

Healthy People 2010 Operational Definition

19-18. Increase food security among U.S. households and in so doing reduce hunger.

National Data Source	Current Population Survey (CPS): Department of Commerce, Census Bureau; Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.
State Data Source	Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS), U.S. Census Bureau.
Healthy People 2000 Objective	Not applicable.
Changes since the 2000 Publication	None.
Measure	Percent.
Baseline (Year)	88 (1995)
Target	94
Target-Setting Method	6 percentage point improvement. For a discussion of target-setting methods, see Part A, section 4.
Numerator	Number of U.S. households that did not report experiencing food insecurity over a 12-month period.
Denominator	Number of U.S. households during a 12 month period.
Population Targeted	U.S. civilian, noninstitutionalized population.
Questions Used to Obtain the National Baseline Data	From the 1995 Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey: <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>(I/we) worried whether our food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more. Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?</i>➤ <i>The food that I/we bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more. Was that often, sometimes or never true for you in the last 12 months?</i>

- *(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals. Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
- *(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed the children because I/we were running out of money to buy food. Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
- *In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?*
[If yes:]
 - *How often did this happen - almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?*
- *(I/we) couldn't feed the children a balanced meal because (I/we) couldn't afford that. Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
- *In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?*
- *The children were not eating enough because (I/we) just couldn't afford enough food. Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?*
- *In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?*
- *Sometimes people lose weight because they don't have enough to eat. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because there wasn't enough food?*
- *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?*
- *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?*
[If yes:]
 - *How often did this happen - almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?*
- *In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?*
- *In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever skip a meal because there wasn't enough money for food?*
[If yes:]
 - *How often did this happen - almost every month, some month but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?*
- *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?

Expected Periodicity

Annual.

Comments

The 1995 Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey is a set of questions developed by an interagency working group led jointly by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and HHS's National Center for Health Statistics.^{1, 2} All of the indicators of food insecurity in the Supplement focus explicitly on food insufficiency and hunger, at adult and child levels, resulting from inadequate household resources. Other sources of food insecurity, such as child abuse/neglect or loss of function or mobility (particularly relevant to the elderly population) are not distinguished by the measure.

The Food Security Supplement questions were asked of about 45,000 households as part of the 1995 Current Population Survey (a nationally representative sample selected and interviewed by the Census Bureau). This annual supplement has been in the CPS since 1995.

A statistical analysis of the survey responses identified a set of 18 core questions that were used to identify households with food insecurity.³ Two separate measurement scales were developed: one for food insecurity during a 12-month period and another for insecurity for the past 30 days. The 12-month scale, which covers a broader range of food insecurity, was used for this objective. Households were classified as food secure if fewer than three of the questions were answered affirmatively or if only one or two questions were answered affirmatively. Otherwise, the household was classified as food insecure. An affirmative answer included "yes," "often," or "sometimes."

The Food Security Supplement also provides State-level estimates of food insecurity, which generally will be reported by the USDA based on 2- or 3-year averages.⁴ The prevalence of hunger can also be tracked at the national and State levels.

See Appendix A for focus area contact information.

References

1. Hamilton, W.L.; et al. *Household Food Security the United States in 1995: Summary Report of the Food Security Measurement Project*. Washington DC: Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Consumer Service, USDA, 1997a.
2. Hamilton, W.L.; et al. *Household Food Security in the United States in 1995: Technical Report of the Food Security Measurement Project*. Washington DC: Office of Analysis and Evaluation, Food and Consumer Service, USDA, 1997b.
3. Bickel, G.; Nord, M.; Price, C.; et al. *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security*. Revised 2000. Alexandria, VA: USDA, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), 2000.
4. Nord, M.; Jemison, K.; and Bickel, G. *Measuring Food Security in the United States: Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Hunger by State, 1996–1998*. Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Report No. 2. Washington, DC: Economic Research Service, 1999.