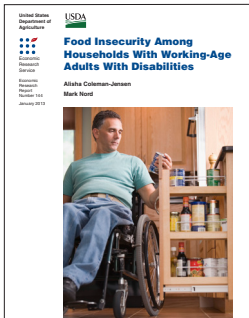


ERS Report Summary

Economic Research Service

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This is a summary of an ERS report.

Find the full report at www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err144.aspx

ERS is a primary source of economic research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

Food Insecurity Among Households With Working-Age Adults With Disabilities

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What Is the Issue?

Food-insecure households are those that lack consistent access to adequate food for one or more household members. Prior research found that households with adults with work-limiting disabilities were more likely to be food insecure. This report describes food security in two groups of households with working-age (18-64) adults who have disabilities: those with disabilities who are unable to work (*not in labor force-disabled*) and those with disabilities that are not necessarily work-limiting (*other reported disabilities*). The analysis focused on type of disability and other characteristics of working-age adults with disabilities, such as employment and education, to identify factors that may put households at greater risk for food insecurity. In addition, participation in the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly food stamps) and disability assistance programs was examined to determine the extent to which adults with disabilities accessed these benefits and the programs' role in preventing household food insecurity.

What Were the Study Findings?

There is a strong association between disability and food insecurity. Substantially reducing the prevalence and severity of food insecurity among households in which one or more members is affected by disabilities would reduce the overall prevalence of food insecurity. The main study findings include:

- Food insecurity was more prevalent among households with working-age adults with disabilities: 33.5 percent of households with an adult who was *not in labor force-disabled* were food insecure; 24.8 percent of households with adults with *other reported disabilities* (adults age 18-64 who had a disability but did not indicate they were out of the labor force due to disability) were food insecure; while 12 percent of households with no adults age 18-64 with disabilities were food insecure.
- Very low food security, the more severe range of food insecurity characterized by disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake, was also more common among households with adults with disabilities than among other households: 17.3 percent of households with a member who was *not in labor force-disabled* had very low food security and 11.8 percent of households with a working-age adult with *other reported disabilities* had very low food security. Among households with no working-age adults with disabilities, 4.6 percent had very low food security.

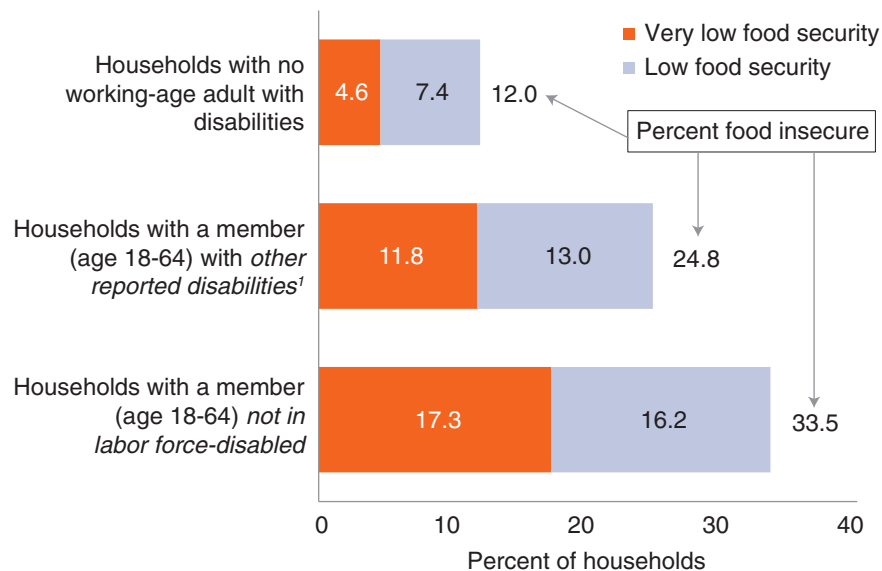
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- Households that include working-age adults with disabilities comprise a large share of food-insecure households. An estimated 31.8 percent of households with food insecurity included a working-age adult with a disability. Nearly 38 percent of households with very low food security included a working-age adult with a disability.
- Whether disabilities prevented employment was an important factor related to food insecurity among households that included adults with disabilities. Vision, mental, and physical disabilities were related to higher odds of food insecurity than were hearing, self-care, and going-outside-home disabilities.
- Participation in SNAP was relatively high among households with members who were *not in labor force-disabled* and households with working-age members with *other reported disabilities* compared with those without working-age adults with disabilities. Among low-income households that participated in SNAP and with an adult who was *not in labor force-disabled*, 56.1 percent were food insecure.

How Was the Study Conducted?

We used the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) from 2009 and 2010 to examine the association between food insecurity and disability. The CPS is administered by the U.S. Census Bureau and is nationally representative of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population. The CPS-FSS is the source for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s annual food security statistics. The analysis examined the prevalence and severity of household food insecurity by the presence of adults age 18-64 with disabilities. The study used multivariate logistic regression analysis to account for differences in income, education, family composition and other characteristics between households with and without adults with disabilities. The percentage of households participating in SNAP and disability assistance programs was also examined by disability status and food security status.

Figure 1
Prevalence of food insecurity by disability status



¹Working-age adults with *other reported disabilities* are those reported to have one or more of the following disabilities: hearing, vision, mental, physical, self-care, or going-outside-home disability, but no indication that their disability prevented them from working.

Source: USDA, Economic Research Service calculations based on 2009 and 2010 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.