

## Food Insecurity in 2023: *Notable Research Findings from the USDA's Annual Food Security Report*

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On Wednesday, September 4, 2024, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released its annual study about food security in the U.S., [Household Food Security in the United States in 2023](#). Food security is the household-level economic and social condition of having access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life.

The study is based upon data collected through the Current Population Survey (CPS) in December 2023 and includes a main report (focused on household food security, food expenditures, and use of Federal food and nutrition assistance programs) and a statistical supplement (that includes additional statistics such as individual-level data). Together, the two reports provide data about different populations and household types, including by age, select racial/ethnic groups, geography, household income, and other household characteristics.

### **What does the latest USDA report show?**

The report reveals that food insecurity in the United States increased by 6% overall in 2023, with an estimated 47 million people (14.3% or 1 in 7) living in food-insecure households. This included nearly 14 million children (19.2% or 1 in 5), a small increase compared to 2022. The rates among all individuals and children continue to be the highest since 2014.<sup>1</sup>

On the following pages, we highlight eight notable research findings. Unless otherwise noted, all findings are based upon results at the individual level taken from the citation below (as well as prior years of the Statistical Supplement). While food insecurity is measured at the household level but not necessarily experienced directly by every member of a household, Feeding America has chosen to consider results about all individuals living in food-insecure households because we assume that the negative effects of food insecurity within a household are also having some negative effect on all household members.

Source for 2023 data in this document:

Rabbitt, M. P., Reed-Jones, M., Hales, L. J., and Burke, M. P. (2024). Statistical supplement to household food security in the United States in 2023 (Report No. AP-124). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.

### **Contact:**

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<sup>1</sup> In 2014, 15.4% of all individuals and 20.9% of children lived in food-insecure households.

## Notable Research Findings

### 1. 47 million people (1 in 7) experienced food insecurity in 2022 – 3 million more compared to 2022

Food insecurity increased in 2023 continuing the upward trend from 2021, though at slower rate of increase. In 2023, the rate among all individuals increased by 6% from 13.5% to 14.3%, compared to a 30% increase between 2021 and 2022. With this increase, the overall food insecurity rate and the number of people living in food-insecure households continues to be the highest it has been since 2014. (See Figure 1 and 2.)

### 2. Almost 14 million children (1 in 5) experienced food insecurity in 2023 – nearly half a million more compared to 2022

Food insecurity among children increased slightly in 2023, rising 4% from 18.5% in 2022 to 19.2% in 2023. Following the sharp increase from 2021 to 2022 (45%), this small but steady increase highlights the continued effects of the expiration of many programs including the Child Tax Credit, WIC benefits increase, and others in recent years. (See Figure 1 and 2.)

Figure 1.

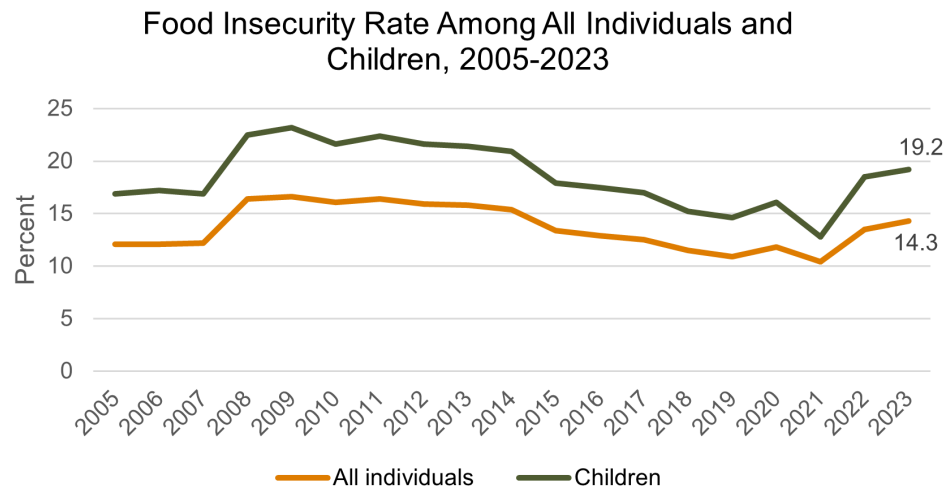
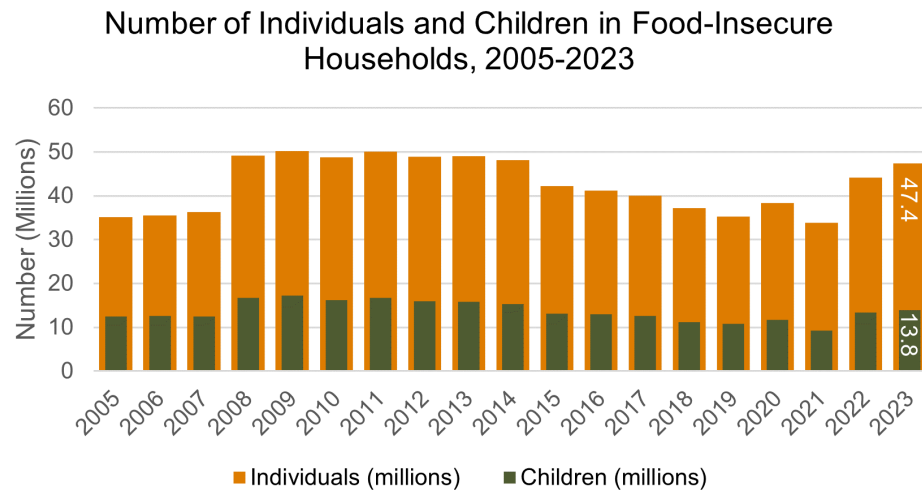


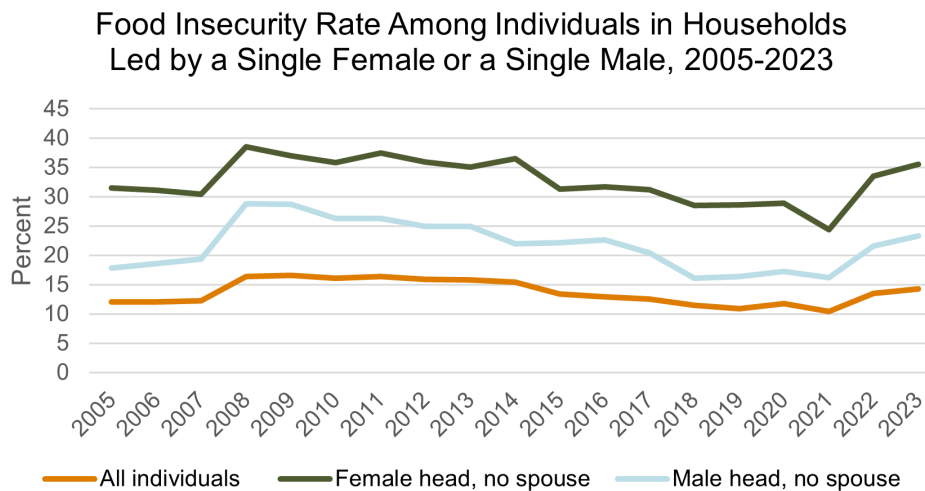
Figure 2.



### 3. Food insecurity in single-parent households remains high – Up to 1 in 3

Food insecurity among members of households with children led by a single female rose from 2022 to 2023, from 33.5% to almost 35.5% (1 in 3), a change of +6%. Food insecurity among members of households with children led by a single male rose at a similar rate (+8%), from 21.6% to 23.3% (1 in 4). (See Figure 3.)

Figure 3.



#### 4. Food insecurity remains disproportionately high among communities of color

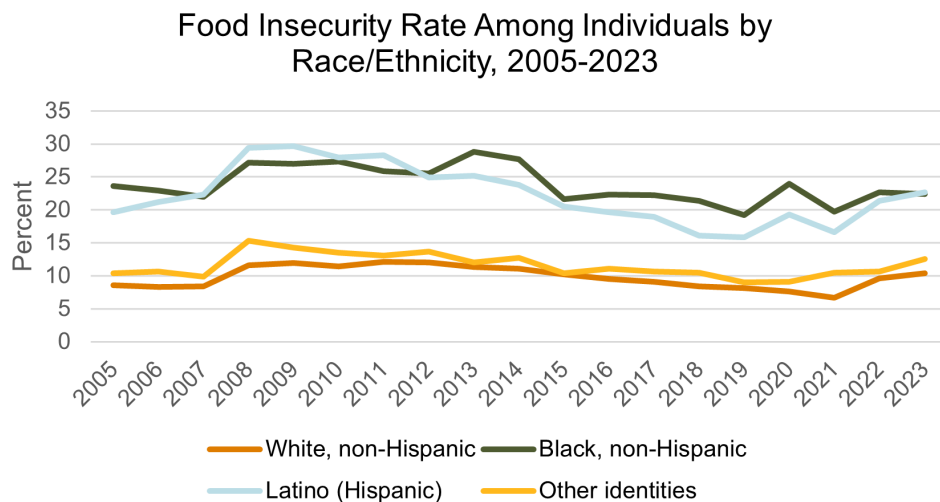
In 2023, food insecurity increased among individuals who identify as Latino (Hispanic) and white, non-Hispanic, while remaining largely unchanged for Black, non-Hispanic individuals. Food insecurity increased most significantly among a category that includes multiple identities, including Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people of multiple races.

Resulting from these changes, food insecurity disparities decreased slightly for Black individuals and were unchanged for Latino individuals. (Food insecurity disparities can be defined as the food insecurity rate for Black and Latino (Hispanic) individuals relative to the food insecurity rate for white individuals.) Year-over-year changes aside, Black and Latino individuals continue to be more than two times as likely to experience food insecurity compared to white people. (See Table 1 and Figure 4.)

**Table 1. Food Insecurity Rates and Racial Disparities Among Black, Latino, and White Individuals (2022-2023)**

Year	Black Individuals		Latino Individuals		White Individuals
	Food Insecurity Rate	Rate compared to white individuals	Food Insecurity Rate	Rate compared to white individuals	Food Insecurity Rate
2023	22.4%	2.2 times	22.7%	2.2 times	10.4%
2022	22.7%	2.4 times	21.4%	2.2 times	9.6%

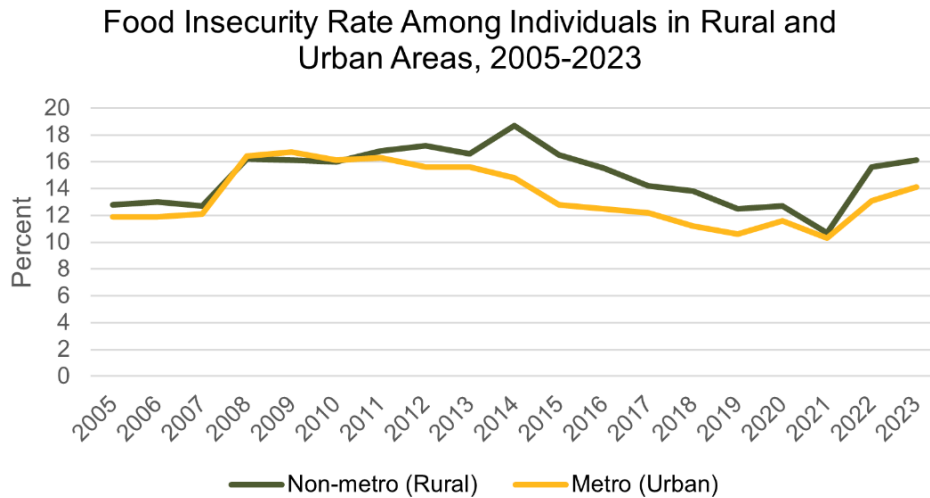
Figure 4.



**5. Geographically, food insecurity was highest in rural areas, cities, and the South**

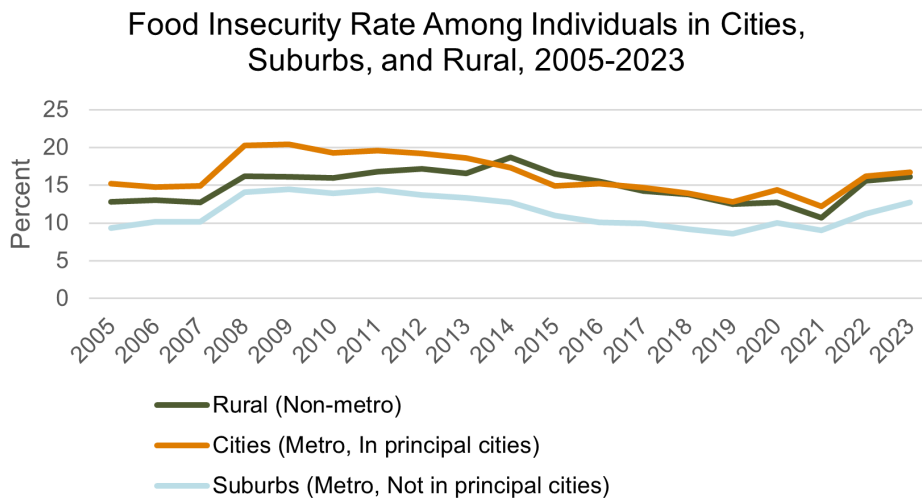
When considering metropolitan (urban) and nonmetropolitan (rural) areas, food insecurity in 2023 was higher in rural areas (16.1%) compared to urban areas (14.1%). (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5.



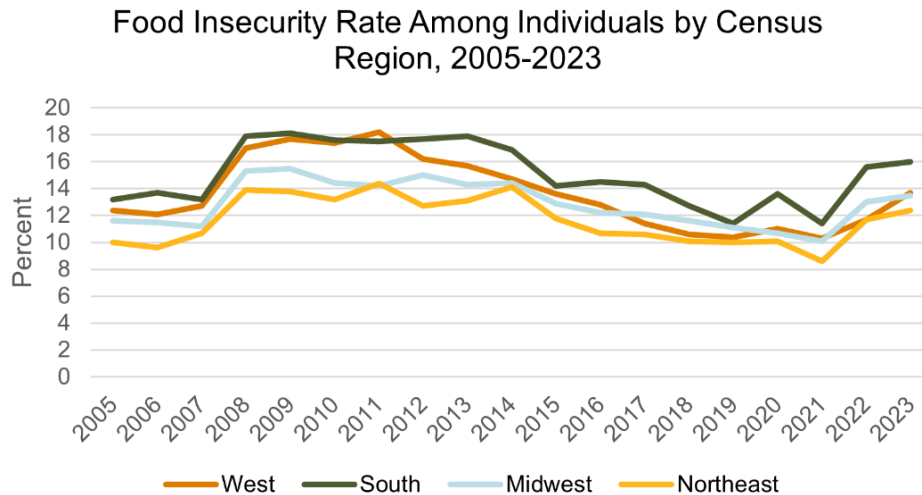
Urban areas are comprised of principal cities and suburbs (urban areas not in principal cities), and when those two areas are considered separately alongside rural areas, food insecurity was similar in rural areas (16.1%) and cities (16.7%). While food insecurity was lower in suburbs (12.7%) in 2023, the increase compared to 2022 was notable (up 18%, equivalent to 2.4 million more people). (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6.



Among the four Census regions in the country, food insecurity among individuals living in the South was the highest (16%), although food insecurity increased the most in the West (11.7% in 2022 to 13.7% in 2023). (See Figure 7.)

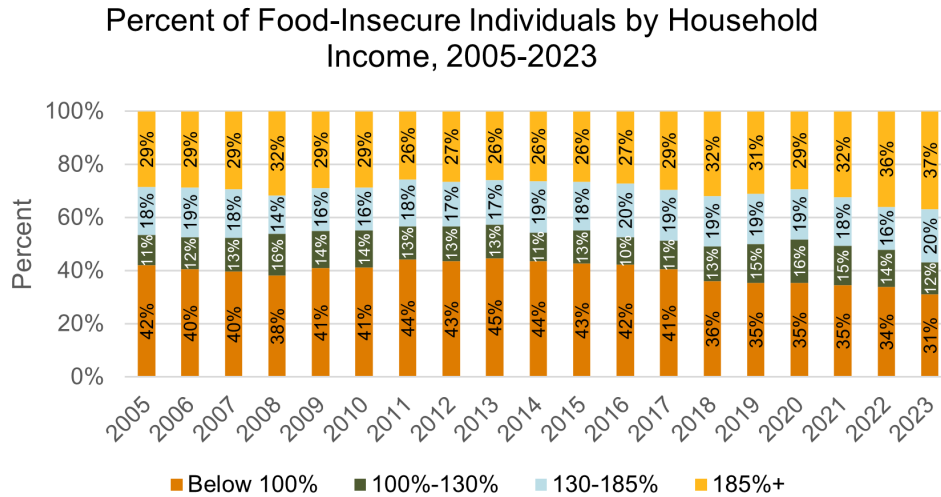
Figure 7.



**6. 37% of people experiencing food insecurity may be ineligible for federal programs**

Even though income is inversely related to food insecurity, many of the people who experience food insecurity have income above the federal poverty line (FPL), and a slightly higher share – 37% - have income above 185% of the FPL. In 2023, this amounts to more than 14.5 million people who had difficulty making ends meet but also had an income level that was too high to qualify for most federal food assistance benefits. For people in this situation, the charitable food system can be a critical support. (See Figure 8.)

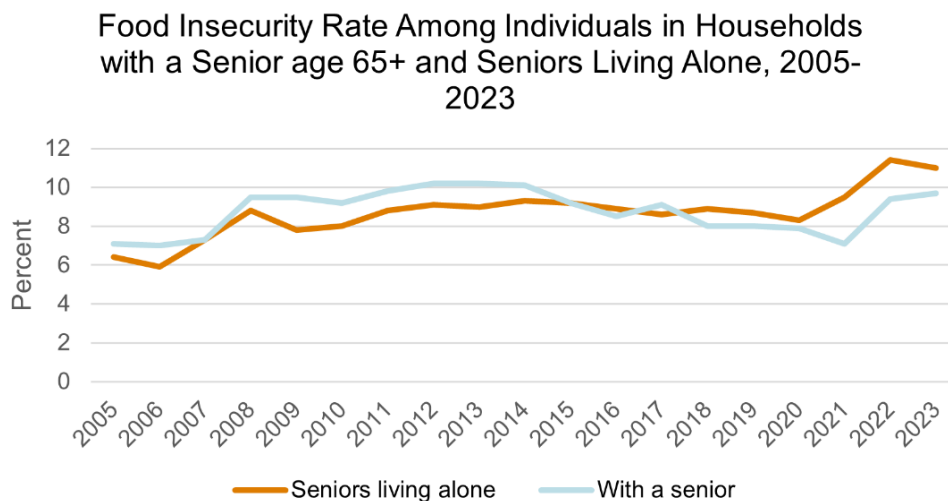
Figure 8.



### 7. Half a million more senior household members experienced food insecurity in 2023

Food insecurity continues to be lower among seniors compared to younger people, but seniors were not spared when it came to increasing food insecurity from 2022 to 2023. The food insecurity rate among individuals living in households with a senior age 65+ rose slightly from 9.4% in 2022 to 9.7% in 2023 (1 in 10), which was an increase of 3% and equivalent to half a million more people. The rate was even higher among seniors 65+ living alone, at 11.0% (1 in 9), though this rate reflects a decrease compared to 2022. (See Figure 9.)

Figure 9.



**8. An estimated 16.5 million people experienced a more severe level of food insecurity in 2023**  
 Among the 47 million people who experienced food insecurity in 2023, more than one third - 16.5 million people – experienced a more severe level of food insecurity referred to as *very low food security*, which is characterized by reduced food intake and disrupted eating patterns at times during the year because of limited money and other resources for obtaining food. (See Figure 10.)

Figure 10.

