

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

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

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

About 2.9 million households (2.7 percent) were food insecure with hunger (table E-1) at some time during the 30-day period from early November to early December 2002.³⁵ The 30-day prevalence was just over three-fourths (76.2 percent) that for the entire 12 months prior to the survey. The corresponding statistics for other 30-day periods in earlier years' surveys were: 72.8 percent in July/August 1998, 66.1 percent in March/April 1999, and 74.4 percent in August/September 2000. Taken together, these statistics imply that, on average, households that were food insecure with hunger at some time during the year experienced this condition in 8 or 9 months of the year.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30-days prior to the survey varied across household types following the same general pattern as the 12-month measure. The prevalence of hunger was lowest for households with two or more adults without children, for households that included an elderly person, and for

households with incomes higher than 185 percent of the poverty line. Prevalences of hunger were highest for single women with children, Blacks, and households with incomes below the poverty line. The ratios of prevalence rates of hunger for the two reference periods ranged from 62.0 percent for elderly living alone to 83.7 percent for households with annual incomes above 185 percent of the poverty line.³⁶

The 30-day measure of food insecurity with hunger facilitates a more temporally precise analysis of the relationship between households' food insecurity and their use of Federal and community food assistance programs. That is, measured food insecurity with hunger and reported use of food assistance programs are more likely to refer to contemporaneous conditions when both are referenced to the previous 30 days than when one or both is referenced to the previous 12 months. For households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year, the 30-day measure of food security can also provide information about their food security status after they left the program.

The prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey among households that left the Food Stamp Program during the year (14.5 percent) was twice that of households that did not receive food stamps at any time during the year (6.9 percent) and was essentially the same as that of households that received food stamps during the 30 days prior to the survey (14.4 percent; table E-2). This implies that not all households that left the Food Stamp Program did so because their economic situations had improved to a level that assured access to enough food without food stamps. Associations of 30-day prevalence rates of hunger with use of other food assistance programs were similar to those of the 12-month measure reported in table 11, although the contrasts between users and non-users were generally slightly greater for the 30-day measure.

³⁵The food security survey was conducted in the second week of December in 2002.

³⁶Only six interviewed households in the category "Other household with child" registered hunger on the 12-month measure, so comparison of the 30-day and 12-month measures was not considered reliable.

Table E-1—Prevalence of food insecurity with hunger during 12 months and 30 days prior to food security survey, by selected household characteristics, 2002¹

Category	Food insecure with hunger					
	Total ²	Previous 12 months		Previous 30 days		Previous 30 days as percentage of previous 12 months
		1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All households	108,601	3,799	3.5	2,895	2.7	76.2
Household composition:						
With children < 18	38,647	1,480	3.8	1,151	3.0	77.8
With children < 6	17,073	584	3.4	458	2.7	78.4
Married-couple families	26,069	508	1.9	414	1.6	81.5
Female head, no spouse	9,496	828	8.7	616	6.5	74.4
Male head, no spouse	2,375	139	5.9	112	4.7	80.6
Other household with child ³	707	6	.8	6	.8	100.0
With no children < 18	69,954	2,318	3.3	1,744	2.5	75.2
More than one adult	41,538	958	2.3	702	1.7	73.3
Women living alone	16,174	717	4.4	518	3.2	72.2
Men living alone	12,242	643	5.3	524	4.3	81.5
With elderly	24,791	463	1.9	303	1.2	65.4
Elderly living alone	10,072	255	2.5	158	1.6	62.0
Race/ethnicity of households:						
White non-Hispanic	80,266	2,113	2.6	1,657	2.1	78.4
Black non-Hispanic	13,515	970	7.2	741	5.5	76.4
Hispanic ⁴	10,344	591	5.7	399	3.9	67.5
Other non-Hispanic	4,475	124	2.8	97	2.2	78.2
Household income-to-poverty ratio:						
Under 1.00	11,515	1,651	14.3	1,197	10.4	72.5
Under 1.30	17,010	2,057	12.1	1,499	8.8	72.9
Under 1.85	25,134	2,438	9.7	1,804	7.2	74.0
1.85 and over	64,263	945	1.5	791	1.2	83.7
Income unknown	19,204	416	2.2	299	1.6	71.9
Area of residence:						
Inside metropolitan area	87,617	3,092	3.5	2,336	2.7	75.5
In central city ⁵	26,922	1,358	5.0	1,041	3.9	76.7
Not in central city ⁵	45,552	1,219	2.7	966	2.1	79.2
Outside metropolitan area	20,983	707	3.4	559	2.7	79.1
Census geographic region:						
Northeast	20,242	604	3.0	461	2.3	76.3
Midwest	25,180	823	3.3	658	2.6	80.0
South	39,195	1,428	3.6	1,025	2.6	71.8
West	23,984	944	3.9	750	3.1	79.4

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from early November to early December; the survey was conducted during the second week of December 2002.

²Totals exclude households in 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 2002, these represented 336,000 households (0.3 percent of all households.)

³Households with children in complex living arrangements—e.g., children of other relatives or unrelated roommate or boarder.

⁴Hispanics may be of any race.

⁵Metropolitan area subtotals do not add to metropolitan area totals because central-city residence is not identified for about 17 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2002 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table E-2—Prevalence rates of food insecurity with hunger during the 30 days prior to the food security survey, by participation in selected Federal and community food assistance programs, 2002¹

Category	Food insecure with hunger
	<i>Percent</i>
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line	
Received food stamps previous 30 days	14.4
Received food stamps previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (food stamp leavers)	14.5
Did not receive food stamps previous 12 months	6.9
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; school-age children in household	
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	9.5
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	3.6
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household	
Received WIC previous 30 days	6.8
Did not receive WIC previous 30 days	5.0
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:	
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	36.5
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	5.8
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	56.0
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 30 days	6.9

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from early November to early December; the survey was conducted during the second week of December 2002.

Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2002 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.