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Household Food Security in the United States in 2011

Statistical Supplement

Alisha Coleman-Jensen
Mark Nord
Margaret Andrews
Steven Carlson



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Note to Readers

This Supplement contains statistics that complement those provided in the Economic Research Report, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011* (ERR-141). The 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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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 2011*, 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 2011. Information about the survey, data, and methods are available in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err141.aspx/>).

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.¹

¹Standard errors of estimates, except for State-level estimates, were calculated using balanced repeated replication (BRR) methods based on replicate weights computed for the Supplement by the U.S. Census Bureau (see http://thedataweb.rm.census.gov/ftp/cps_ftp.html#cpsrepwgt). Standard errors of State-level estimates were calculated using jackknife replication methods with “month in sample” groups considered as separate, independent samples (see Nord et al., 1999). Beginning with the 2007 data, the jackknife methods have aggregated data from pairs of month-in-sample groups comprising largely the same households (i.e., month-in-sample group 1 in one year and month-in-sample group 5 in the following year) to account for the non-independence of these samples.

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.² 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 high expenses) 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.

²The Federal poverty line was \$22,811 for a family of four in 2011. Households with income below 130 percent of the poverty line are eligible to receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (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, 2011

Category	Total ¹	Food secure		Food insecure					
				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	22,168	13,825	62.4	8,343	37.6	4,763	21.5	3,580	16.1
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	9,278	5,240	56.5	4,038	43.5	2,750	29.6	1,288	13.9
With children < 6 yrs	5,102	2,993	58.7	2,109	41.3	1,526	29.9	583	11.4
Married-couple families	3,796	2,316	61.0	1,480	39.0	1,054	27.8	426	11.2
Female head, no spouse	4,453	2,302	51.7	2,151	48.3	1,431	32.1	720	16.2
Male head, no spouse	890	523	58.8	367	41.2	235	26.4	132	14.8
Other household with child ²	139	101	72.7	38	27.3	29	20.9	NA	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	12,890	8,585	66.6	4,305	33.4	2,013	15.6	2,292	17.8
More than one adult	5,422	3,665	67.6	1,757	32.4	904	16.7	853	15.7
Women living alone	4,420	2,924	66.2	1,496	33.8	658	14.9	838	19.0
Men living alone	3,048	1,997	65.5	1,051	34.5	451	14.8	600	19.7
With elderly	5,148	3,997	77.6	1,151	22.4	672	13.1	479	9.3
Elderly living alone	2,837	2,275	80.2	562	19.8	317	11.2	245	8.6
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	11,358	7,493	66.0	3,865	34.0	2,054	18.1	1,811	15.9
Black, non-Hispanic	4,522	2,628	58.1	1,894	41.9	1,014	22.4	880	19.5
Hispanic ³	4,892	2,754	56.3	2,138	43.7	1,425	29.1	713	14.6
Other	1,396	950	68.1	446	31.9	270	19.3	176	12.6
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	17,546	10,809	61.6	6,737	38.4	3,874	22.1	2,863	16.3
In principal cities ⁵	7,517	4,519	60.1	2,998	39.9	1,740	23.1	1,258	16.7
Not in principal cities	6,831	4,234	62.0	2,597	38.0	1,482	21.7	1,115	16.3
Outside metropolitan area	4,622	3,016	65.3	1,606	34.7	889	19.2	717	15.5
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	3,272	1,999	61.1	1,273	38.9	719	22.0	554	16.9
Midwest	4,606	2,885	62.6	1,721	37.4	938	20.4	783	17.0
South	9,187	5,747	62.6	3,440	37.4	2,002	21.8	1,438	15.7
West	5,102	3,193	62.6	1,909	37.4	1,104	21.6	805	15.8

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

¹Totals exclude households for which income was not reported (about 22 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 (0.6 percent of low-income households).

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵Households 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 2011 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, 2011

Category	Total ¹	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	305,893	255,773	83.6	50,120	16.4	33,232	10.9	16,888	5.5
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	160,055	126,707	79.2	33,348	20.8	23,972	15.0	9,376	5.9
With children < 6 yrs	75,992	58,477	77.0	17,515	23.0	13,038	17.2	4,477	5.9
Married-couple families	111,240	94,527	85.0	16,713	15.0	12,494	11.2	4,219	3.8
Female head, no spouse	35,439	22,162	62.5	13,277	37.5	9,048	25.5	4,229	11.9
Male head, no spouse	10,937	8,063	73.7	2,874	26.3	2,058	18.8	816	7.5
Other household with child ²	2,439	1,955	80.2	484	19.8	372	15.3	112	4.6
With no children < 18 yrs	145,838	129,065	88.5	16,773	11.5	9,261	6.4	7,512	5.2
More than one adult	113,020	101,351	89.7	11,669	10.3	6,775	6.0	4,894	4.3
Women living alone	18,021	15,205	84.4	2,816	15.6	1,387	7.7	1,429	7.9
Men living alone	14,796	12,508	84.5	2,288	15.5	1,099	7.4	1,189	8.0
With elderly	59,970	54,088	90.2	5,882	9.8	3,915	6.5	1,967	3.3
Elderly living alone	11,402	10,400	91.2	1,002	8.8	579	5.1	423	3.7
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	199,901	175,777	87.9	24,124	12.1	15,771	7.9	8,353	4.2
Black, non-Hispanic	36,879	27,342	74.1	9,537	25.9	5,847	15.9	3,690	10.0
Hispanic ³	48,804	35,004	71.7	13,800	28.3	9,771	20.0	4,029	8.3
Other	20,309	17,649	86.9	2,660	13.1	1,843	9.1	817	4.0
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	44,186	25,530	57.8	18,656	42.2	11,700	26.5	6,956	15.7
Under 1.30	61,039	37,043	60.7	23,996	39.3	15,125	24.8	8,871	14.5
Under 1.85	87,395	55,985	64.1	31,410	35.9	20,178	23.1	11,232	12.9
1.85 and over	155,177	144,318	93.0	10,859	7.0	7,741	5.0	3,118	2.0
Income unknown	63,321	55,469	87.6	7,852	12.4	5,314	8.4	2,538	4.0
Area of residence: ⁴									
Inside metropolitan area	257,415	215,423	83.7	41,992	16.3	27,835	10.8	14,157	5.5
In principal cities ⁵	83,250	66,942	80.4	16,308	19.6	10,753	12.9	5,555	6.7
Not in principal cities	131,445	112,537	85.6	18,908	14.4	12,533	9.5	6,375	4.8
Outside metropolitan area	48,478	40,350	83.2	8,128	16.8	5,397	11.1	2,731	5.6
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	54,790	46,911	85.6	7,879	14.4	5,215	9.5	2,664	4.9
Midwest	66,037	56,644	85.8	9,393	14.2	6,138	9.3	3,255	4.9
South	113,293	93,503	82.5	19,790	17.5	13,239	11.7	6,551	5.8
West	71,773	58,715	81.8	13,058	18.2	8,640	12.0	4,418	6.2

¹Totals 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 2011, these exclusions represented about 1.1 million individuals (0.4 percent of the U.S. population.)

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵Households 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 individuals living in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-3

Number of children by food security status of households and selected household characteristics, 2011

Category	Total ¹	In food-insecure households							
		In food-secure households		In food-insecure households ²		In households with food-insecure children ³		In households with very low food security among children	
		1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent	1,000	Percent
All children	74,508	57,850	77.6	16,658	22.4	8,565	11.5	845	1.1
Household composition:									
With children < 6 yrs	38,096	28,764	75.5	9,332	24.5	4,607	12.1	407	1.1
Married-couple families	50,208	42,358	84.4	7,850	15.6	3,876	7.7	417	.8
Female head, no spouse	18,498	11,174	60.4	7,324	39.6	3,922	21.2	355	1.9
Male head, no spouse	4,953	3,649	73.7	1,304	26.3	699	14.1	NA	NA
Other household with child ⁴	849	669	78.8	180	21.2	67	7.9	NA	NA
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	42,724	35,869	84.0	6,855	16.0	3,112	7.3	248	.6
Black, non-Hispanic	10,502	7,138	68.0	3,364	32.0	1,787	17.0	227	2.2
Hispanic ⁵	16,074	10,527	65.5	5,547	34.5	3,156	19.6	322	2.0
Other	5,208	4,316	82.9	892	17.1	509	9.8	NA	NA
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	16,104	8,697	54.0	7,407	46.0	4,046	25.1	490	3.0
Under 1.30	21,050	11,937	56.7	9,113	43.3	4,948	23.5	608	2.9
Under 1.85	28,411	16,858	59.3	11,553	40.7	6,205	21.8	683	2.4
1.85 and over	33,516	30,888	92.2	2,628	7.8	1,083	3.2	65	.2
Income unknown	12,581	10,105	80.3	2,476	19.7	1,277	10.2	97	.8
Area of residence: ⁶									
Inside metropolitan area	62,928	48,958	77.8	13,970	22.2	7,232	11.5	734	1.2
In principal cities ⁷	20,358	14,880	73.1	5,478	26.9	2,848	14.0	260	1.3
Not in principal cities	32,550	26,214	80.5	6,336	19.5	3,371	10.4	365	1.1
Outside metropolitan area	11,580	8,892	76.8	2,688	23.2	1,333	11.5	112	1.0
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	12,238	9,804	80.1	2,434	19.9	1,194	9.8	106	.9
Midwest	15,833	12,910	81.5	2,923	18.5	1,450	9.2	155	1.0
South	28,215	21,515	76.3	6,700	23.7	3,385	12.0	428	1.5
West	18,221	13,620	74.7	4,601	25.3	2,535	13.9	156	.9

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

¹Totals 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 2011, these exclusions represented 327,000 children (0.4 percent.)

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

³Households with food-insecure children are those with low or very low food security among children.

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

⁵Hispanics may be of any race.

⁶Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁷Households 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 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Changes in the Prevalence of Food Insecurity, by State

State-level prevalence rates of food insecurity and very low food security for the period 2009-11 are compared with 3-year average rates for 2006-08 and 1999-2001 in table S-4. The prevalence rates for 2009-11 are repeated from table 4 in *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err141.aspx/>).

The prevalence rates for 2006-08 were reported previously in *Household Food Security in the United States, 2008* (Nord et al., 2009). The 1999-2001 prevalence rates were reported previously in *Household Food Security in the United States, 2001* (Nord et al., 2002).³ They are presented as a baseline to assess longer term changes in State-level food security conditions over the past decade.

³Prevalence rates for 1996-98 reported in *Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998* (Nord et al., 1999) are not directly comparable with the rates reported here because of differences in screening procedures in the CPS Food Security Supplements from 1995 to 1998. Comparable statistics for 1996-1998 are presented in *Food Security in the United States in 2010 Statistical Supplement table S4* (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011).

Table S-4

Prevalence of household-level food insecurity and very low food security by State, 2009-11 (average), 2006-08 (average), and 1999-2001 (average)

State	Food insecurity (low or very low food security)					Very low food security				
	Average	Average	Average	Change	Change	Average	Average	Average	Change	Change
	2009-11	2006-08	1999-2001	2006-08 to 2009-11	1999-2001 to 2009-11	2009-11	2006-08	1999-2001	2006-08 to 2009-11	1999-2001 to 2009-11
	Percent		Percentage points		Percent		Percentage points			
U.S.	14.7	12.2	10.4	2.5*	4.3*	5.6	4.6	3.1	1.0*	2.5*
AK	13.9	11.6	11.1	2.3	2.8*	4.8	4.4	4.3	.4	.5
AL	18.2	13.3	11.9	4.9*	6.3*	7.1	5.4	3.9	1.7	3.2*
AR	19.2	15.9	12.8	3.3	6.4*	7.6	5.6	3.9	2.0	3.7*
AZ	15.8	13.2	11.6	2.6*	4.2*	6.2	4.9	3.6	1.3	2.6*
CA	16.2	12.0	11.8	4.2*	4.4*	5.8	4.3	3.3	1.5*	2.5*
CO	13.4	11.6	8.6	1.8	4.8*	5.4	5.0	2.5	.4	2.9*
CT	11.9	11.0	6.8	.9	5.1*	4.7	4.1	2.6	.6	2.1*
DC	12.6	12.4	9.8	.2	2.8*	4.4	4.2	2.9	.2	1.5*
DE	10.9	9.4	7.3	1.5	3.6*	4.3	3.7	2.1	.6	2.2*
FL	15.4	12.2	12.2	3.2*	3.2*	6.3	4.9	4.0	1.4*	2.3*
GA	17.4	14.2	11.6	3.2*	5.8*	6.4	5.4	3.9	1.0	2.5*
HI	13.8	9.1	10.8	4.7*	3.0*	5.6	3.0	3.0	2.6*	2.6*
IA	12.0	11.6	7.6	.4	4.4*	4.7	4.8	2.2	-.1	2.5*
ID	13.7	11.4	13.0	2.3*	.7	5.0	3.9	4.5	1.1	.5
IL	13.3	11.1	9.2	2.2*	4.1*	4.5	4.1	2.7	.4	1.8*
IN	13.2	11.2	8.5	2.0	4.7*	5.4	4.3	2.5	1.1	2.9*
KS	14.5	13.8	11.3	.7	3.2*	5.2	4.8	3.2	.4	2.0*
KY	16.4	12.6	10.1	3.8*	6.3*	6.6	4.4	3.0	2.2*	3.6*
LA	14.1	11.0	13.2	3.1*	.9	4.4	3.7	3.0	.7	1.4*
MA	11.9	8.3	6.7	3.6*	5.2*	4.5	3.8	2.0	.7	2.5*
MD	12.5	9.6	8.8	2.9*	3.7*	5.6	3.4	3.1	2.2*	2.5*
ME	14.7	13.7	9.4	1.0	5.3*	6.5	6.4	3.1	.1	3.4*
MI	14.2	12.0	8.1	2.2*	6.1*	5.6	4.4	2.4	1.2	3.2*
MN	10.2	10.3	7.1	-.1	3.1*	4.3	4.1	2.0	.2	2.3*
MO	16.0	14.0	8.6	2.0*	7.4*	6.7	5.8	2.3	.9	4.4*
MS	19.2	17.4	13.1	1.8	6.1*	7.1	7.4	3.7	-.3	3.4*
MT	14.5	10.9	13.2	3.6*	1.3	5.4	4.4	4.0	1.0	1.4*
NC	17.1	13.7	11.1	3.4*	6.0*	5.8	4.4	3.3	1.4*	2.5*
ND	7.8	6.9	8.5	.9	-.7	3.1	2.6	2.2	.5	.9*
NE	13.3	10.4	9.9	2.9*	3.4*	4.9	4.0	2.9	.9	2.0*
NH	9.6	8.5	6.5	1.1	3.1*	4.0	3.1	1.9	.9	2.1*
NJ	12.3	10.3	7.8	2.0*	4.5*	4.5	3.4	2.4	1.1*	2.1*
NM	16.5	14.1	14.6	2.4	1.9	6.3	4.6	4.2	1.7*	2.1*
NV	15.3	12.4	10.1	2.9*	5.2*	6.0	4.6	3.4	1.4	2.6*
NY	13.3	11.3	9.6	2.0*	3.7*	5.1	4.3	3.1	.8*	2.0*
OH	15.5	13.3	9.1	2.2*	6.4*	6.4	5.2	2.8	1.2*	3.6*
OK	14.7	14.0	12.9	.7	1.8	7.0	5.9	3.8	1.1	3.2*
OR	13.6	13.1	13.7	.5	-.1	5.9	6.6	5.8	-.7	.1
PA	12.5	11.2	8.4	1.3	4.1*	5.0	4.2	2.2	.8*	2.8*
RI	15.5	11.7	8.7	3.8*	6.8*	6.0	4.2	2.5	1.8*	3.5*
SC	14.8	13.1	11.3	1.7	3.5*	4.4	5.2	3.6	-.8	.8
SD	12.7	10.3	7.9	2.4*	4.8*	5.3	4.1	1.9	1.2	3.4*
TN	15.2	13.5	11.8	1.7	3.4*	6.4	4.6	3.4	1.8*	3.0*
TX	18.5	16.3	13.9	2.2*	4.6*	6.5	5.7	3.6	.8*	2.9*
UT	14.6	11.2	13.8	3.4*	.8	5.2	4.5	4.6	.7	.6
VA	9.1	8.6	7.6	.5	1.5	3.2	3.3	1.5	-.1	1.7*
VT	12.8	12.1	9.1	.7	3.7*	5.4	5.7	1.8	-.3	3.6*
WA	15.4	11.1	12.5	4.3*	2.9*	6.2	4.3	4.6	1.9*	1.6*
WI	11.3	10.1	8.4	1.2	2.9*	4.7	3.7	2.9	1.0*	1.8*
WV	14.1	12.0	10.3	2.1	3.8*	5.1	4.5	3.3	.6	1.8*
WY	12.7	9.2	9.9	3.5*	2.8*	4.8	2.9	3.2	1.9*	1.6*

*Change was statistically significant with 90-percent confidence ($t > 1.645$).

Prevalence rates for 1996-98 reported in *Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger, by State, 1996-1998* (Nord et al., 1999) are not directly comparable with the rates reported here because of differences in screening procedures in the CPS Food Security Supplements from 1995 to 1998. Comparable statistics for 1996-1998 are presented in *Food Security in the United States in 2010 Statistical Supplement* table S-4 (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011).

Source: Prepared by USDA, Economic Research Service based on Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.

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 2011 are directly comparable with those for 2005 and later years, but not with those reported for 2004 and earlier years.

An estimated 91.6 percent of households were food secure throughout the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December 2011 (table S-5).⁴ About 8.4 percent (10.1 million households) were food insecure at some time during that 30-day period, including 3.4 percent (4.0 million) with very low food security. The national-level prevalence of food insecurity was essentially unchanged from the corresponding 30-day period in 2010 (8.2 percent). However, increases in food insecurity from 2010 to 2011 were statistically significant for several subpopulations including women living alone, households with elderly members, and households in principal cities of metropolitan areas. The prevalence of very low food security (3.4 percent) increased from the corresponding 30-day period in 2010 (3.1 percent). Increases in very low food security from 2010 to 2011 were statistically significant for women living alone, Black households, households with incomes below 185 percent of the poverty line, and households in metropolitan areas outside principal cities.

The number of households that were food insecure at some time during the 30 days from mid-November to mid-December was 56 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 59 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. 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.

⁴The food security survey was conducted during the week of December 11-17, 2011.

Table S-5

Households by food security status during the 30 days prior to the food security survey and selected household characteristics, 2011¹

Category	Total ²	Food secure		Food insecure					
				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 households	119,484	109,423	91.6	10,061	8.4	6,017	5.0	4,044	3.4
Household composition:									
With children < 18 yrs	38,803	34,429	88.7	4,374	11.3	3,099	8.0	1,275	3.3
With children < 6 yrs	17,281	15,255	88.3	2,026	11.7	1,504	8.7	522	3.0
Married-couple families	25,421	23,554	92.7	1,867	7.3	1,348	5.3	519	2.0
Female head, no spouse	9,690	7,686	79.3	2,004	20.7	1,380	14.2	624	6.4
Male head, no spouse	3,055	2,625	85.9	430	14.1	319	10.4	111	3.6
Other household with child ³	638	565	88.6	73	11.4	52	8.2	21	3.3
With no children < 18 yrs	80,681	74,994	93.0	5,687	7.0	2,918	3.6	2,769	3.4
More than one adult	47,863	45,292	94.6	2,571	5.4	1,420	3.0	1,151	2.4
Women living alone	18,021	16,273	90.3	1,748	9.7	837	4.6	911	5.1
Men living alone	14,796	13,428	90.8	1,368	9.2	661	4.5	707	4.8
With elderly	30,099	28,739	95.5	1,360	4.5	845	2.8	515	1.7
Elderly living alone	11,402	10,845	95.1	557	4.9	319	2.8	238	2.1
Race/ethnicity of households:									
White, non-Hispanic	83,304	78,139	93.8	5,165	6.2	2,970	3.6	2,195	2.6
Black, non-Hispanic	14,765	12,623	85.5	2,142	14.5	1,193	8.1	949	6.4
Hispanic ⁴	14,410	12,160	84.4	2,250	15.6	1,555	10.8	695	4.8
Other	7,005	6,502	92.8	503	7.2	298	4.3	205	2.9
Household income-to-poverty ratio:									
Under 1.00	15,557	11,711	75.3	3,846	24.7	2,056	13.2	1,790	11.5
Under 1.30	22,168	17,214	77.7	4,954	22.3	2,702	12.2	2,252	10.2
Under 1.85	31,437	25,104	79.9	6,333	20.1	3,577	11.4	2,756	8.8
1.85 and over	62,244	59,911	96.3	2,333	3.7	1,541	2.5	792	1.3
Income unknown	25,802	24,407	94.6	1,395	5.4	899	3.5	496	1.9
Area of residence: ⁵									
Inside metropolitan area	99,835	91,380	91.5	8,455	8.5	5,049	5.1	3,406	3.4
In principal cities ⁶	33,515	30,016	89.6	3,499	10.4	2,094	6.2	1,405	4.2
Not in principal cities	49,253	45,625	92.6	3,628	7.4	2,137	4.3	1,491	3.0
Outside metropolitan area	19,649	18,043	91.8	1,606	8.2	968	4.9	638	3.2
Census geographic region:									
Northeast	21,650	20,014	92.4	1,636	7.6	996	4.6	640	3.0
Midwest	26,359	24,314	92.2	2,045	7.8	1,189	4.5	856	3.2
South	44,772	40,854	91.2	3,918	8.8	2,315	5.2	1,603	3.6
West	26,703	24,241	90.8	2,462	9.2	1,517	5.7	945	3.5

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 11-17, 2011.

²Totals 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 2011, these exclusions represented 405,000 households (0.3 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.

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

⁴Hispanics may be of any race.

⁵Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁶Households within incorporated areas of the largest cities in each metropolitan area. Residence inside or outside of principal cities is not identified for about 17 percent of households in metropolitan statistical areas.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 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-6).

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 box, “Questions Used To Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Survey,” page 14, 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-7).

A majority of households (67 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 (12.7 percent of households with children and 7.7 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 insecurity (Anderson, 1990, p. 1,598).⁵ 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).

⁵The 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-6

Responses to items in the food security scale, 2008-11¹

Scale item ²	Households affirming item ³			
	2008	2009	2010	2011
	<i>Percent</i>			
Household items:				
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	19.7	19.6	19.9	19.7
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	15.3	15.7	15.4	16.2
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	14.8	14.7	14.8	15.2
Adult items:				
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	9.2	9.4	8.7	9.2
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	9.0	9.2	8.9	9.2
Adult(s) cut size or skipped meals in 3 or more months	7.1	7.1	6.7	7.1
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5
Respondent lost weight	3.0	3.1	2.8	3.1
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.6	1.7	1.6	1.6
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day in 3 or more months	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.2
Child items:				
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	17.5	18.1	17.3	17.5
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	11.3	10.9	10.4	10.4
Child(ren) were not eating enough	5.9	4.8	4.7	4.6
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.0
Child(ren) were hungry	1.6	1.5	1.3	1.3
Child(ren) skipped meals	1.0	.9	.7	.8
Child(ren) skipped meals in 3 or more months	.7	.6	.5	.6
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.1	.2	.1	.2

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals.

²The 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 14 for the complete wording of these questions.)

³Households 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 2008, December 2009, December 2010, and December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements.

Table S-7

Percentage of households by food security raw score, 2011

Panel A: Households with children—18-item household food security scale			
Raw score (number of food-insecure conditions reported)	Percent of households ¹	Cumulative percent of households ¹	Food security status
0	66.75	66.75	Food secure (79.41 percent)
1	7.10	73.85	
2	5.56	79.41	
3	4.74	84.15	Low food security (14.82 percent)
4	3.01	87.16	
5	2.88	90.04	
6	2.41	92.45	
7	1.78	94.23	
8	1.51	95.75	Very low food security (5.77 percent)
9	1.29	97.04	
10	.98	98.02	
11	.57	98.59	
12	.47	99.06	
13	.32	99.38	
14	.21	99.59	
15	.23	99.82	
16	.07	99.89	
17	.09	99.98	
18	.02	100.00	
Panel B: Households with children—8-item child food security scale			
0	80.67	80.67	Children food secure (90.05 percent)
1	9.38	90.05	
2	5.54	95.59	Low food security among children (8.99 percent)
3	2.54	98.13	
4	.91	99.04	
5	.49	99.52	Very low food security among children (0.96 percent)
6	.20	99.73	
7	.18	99.91	
8	.09	100.00	
Panel C: Households with no children—10-item adult food security scale			
0	80.09	80.09	Food secure (87.77 percent)
1	4.37	84.47	
2	3.31	87.77	
3	3.35	91.12	Low food security (6.53 percent)
4	1.67	92.79	
5	1.50	94.30	
6	1.91	96.21	
7	1.57	97.78	Very low food security (5.70 percent)
8	1.09	98.87	
9	.41	99.28	
10	.72	100.00	

¹Survey responses weighted to population totals.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 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-8 presents responses to each food security question broken down by reported frequency of occurrence for all households interviewed in the December 2011 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, 28 to 37 percent of households that responded “yes” to the base question reported that the behavior, experience, or condition occurred “in almost every month;” 39 to 48 percent reported that it occurred in “some months, but not every month;” and 19 to 29 percent reported that it occurred “in only 1 or 2 months.”

Table S-9 presents the same frequency-of-occurrence response statistics for households classified as having very low food security.

Table S-8

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2011¹

Condition ²	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	19.7	5.2	14.5	26	74
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	16.2	3.4	12.8	21	79
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	15.2	3.9	11.3	26	74
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	17.5	4.2	13.3	24	76
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	10.4	1.8	8.6	17	83
Child(ren) were not eating enough	4.6	.7	3.9	15	85

Condition ²	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	9.2	3.3	3.8	2.0	36	42	22
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	9.2	3.0	4.1	2.1	33	44	23
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	4.5	1.7	1.8	1.1	37	39	24
Respondent lost weight	3.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.6	.6	.6	.4	37	40	23
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	2.0	.7	1.0	.4	32	48	20
Child(ren) were hungry	1.3	.4	.5	.4	28	43	29
Child(ren) skipped meals	.7	.2	.3	.1	33	47	19
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.2	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

¹Survey 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.

²The 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 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-9

Frequency of occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by households with very low food security, 2011¹

Condition ²	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	98.5	52.3	46.2	53	47
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	97.0	40.4	56.5	42	58
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	95.3	41.6	53.7	44	56
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	91.9	41.9	50.0	46	54
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	85.3	22.3	63.0	26	74
Child(ren) were not eating enough	53.0	10.3	42.7	19	81

Condition ²	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	97.4	47.9	42.6	6.9	49	44	7
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	94.8	44.0	41.1	9.7	46	43	10
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	64.6	28.0	25.4	11.2	43	39	17
Respondent lost weight	47.5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	26.8	10.4	10.8	5.5	39	40	21
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	28.8	10.4	13.9	4.5	36	48	16
Child(ren) were hungry	19.6	6.0	9.4	4.2	31	48	22
Child(ren) skipped meals	11.9	4.0	5.8	2.2	33	48	18
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	3.0	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

¹Survey 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.

²The 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 2011 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-10.⁶

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 prevalences ranged from 25 to 33 percent of their prevalence at any time during the month (analysis not shown, based on table S-10). The corresponding ranges for daily prevalences of the child-referenced items were 19 to 27 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 2011* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err141.aspx/>).

⁶Average daily prevalence is calculated as the product of the population-weighted 30-day prevalence and the average number of days divided by 30.

Table S-10

Monthly and daily occurrence of behaviors, experiences, and conditions indicating food insecurity reported by all U.S. households, 2011¹

Condition ²	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		Days ³
Worried food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more	9.55	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Food bought didn't last and (I/we) didn't have money to get more	8.37	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	8.98	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Relied on few kinds of low-cost food to feed child(ren)	9.72	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Couldn't feed child(ren) balanced meals	6.03	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Child(ren) were not eating enough	2.80	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) cut size of meals or skipped meals	6.27	66	15	19	7.9	1.65
Respondent ate less than felt he/she should	5.64	57	17	26	9.9	1.86
Respondent hungry but didn't eat because couldn't afford	3.05	57	16	27	9.7	.99
Respondent lost weight	2.06	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Adult(s) did not eat for whole day	1.04	67	13	20	7.7	.26
Cut size of child(ren)'s meals	1.43	67	14	19	8.1	.39
Child(ren) were hungry	.77	75	13	12	6.9	.18
Child(ren) skipped meals	.48	83	6	11	5.9	.09
Child(ren) did not eat for whole day	.15	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

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

¹Survey 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 11-17, 2011.

²The 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."

³Households without children are excluded from the denominator of child-referenced items.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 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-11).

Table S-11

Weekly household food spending relative to the cost of the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) by food security status and selected household characteristics, 2011

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to TFP ¹	
	Food secure	Food insecure
	<i>Ratio (Cost of TFP = 1.0)</i>	
All households	1.17	.94
Household composition:		
With children < 18 yrs	1.04	.86
At least one child < 6 yrs	1.05	.87
Married couple families	1.07	.84
Female head, no spouse	.99	.87
Male head, no spouse	1.00	.88
Other household with child ²	.90	NA
With no children < 18 yrs	1.22	1.05
More than one adult	1.22	.92
Women living alone	1.36	1.14
Men living alone	1.51	1.20
With elderly	1.17	.92
Elderly living alone	1.17	1.10
Race/ethnicity of households:		
White, non-Hispanic	1.22	.99
Black, non-Hispanic	1.00	.93
Hispanic ³	1.02	.87
Other	1.13	.92
Household income-to-poverty ratio:		
Under 1.00	.96	.89
Under 1.30	.95	.88
Under 1.85	.96	.90
1.85 and over	1.27	1.16
Income unknown	1.15	.88
Area of residence: ⁴		
Inside metropolitan area	1.21	.96
In principal cities ⁵	1.22	.97
Not in principal cities	1.22	.95
Outside metropolitan area	1.08	.86
Census geographic region:		
Northeast	1.22	1.03
Midwest	1.13	.92
South	1.17	.92
West	1.22	.94

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

¹Statistics 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 7.2 percent of all households.

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵Households 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 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Use of Food Pantries and Emergency Kitchens

The December 2011 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 23 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-12 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 2011. 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 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.⁷

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-13. Use of food pantries by household composition, race and Hispanic ethnicity, income, and residence is provided in table S-14.

⁷Previous 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).

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 2011, TEFAP supplied 748 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.

Table S-12

Use of food pantries and emergency kitchens, 2011

Category	Pantries			Kitchens		
	Total ¹	Users	Percent	Total ¹	Users	Percent
	1,000	1,000	Percent	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	119,098	6,083	5.1	119,117	736	0.6
All persons in households	304,687	17,145	5.6	304,772	1,611	.5
Adults in households	230,613	11,414	4.9	230,666	1,255	.5
Children in households	74,074	5,730	7.7	74,105	356	.5
Households by food security status:						
Food-secure households	101,311	1,796	1.8	101,351	163	.2
Food-insecure households	17,701	4,276	24.2	17,670	566	3.2
Households with low food security	10,933	2,101	19.2	10,916	220	2.0
Households with very low food security	6,768	2,175	32.1	6,753	346	5.1

¹Totals 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 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Table S-13

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, 2011

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	29.7	70.3	33.2	37.1
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	71.5	28.5	18.2	10.3
Ate meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	22.5	77.5	27.6	49.9
Did not eat meal at emergency kitchen previous 12 months	66.3	33.7	20.2	13.5

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement

Table S-14

Use of food pantries, by selected household characteristics, 2011

Category	Total ¹	Pantry users	
	1,000	1,000	Percent
All households	119,098	6,083	5.1
Household composition:			
With children < 18 yrs	38,610	2,598	6.7
At least one child < 6 yrs	17,184	1,258	7.3
Married-couple families	25,335	1,020	4.0
Female head, no spouse	9,604	1,290	13.4
Male head, no spouse	3,031	244	8.1
Other household with child ²	640	44	6.9
With no children < 18 yrs	80,488	3,484	4.3
More than one adult	47,778	1,699	3.6
Women living alone	17,971	1,076	6.0
Men living alone	14,739	710	4.8
With elderly	30,000	1,014	3.4
Elderly living alone	11,355	468	4.1
Race/ethnicity of households:			
White, non-Hispanic	83,127	3,169	3.8
Black, non-Hispanic	14,672	1,384	9.4
Hispanic ³	14,310	1,232	8.6
Other	6,989	298	4.3
Household income-to-poverty ratio:			
Under 1.00	15,408	3,058	19.8
Under 1.30	21,981	3,847	17.5
Under 1.85	31,195	4,495	14.4
1.85 and over	62,197	728	1.2
Income unknown	25,706	860	3.3
Area of residence: ⁴			
Inside metropolitan area	99,478	4,846	4.9
In principal cities ⁵	33,380	1,953	5.9
Not in principal cities	49,089	1,903	3.9
Outside metropolitan area	19,620	1,237	6.3
Census geographic region:			
Northeast	21,602	921	4.3
Midwest	26,274	1,564	6.0
South	44,596	1,979	4.4
West	26,626	1,619	6.1

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

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

³Hispanics may be of any race.

⁴Metropolitan area residence is based on 2003 Office of Management and Budget delineation.

⁵Households 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 2011 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 nonrecipient households in similar low-income ranges is presented in table S-15.⁸

⁸Food purchased with SNAP benefits is included in household food spending as calculated here. However, the value of school lunches and food obtained through the Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) is not included. Food from these sources supplemented the food purchased by many of these households.

Table S-15

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, 2011

Category	Median weekly food spending relative to cost of the TFP ¹
	<i>Ratio</i> (Cost of TFP = 1.0)
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:	
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 30 days	0.92
Did not receive SNAP ² 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	.86
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:	
Received WIC ³ previous 30 days	.88
Did not receive WIC ³ previous 30 days	.85
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:	
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	.87
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 12 months	.95

¹Statistics exclude households that did not answer the questions about spending on food or reported zero usual food spending.

²SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly the Food Stamp Program.

³WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Food Security During the 30 Days Prior to the Food Security Survey in Households That Received Food and Nutrition Assistance

Table S-16 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 nonrecipient households in similar low-income ranges.⁹ This complements table 7 of *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011* (<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/err-economic-research-report/err141.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-16

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, 2011¹

Category	Food insecurity (low or very low food security)	Very low food security
	<i>Percent</i>	
Income less than 130 percent of poverty line:		
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 30 days	29.9	13.8
Received SNAP ² benefits in every month during the previous 12 months	29.8	13.9
Received SNAP ² benefits previous 12 months but not previous 30 days (SNAP leavers)	37.8	16.4
Did not receive SNAP ² benefits previous 12 months	16.4	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	28.1	9.9
Did not receive free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	16.2	4.4
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line; children under age 5 in household:		
Received WIC ³ previous 30 days	27.4	8.4
Did not receive WIC ³ previous 30 days	17.0	4.1
Income less than 185 percent of poverty line:		
Received emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	54.9	30.1
Did not receive emergency food from food pantry previous 30 days	17.3	7.1

¹The 30-day prevalence rates refer to the 30-day period from mid-November to mid-December; the survey was conducted during the week of December 11-17, 2011. 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.

²SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

³WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

⁹It is known from comparisons between household survey data and administrative records that food program participation is underreported by household survey respondents, including those in the CPS (Meyer et al., 2009).

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-17).

Table S-17

Combined use of Federal and community food and nutrition assistance programs by low-income households,¹ 2011

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 ² benefits previous 30 days	28.5	52.8	3.4	53.6
Received free or reduced-price school lunch previous 30 days	22.2	34.7	1.5	19.2
Received WIC ³ previous 30 days	20.7	12.5	1.8	9.3
Participated in one or more of the three Federal programs	23.8	67.1	2.5	60.2
Did not participate in any of the three Federal programs	8.0	32.9	1.2	39.8

¹Analysis 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.

²SNAP = Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly called the Food Stamp Program.

³WIC = Special Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program for Women, Infants, and Children.

Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service using data from the December 2011 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

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