	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	1.66	65	18	17	7.8	.43
Child(ren) were hungry	1.04	70	15	15	7.3	.25
Child(ren) skipped meals	.56	67	20	13	7.2	.14
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.11	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

<sup>1</sup>Survey 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 during the week of December 9-15, 2012.

<sup>2</sup>The 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."

<sup>3</sup>Households without children are excluded from the denominator of child-referenced items.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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, 2012**

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to TFP <sup>1</sup>	
	Food secure	Food insecure
	<i>Ratio (Cost of TFP = 1.0)</i>	
All households	1.21	0.96
Household composition:		
With children < 18 yrs	1.07	.91
At least one child < 6 yrs	1.07	.93
Married couple families	1.10	.89
Female head, no spouse	.99	.93
Male head, no spouse	1.03	.88
Other household with child <sup>2</sup>	1.06	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	1.22	1.04
More than one adult	1.21	.85
Women living alone	1.36	1.13
Men living alone	1.49	1.19
With elderly	1.19	.87
Elderly living alone	1.17	1.13
Race/ethnicity of households:		
White, non-Hispanic	1.22	.98
Black, non-Hispanic	1.05	.95
Hispanic <sup>3</sup>	1.04	.93
Other	1.19	.91
Household income-to-poverty ratio:		
Under 1.00	.94	.87
Under 1.30	.94	.88
Under 1.85	.96	.88
1.85 and over	1.30	1.15
Income unknown	1.14	.94
Area of residence: <sup>4</sup>		
Inside metropolitan area	1.21	.97
In principal cities <sup>5</sup>	1.21	.96
Not in principal cities	1.22	1.00
Outside metropolitan area	1.09	.90
Census geographic region:		
Northeast	1.22	1.06
Midwest	1.14	.92
South	1.20	.97
West	1.22	.93

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

<sup>1</sup>Statistics 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 7.8 percent of all households.

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

<sup>3</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>5</sup>Households 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 USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

## Use of Food Pantries and Emergency Kitchens

The December 2012 CPS food security survey included questions about the use of two types of community-based food and nutrition assistance programs (see box, “Community Food and Nutrition Assistance Programs,” on page 21 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 2012. 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 the survey are not included in the sample, and those in tenuous housing arrangements (for instance, temporarily

Table S-11

### Use of food pantries and emergency kitchens, 2012

Category	Pantries			Kitchens		
	Total <sup>1</sup>	Users	Percent	Total <sup>1</sup>	Users	Percent
All households	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	121,158	6,186	5.1	121,133	766	0.6
All persons in households	307,218	17,272	5.6	307,103	1,714	.6
Adults in households	233,996	11,392	4.9	233,926	1,286	.6
Children in households	73,222	5,880	8.0	73,177	428	.6
Households by food security status:						
Food-secure households	103,654	1,745	1.7	103,638	223	.2
Food-insecure households	17,443	4,434	25.4	17,433	543	3.1
Households with low food security	10,567	1,930	18.3	10,561	153	1.5
Households with very low food security	6,876	2,504	36.4	6,872	390	5.7

<sup>1</sup>Totals 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: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

## 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 2012, TEFAP supplied 723 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.

doubled up with another family) also may be 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 items from a food pantry.<sup>7</sup>

The food security of households that used food pantries and emergency kitchens is compared with that of 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-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, 2012

Category	Food secure	Food insecure		
		All	With low food security	With very low food security
<i>Percent</i>				
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:				
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	28.1	71.9	29.6	42.3
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	72.1	27.9	18.2	9.7
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	28.0	72.0	17.7	54.3
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	66.4	33.6	19.9	13.7

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement

<sup>7</sup>Previous 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, 2012**

Category	Total <sup>1</sup>	Pantry users	
	<i>1,000</i>	<i>1,000</i>	<i>Percent</i>
All households	121,158	6,186	5.1
Household composition:			
With children < 18 yrs	38,994	2,760	7.1
At least one child < 6 yrs	17,216	1,277	7.4
Married-couple families	25,117	963	3.8
Female head, no spouse	10,292	1,490	14.5
Male head, no spouse	2,998	245	8.2
Other household with child <sup>2</sup>	587	62	10.6
With no children < 18 yrs	82,164	3,426	4.2
More than one adult	49,513	1,602	3.2
Women living alone	17,836	1,097	6.2
Men living alone	14,816	727	4.9
With elderly	31,849	1,186	3.7
Elderly living alone	11,675	564	4.8
Race/ethnicity of households:			
White, non-Hispanic	82,989	3,219	3.9
Black, non-Hispanic	14,891	1,450	9.7
Hispanic <sup>3</sup>	15,555	1,205	7.7
Other	7,722	312	4.0
Household income-to-poverty ratio:			
Under 1.00	15,450	3,040	19.7
Under 1.30	21,646	3,814	17.6
Under 1.85	31,038	4,522	14.6
1.85 and over	64,184	823	1.3
Income unknown	25,935	841	3.2
Area of residence: <sup>4</sup>			
Inside metropolitan area	101,152	4,845	4.8
In principal cities <sup>5</sup>	33,846	2,068	6.1
Not in principal cities	50,196	1,918	3.8
Outside metropolitan area	20,006	1,341	6.7
Census geographic region:			
Northeast	21,622	863	4.0
Midwest	26,953	1,544	5.7
South	45,606	2,218	4.9
West	26,977	1,561	5.8

<sup>1</sup>Totals exclude households that did not answer the question about getting food from a food pantry. These exclusions represented 0.7 percent of all households.

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

<sup>3</sup>Hispanics may be of any race.

<sup>4</sup>Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

<sup>5</sup>Households 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 USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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.<sup>8</sup>

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, 2012

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 <sup>1</sup> benefits previous 30 days	0.91
Did not receive SNAP <sup>1</sup> benefits previous 30 days	.93
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	.90
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:	
Received WIC <sup>2</sup> previous 30 days	.93
Did not receive WIC <sup>3</sup> previous 30 days	.90
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	.95

<sup>1</sup>SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

<sup>2</sup>WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

<sup>8</sup>Food 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 2012* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err155.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, 2012<sup>1</sup>

Category	Food insecurity (low or very low food security)	
	Very low food security	Percent
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:		
Received SNAP <sup>2</sup> benefits previous 30 days	31.6	14.5
Received SNAP <sup>2</sup> benefits in every month during the previous 12 months	31.3	14.0
Received SNAP <sup>2</sup> benefits previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (SNAP leavers)	33.5	16.8
Did not receive SNAP <sup>2</sup> benefits previous 12 months	16.5	7.5
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household:		
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	28.0	10.5
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	15.2	4.9
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:		
Received WIC <sup>3</sup> previous 30 days	21.9	5.6
Did not receive WIC <sup>3</sup> previous 30 days	16.3	6.2
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:		
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	60.7	34.2
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	17.0	6.8

<sup>1</sup>The 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 9-15, 2012. 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.

<sup>2</sup>SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

<sup>3</sup>WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 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,<sup>1</sup> 2012

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 <sup>2</sup> benefits previous 30 days	27.7	54.1	3.9	60.0
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	21.9	35.1	1.7	22.2
Received WIC <sup>3</sup> previous 30 days	19.8	12.8	1.7	9.0
Participated in one or more of the three Federal programs	23.4	69.8	2.9	68.4
Did not participate in any of the three Federal programs	7.8	30.2	1.0	31.6

<sup>1</sup>Analysis 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.

<sup>2</sup>SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

<sup>3</sup>WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2012 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

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