

The 2026 Washington State Food Security Survey: Findings from WAFOOD Wave 6

Research Brief 17

About the WAFOOD Surveys

The Washington State Food Security Survey (WAFOOD) first launched in the summer of 2020 with a focus on how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted food security, food assistance use, economic well-being, and the health of Washingtonians. A 2nd survey was conducted from December 2020 to January 2021, a 3rd from July to August 2021, a 4th from December 2022 to January 2023, a 5th from August to October 2024, and a 6th from March to April 2026.

The WAFOOD survey uses convenience sampling and an online format. It is open to all who live in Washington State over 18 years of age but intentionally oversamples households with lower incomes and those using food assistance, to provide deeper insights on food insecurity throughout the state. All responses are anonymous. This research brief reports on the 5,717 responses to the 6th survey (WAFOOD6) and focuses on food security, food assistance use, economic well-being, and health among Washingtonians.

Key Findings from WAFOOD Wave 6

From a sample of 5,717 Washington State residents surveyed between March - April 2026:

1. Food insecurity affected WAFOOD6 households across all income levels. Even among households earning \$75,000-\$150,000, 25% were food insecure and 26% used food assistance.
2. Topping the list of expenses that WAFOOD6 households found “hard to afford” in the past month were utilities, food, and housing.
3. Nearly all WAFOOD6 households experienced and worried about rising prices, and 69% of food insecure WAFOOD6 households reduced the quantity and quality of food they ate to cope with rising prices.
4. Almost half of WAFOOD6 households (48%) used food assistance in the past month. The most commonly used programs were food banks and pantries, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and school meals.
5. Both food secure and food insecure WAFOOD6 households reported using food assistance programs, reflecting the role of these programs in helping households manage food costs.
6. Free school meals supported food affordability: most WAFOOD6 households with children reported having access to free school meals, and the majority reported that school meals helped stretch their food budgets.

Section 1: Food Security

FOOD INSECURITY VARIED BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

- **Age:** Food insecurity was highest among 18-24-year-olds and 45-54-year-olds, with 56% of respondents in those age groups experiencing food insecurity in the past month.
- **Gender:** Food insecurity was highest among transgender and nonbinary respondents and respondents of another gender identity, with 56% experiencing food insecurity in the past month.
- **Race and ethnicity:** Food insecurity varied by race and ethnicity. Food insecurity was highest among American Indian/Alaskan Native, Black, Pacific Islander, and multi-racial respondents as well as Hispanic respondents and lowest among White, Asian, and non-Hispanic respondents.

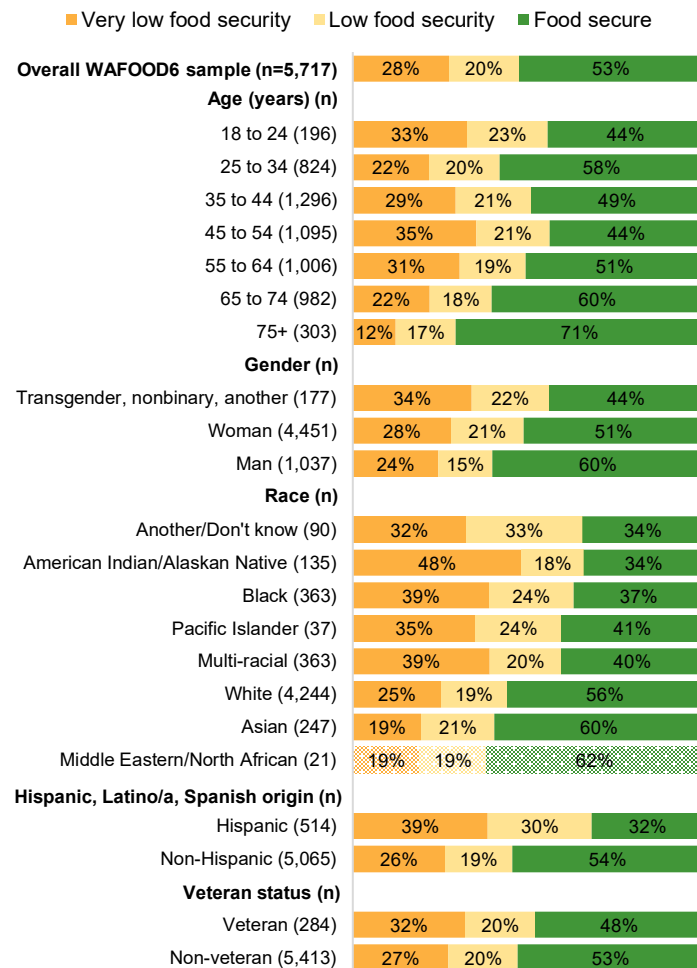


Figure 1a. WAFOOD6 household food security in the past month (n=5,717), by respondent demographic characteristics (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses) ^{a, b, c, d}

FOOD INSECURITY WAS HIGHER AMONG HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN AND AMONG SINGLE-PERSON AND LARGER HOUSEHOLDS

- **Household size:** 53% of single person households and 52% of households of 4 or more experienced food insecurity in the past month.
- **Children:** 54% of households with children and 47% of households without children experienced food insecurity in the past month.
- **Home location:** 52% of rural households and 46% of urban households experienced food insecurity in the past month.

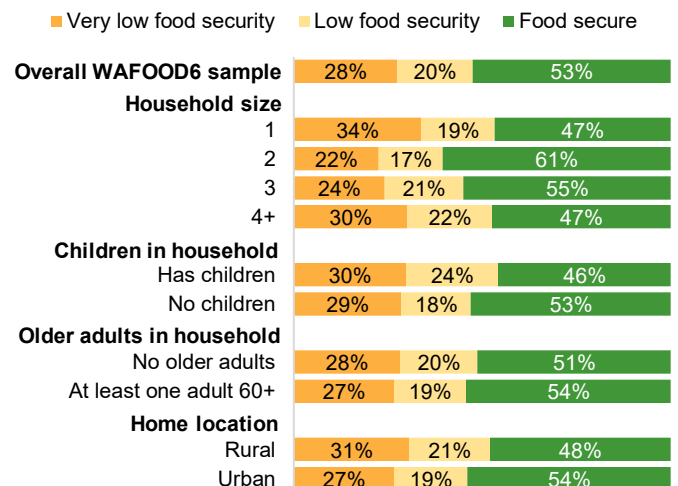


Figure 1b. WAFOOD6 household food security in the past month (n=5,717), by respondent household characteristics ^e

FOOD INSECURITY RELATED TO EDUCATION, INCOME, AND HOUSING STATUS

- **Education:** Food insecurity was highest among respondents with a high school education or less, with 64% experiencing food insecurity in the past month.
- **Income:** While food insecurity was experienced at all income levels, lower income households more commonly experienced food insecurity. 80% of households under \$15,000 were food insecure.
- **Employment status:** 56% of unemployed and 43% of employed households were food insecure.
- **Housing status:** 74% of respondents who had housing situations other than owning or renting were food insecure.

Very low food security Low food security Food secure

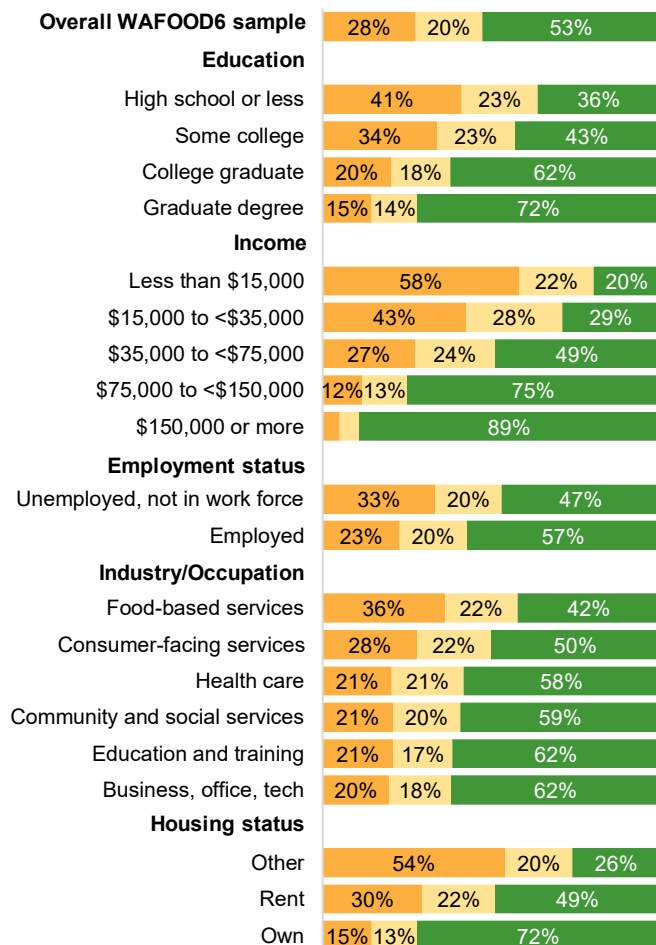


Figure 2. WAFOOD6 household food security in the past month, by respondent socioeconomic characteristics ^{f, g, h}

FOOD SECURITY VARIED ACROSS WA COUNTIES

- Among counties with at least 30 survey responses, food insecurity by county ranged from 32% to 65%.

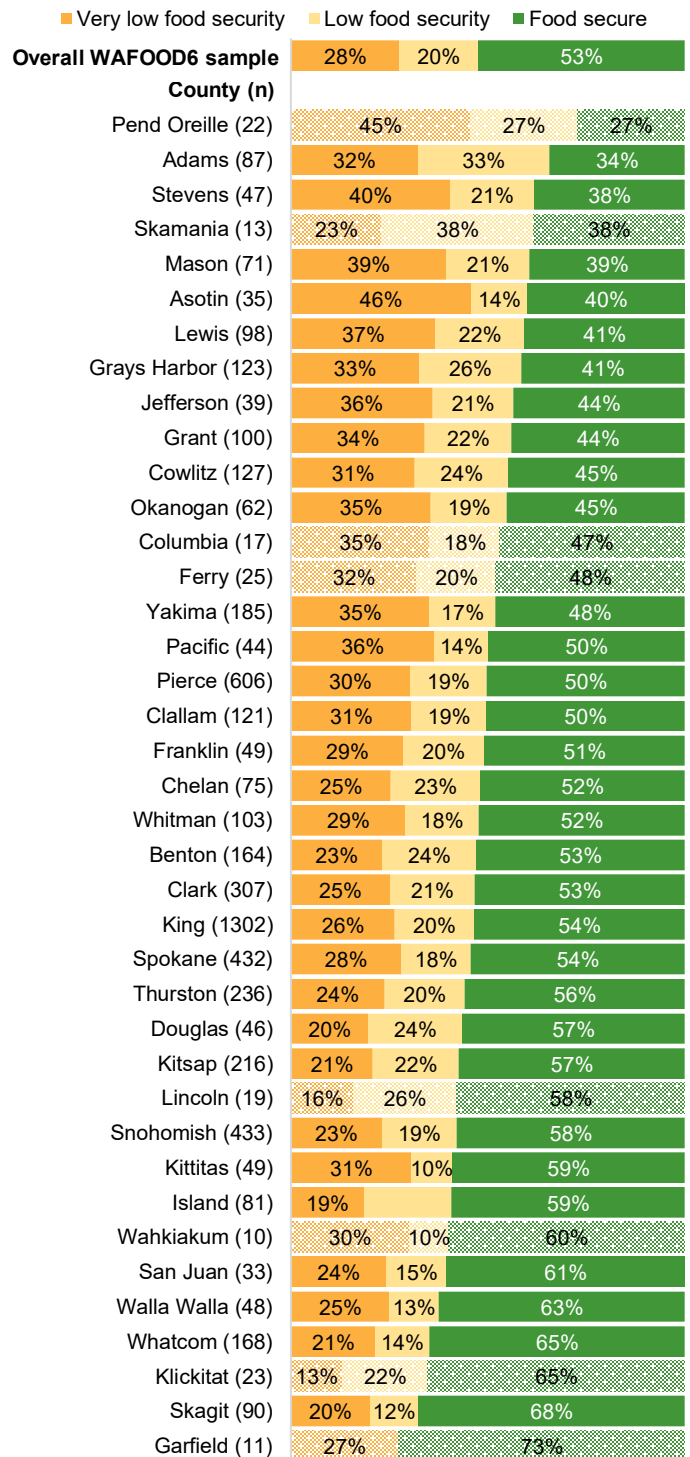


Figure 3. WAFOOD6 household food security in the past month, by county (n=5,717) (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

Section 2: Economic Security

LOWER FINANCIAL SECURITY IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- When asked how they were doing financially, food insecure households felt less financially secure.
- 80% of food insecure households said they were *not getting by* or *just barely getting by*, compared to 19% of food secure households.

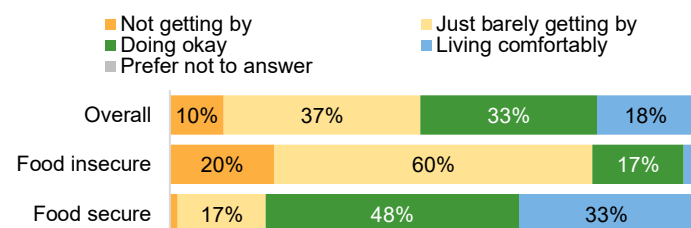


Figure 4. Financial security of WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by food security status

HARD-TO-AFFORD EXPENSES: UTILITIES, FOOD, HOUSING

- Food insecure households had more difficulty affording all types of bills and expenses in the past month than food secure households. For example, 65% of food insecure households and 11% of food secure households reported difficulty affording food.
- Urban and rural household had similar difficulties affording most bills and expenses in the past month, though there were greater differences for rent: 37% of urban households and 32% of rural households reported difficulty affording rent.

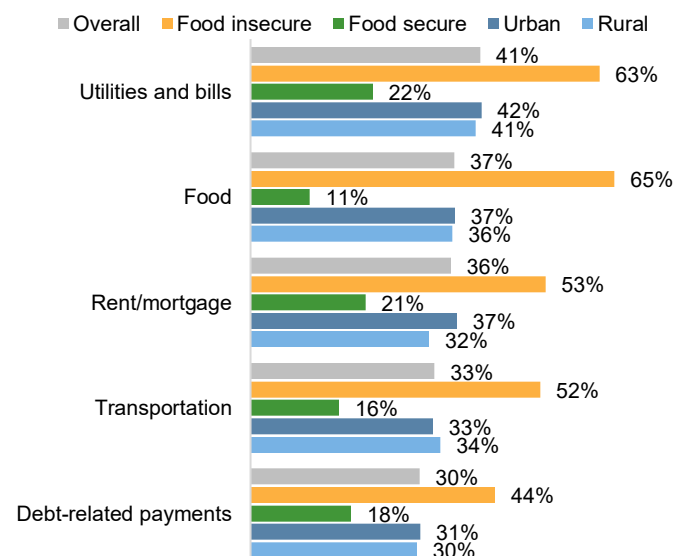


Figure 5. Bills or expenses that were hard to afford in the past month among WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by food security status and urbanicity

HOUSING WAS THE SINGLE BIGGEST FINANCIAL CONCERN

- When asked about their single biggest financial concern, WAFOOD6 respondents' top concern was rent/mortgage.
- Rent/mortgage concerns differed by household food security status and urbanicity. For example, 36% of urban households and 24% of rural households chose rent/mortgage as their biggest financial concern.
- Food ranked sixth as the single biggest financial concern among WAFOOD6 households, and it ranked third as the single biggest financial concern among food insecure WAFOOD6 households.

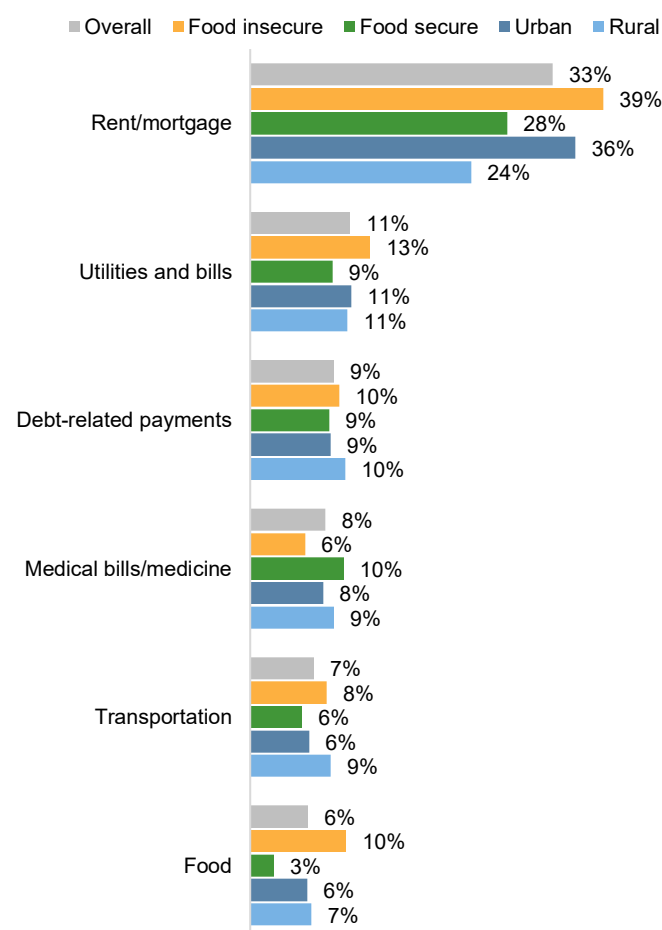


Figure 6. Biggest financial concern in the past month among WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by food security status and urbanicity

MORE FINANCIAL STRESSORS AMONG FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- 62% of food insecure households reported they were never able to put money into savings in the past year compared to 16% of food secure households.
- 45% of food insecure households reported income loss in the past year compared to 17% of food secure households.
- 5% of food insecure households reported eviction/foreclosure in the past year compared to 0.5% of food secure households.

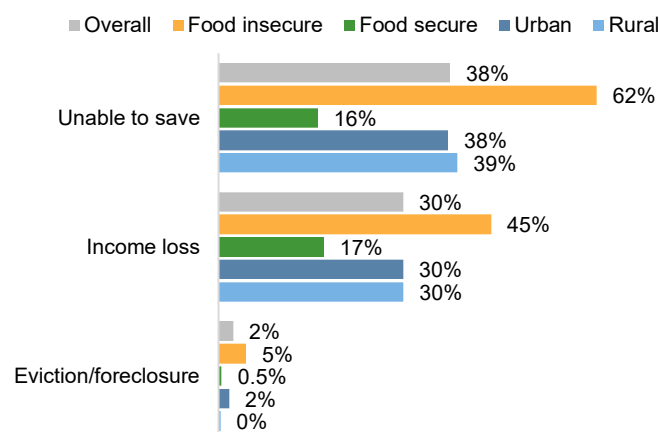


Figure 7. Past-year savings and financial stressors reported by WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by household food security status

PRICE INCREASES FELT BY ALL HOUSEHOLDS

- Almost all WAFOOD6 households felt that prices in their area increased in the past month.
- 91% of food insecure households and 89% of food secure households reported that prices increased in the past month.

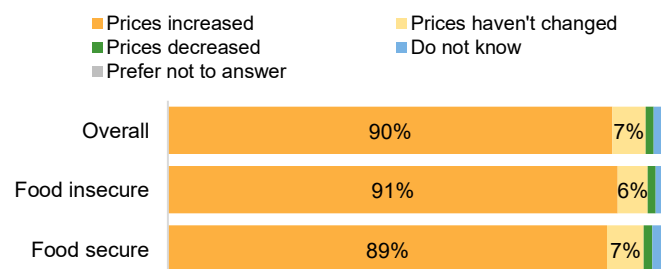


Figure 8. WAFOOD6 respondent experiences with prices in the past month (n=5,717), overall and by food security status

PRICE INCREASES MORE STRESSFUL AMONG FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Food insecure households experienced greater financial stress from price increases.
- 72% of food insecure households and 17% of food secure households reported that price increases in the past month were very stressful.

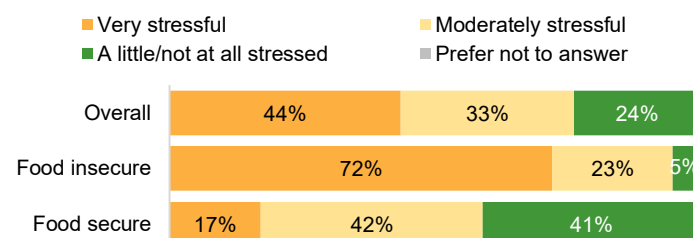


Figure 9. WAFOOD6 respondent financial stress related to price increases in the past month (n=5,717), overall and by food security status

WIDESPREAD CONCERN ABOUT FUTURE PRICES

- While most WAFOOD6 households expressed concern about future price increases, food insecure households were almost universally concerned.
- 83% of food insecure households and 56% of food secure households were very concerned about price increases in the next 6 months.

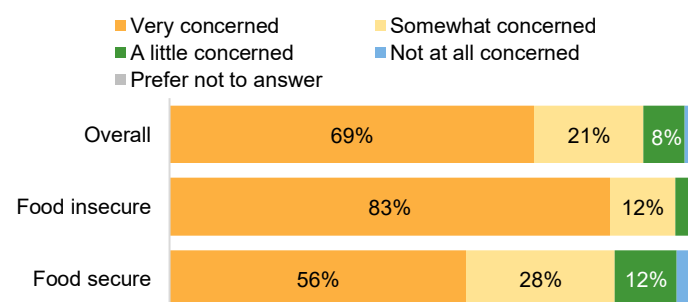


Figure 10. WAFOOD6 households' concern about price increases in the next 6 months (n=5,717), overall and by food security status

TO COPE WITH PRICE INCREASES, FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS RESTRICTED FOOD AMOUNT AND QUALITY

- WAFOOD6 households used many strategies to cope with higher prices. The most common were to *shop for lower prices* and *restrict spending on food away from home*.
- Coping strategies differed by food security status. For example, 62% of food insecure households and 24% of food secure households reported they *restrict food quantity and quality*.
- More urban than rural households reported that they *shop for lower prices* (64% vs. 54%) and are *creative/frugal about using food* (49% vs. 39%).

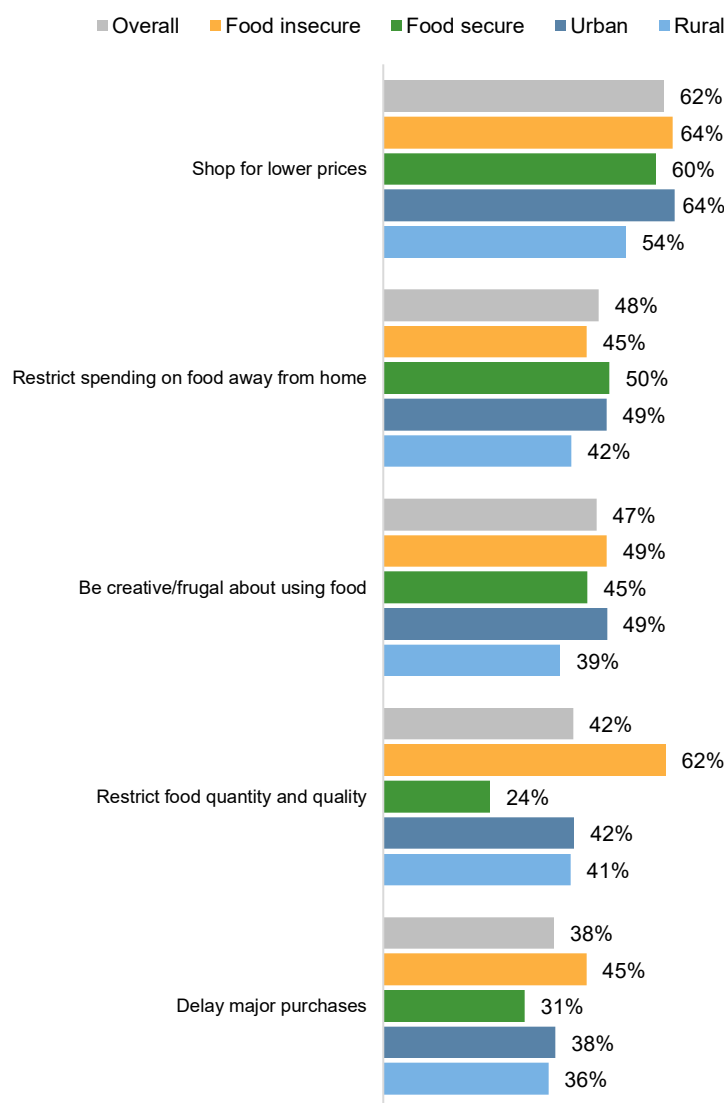


Figure 11. WAFOOD6 respondents' coping strategies for price increases over the past month (n=5,717), overall and by food security status and urbanicity

Section 3: Food Assistance

HIGH USE OF FOOD ASSISTANCE ACROSS WA COUNTIES

- Overall, 48% of WAFOOD6 households used at least one type of food assistance in the past month.
- In counties with at least 30 survey responses, use of food assistance ranged from 35-85% of WAFOOD6 households.

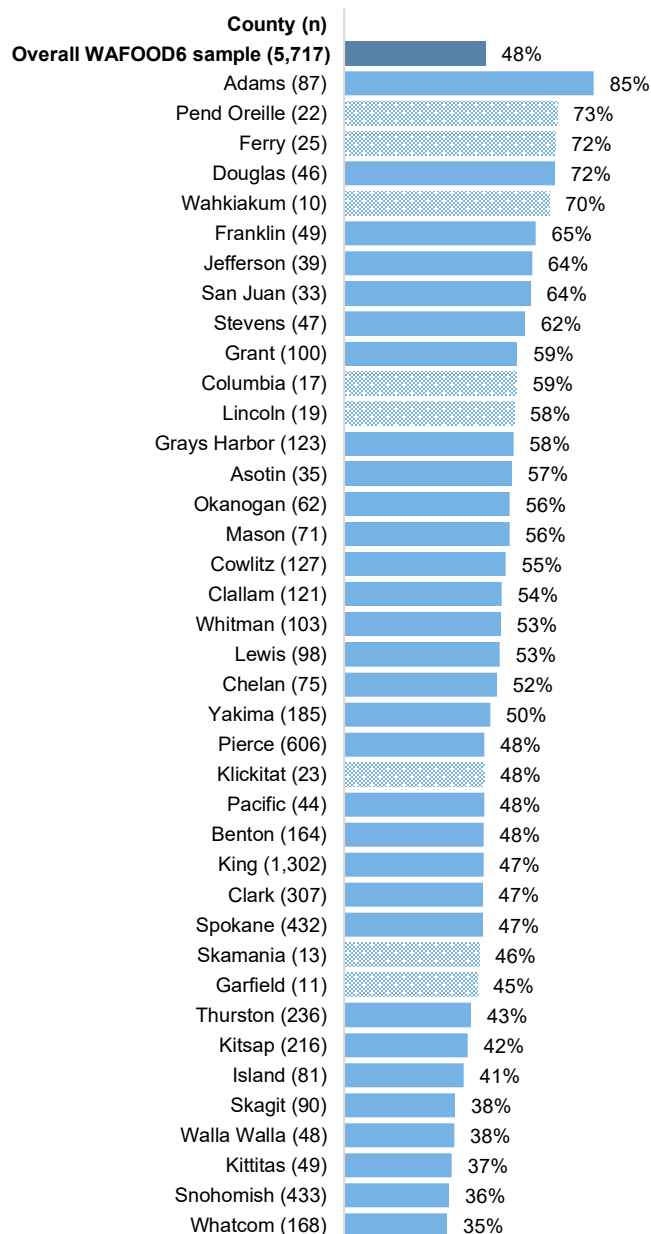


Figure 12. WAFOOD6 household use of any type of food assistance in the past month (n=5,717), overall and by county (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE VARIED ACROSS DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

- Age:** Food assistance use was highest among 18-24-year-olds, with 59% using food assistance in the past month.
- Gender:** Food assistance use was highest in the transgender, nonbinary, or another gender category, with 59% using food assistance in the past month.
- Race and ethnicity:** Food assistance use varied by race and ethnicity. For example, 68% of Hispanic respondents used food assistance in the past month, compared to 47% of non-Hispanic respondents.
- Veteran Status:** 52% of veteran and 48% of non-veteran respondents used food assistance in the past month.

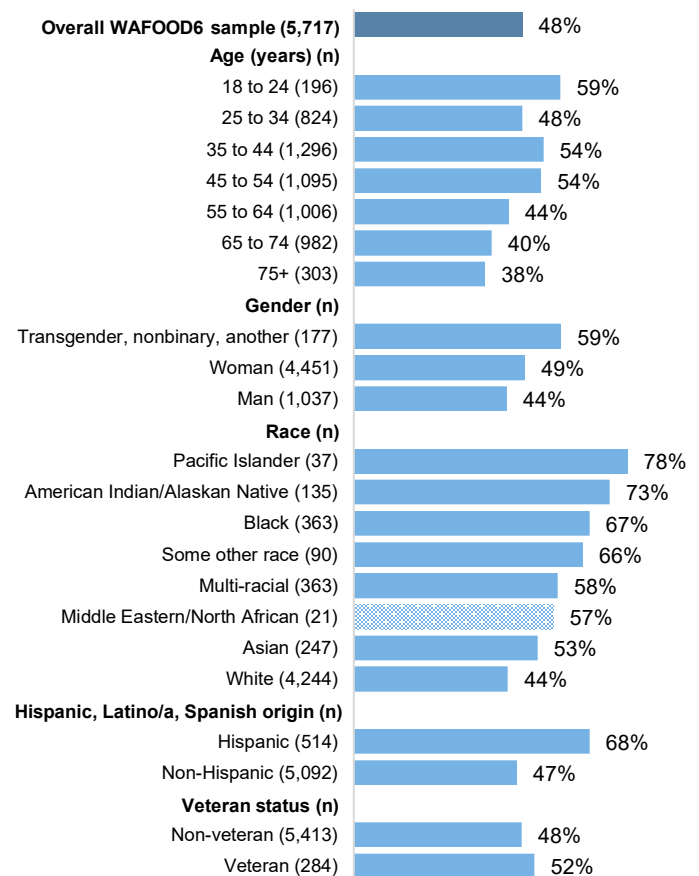


Figure 13. WAFOOD6 household use of any type of food assistance in the past month (n=5,717), by respondent demographic characteristics (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE HIGHER AMONG HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN AND AMONG SINGLE-PERSON AND LARGER HOUSEHOLDS

- **Children:** 60% of households with children used food assistance, and 41% of households with no children used food assistance.
- **Household size:** Food assistance use was highest in households with 4+ people, with 59% using food assistance in the past month; followed by single-person households.
- **Home location:** 57% of rural households used food assistance, and 46% of urban households used food assistance.

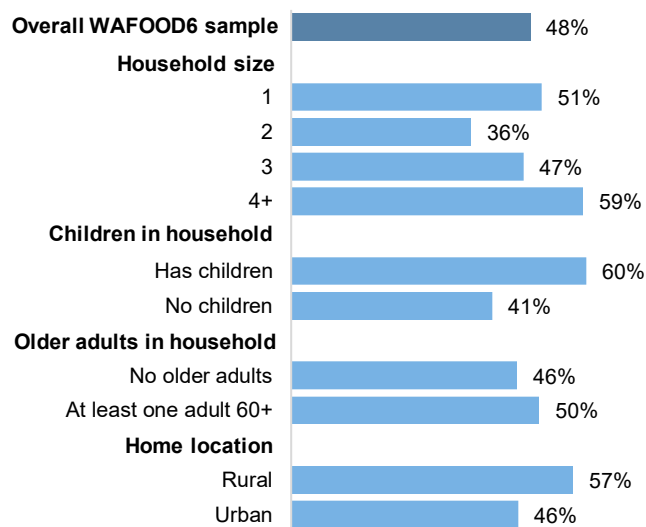


Figure 14. WAFOOD6 household use of any type of food assistance in the past month (n=5,717), by respondent household characteristics

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE HIGHER AMONG THOSE WITH LESS EDUCATION AND INCOME

- **Education:** Food assistance use was highest among respondents with a high school education or less, with 67% using food assistance in the past month.
- **Income:** While food assistance use was reported at all household income levels, lower income households more commonly reported food assistance use. 88% of households with incomes under \$15,000 reported using food assistance in the past month.
- **Employment status:** 55% of unemployed households used food assistance, and 43% of employed households used food assistance.
- **Industry/occupation:** Respondents in food-based service (55%) and consumer-facing service occupations (53%) had the highest food assistance use.

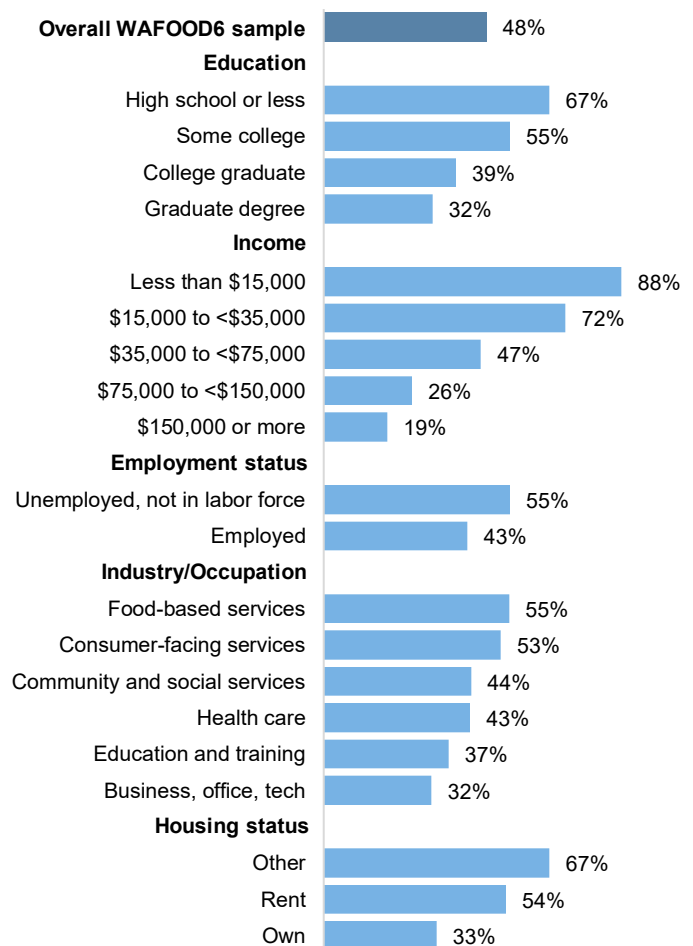


Figure 15. WAFOOD6 household use of any type of food assistance in the past month (n=5,717), by respondent socioeconomic characteristics

MOST COMMONLY USED FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: FOOD BANKS, SNAP, AND SCHOOL MEALS

- Almost half of WAFOOD6 households (48%) used at least one type of food assistance in the past month. Figures 16a-d explore which specific programs were used by this group, overall and disaggregated by food security status, urbanicity, and whether households have children.
- The most commonly used programs among WAFOOD6 households were food banks/pantries, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and school meals.
- For example, among WAFOOD6 households using any type of food assistance, 49% reported receiving assistance from SNAP in the past month.

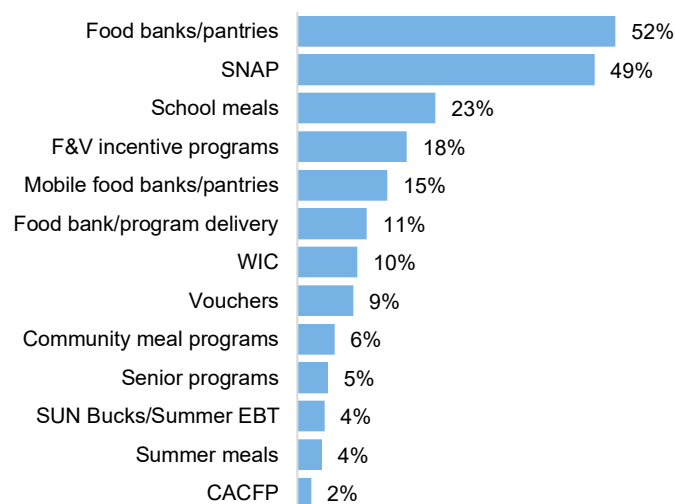


Figure 16a. Use of different food assistance programs in the past month among WAFOOD6 households using at least one type of food assistance (n=2,762)ⁱ

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE PATTERNS IN FOOD SECURE AND FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Both food secure and food insecure WAFOOD6 households reported using food assistance programs, reflecting the role of these programs in helping households manage food costs. However, use of most programs was higher among food insecure households in this sample.
- For example, among WAFOOD6 households using any type of food assistance, 58% of food insecure households and 38% of food secure households reported using food banks/pantries in the past month.
- Among all food secure households in the WAFOOD6 sample, 26% had used at least one type of food assistance program in the past month. Among all food insecure households in the WAFOOD6 sample, 73% had used at least one type of food assistance program in the past month (not shown in the figure).

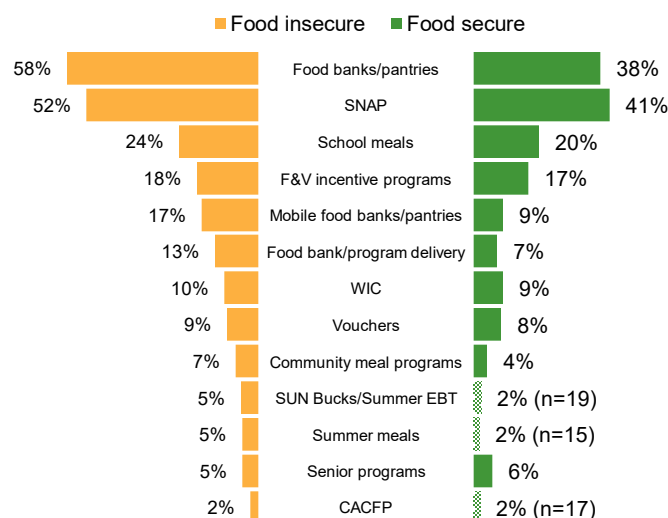


Figure 16b. Food assistance use in the past month among WAFOOD6 households using at least one type of food assistance (n=2,762), by household food security status (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE PATTERNS IN URBAN AND RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

- Urban and rural households showed similar overall patterns in food assistance use, although participation in some programs differed.
- For example, among WAFOOD6 households using any type of food assistance, 51% of urban households and 41% of rural households used SNAP in the past month.

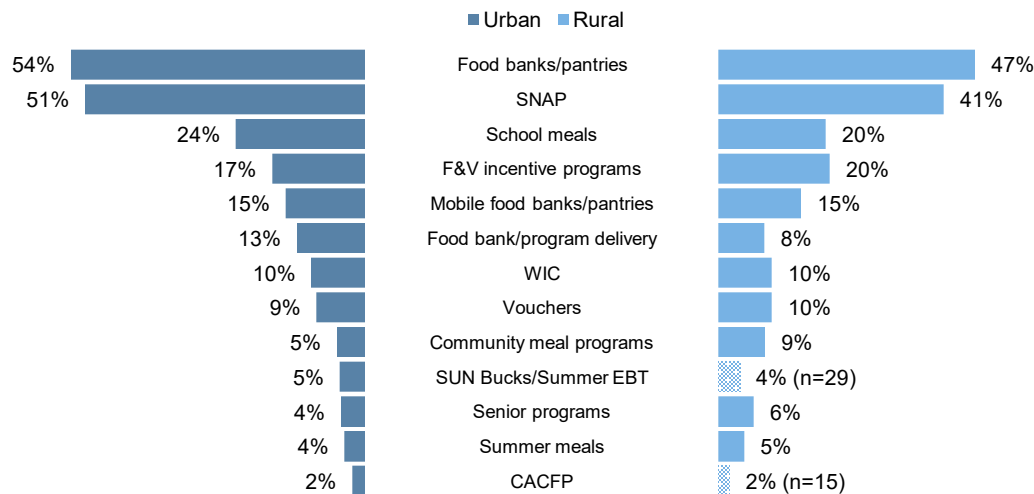


Figure 16c. Food assistance use in the past month among WAFOOD6 households using at least one type of food assistance (n=2,762), by urbanicity (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

FOOD ASSISTANCE USE PATTERNS IN HOUSEHOLDS WITH AND WITHOUT CHILDREN

- Among WAFOOD6 households using any type of food assistance, the most common food assistance programs used by households with children were school meals (43%), food banks/pantries (43%), and SNAP (41%).
- The most common food assistance programs used by households without children were food banks/pantries (61%) and SNAP (57%), followed by fruit and vegetable incentive programs (16%).

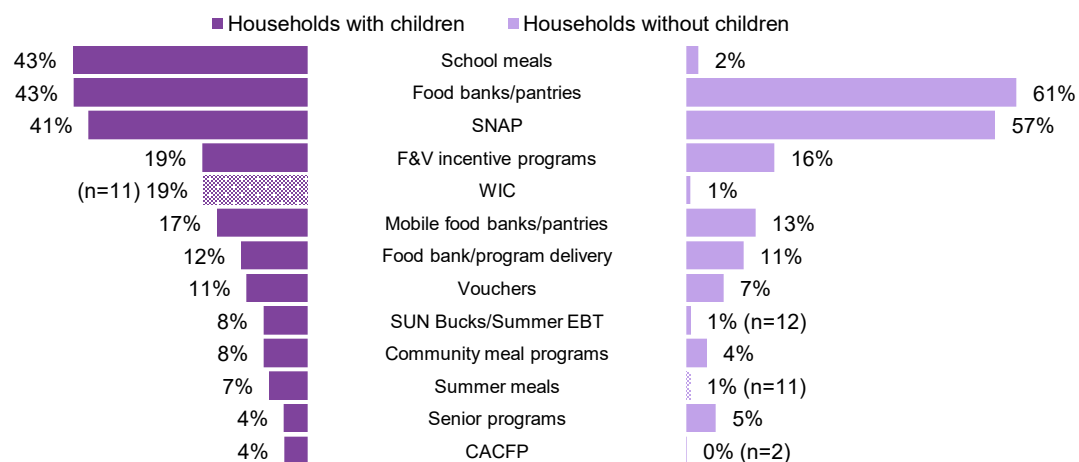


Figure 16d. Food assistance use in the past month among WAFOOD6 households using at least one type of food assistance (n=2,762), among households with and without children (textured bars indicate categories with fewer than 30 responses)

FOOD ASSISTANCE BARRIERS DIFFERED FOR FOOD SECURE AND FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Top barriers to using or applying for more food assistance were *income does not qualify* and respondents already *using all that they were eligible for*.
- Barriers differed by food security status. For example, 27% of food insecure respondents and 9% of food secure respondents reported they were *using all they were currently eligible for*.
- Barriers did not differ greatly among urban and rural households.

Overall Food insecure Food secure Urban Rural

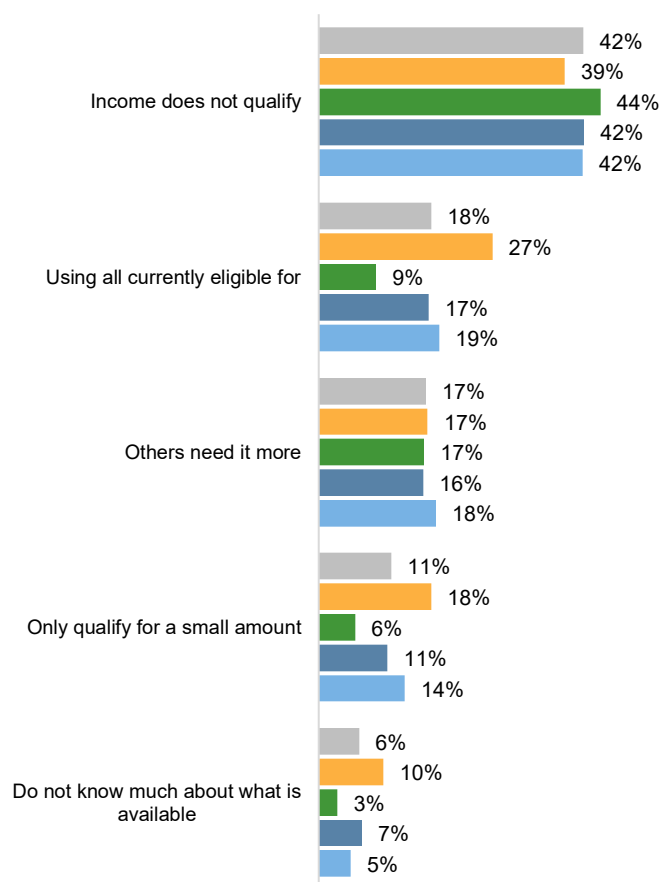


Figure 17. WAFOOD6 barriers to food assistance use in the past month (n=5,717), by food security status and urbanicity

MOST HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN REPORT FREE SCHOOL MEALS ARE AVAILABLE AND HELP STRETCH HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS

- Most households who used school meals said their children's schools provide free school meals (83%). Among respondents who said that all or some of their children receive free school meals:
 - Over half (58%) said their children would qualify for meals free of charge even if their schools did not offer free meals to all students.
 - A majority (65%) said free school meals help stretch their household food budget.

True Sometimes true Not true Not sure Prefer not to answer

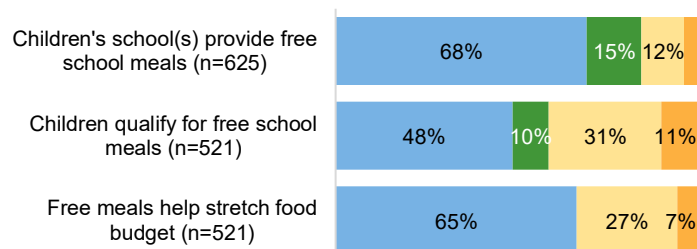


Figure 18. Free school meal availability, eligibility, and perceived budget benefits, among WAFOOD6 households with children who used school meals.

Note: For the rows "Children's school(s) provide free school meals" and "Children qualify for free school meals," True indicates that this was true for all of the respondents' children, and Sometimes true indicates that this was true for some of the respondents' children. For the row "Free meals help stretch food budget," True indicates that respondents selected "It has helped us stretch our food budget," and Not true indicates that respondents selected "It has not changed our food budget."

HOUSEHOLDS ATE MOST OF THE FOOD THEY RECEIVED FROM FOOD BANKS OR FOOD PANTRIES

- The majority of households who received food from food banks or pantries (including mobile and delivery) reported being able to eat all or most of the food they received from these programs, rather than discarding them.

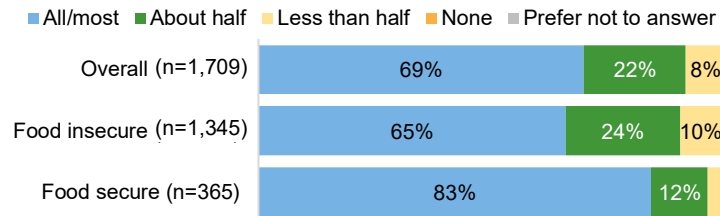


Figure 19. Amount of food from food banks/pantries that households were able to eat in the past month, by food security status, among WAFOOD6 households who reported getting food from food banks/pantries (including mobile and delivery) (n=1,709)

FOOD FROM FOOD BANKS OR FOOD PANTRIES RARELY LASTED MORE THAN A WEEK

- The majority of households (67%) who received food from food banks or pantries (including mobile and delivery) reported the food lasted less than a week, on average.

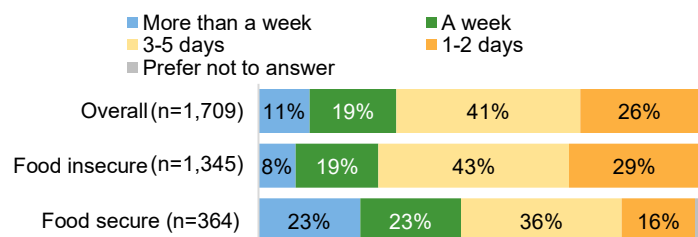


Figure 20. Average amount of time food from food banks/pantries lasted in the past month, by food security status, among WAFOOD6 households who reported getting food from food banks/pantries (including mobile and delivery) (n=1,709)

HIGH FAMILIARITY AND PERCEIVED HEALTHFULNESS OF FOOD FROM FOOD BANKS OR PANTRIES

- A majority of respondents who received food from food banks or pantries (including mobile and delivery) perceived the food they received from these programs as familiar, with 60% reporting these foods as *often* familiar.
- Most (96%) perceived these foods as *often* or *sometimes* good for their health and well-being.

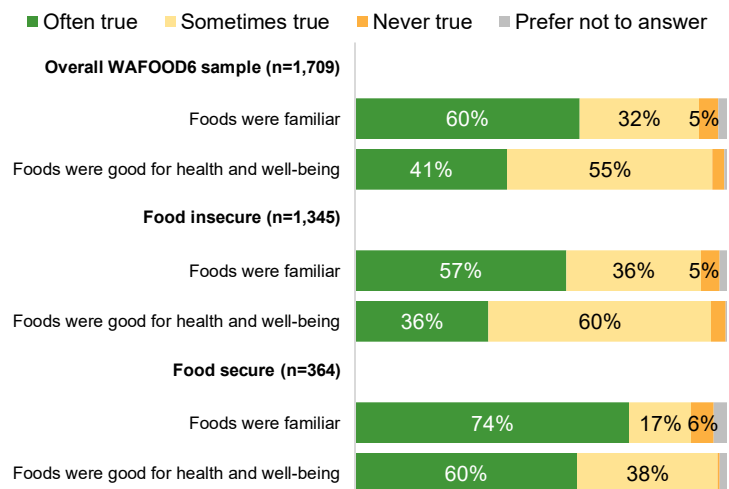


Figure 21. Perceptions of food received from food banks/pantries in the past month, by food security status, among WAFOOD6 households who reported getting food from food banks/pantries (including mobile and delivery) (n=1,709)

Section 4: Food Affordability, Diet Quality, and Health

WIDESPREAD PERCEPTION THAT EATING WASHINGTON-PRODUCED FOODS IS IMPORTANT

- 58% of respondents felt that it was *moderately* or *very important* to eat foods that were grown, caught, gathered, or processed in Washington state.
- Perception of the importance of eating Washington-produced foods did not have substantial variation by food security status or urbanicity.

■ Very important ■ Moderately important
■ Slightly important ■ Not important
■ Prefer not to answer

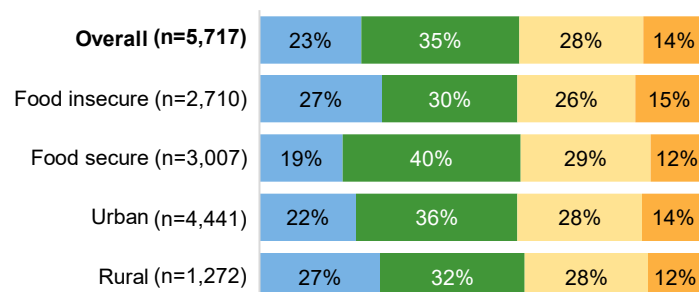


Figure 22. WAFOOD6 respondent perceptions of the importance of eating foods produced in Washington state (n=5,717), overall and by food security status and urbanicity

LESS SPENDING ON GROCERIES AND EATING OUT AMONG FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS AT ALL INCOMES

- Overall, households spent more on groceries (average of \$262 per person per month) than eating out (average of \$83 per person per month).
- While food insecure households spent slightly less on groceries compared to food secure households at all income levels, grocery spending was similar by food security status and income level.

■ Food at home (groceries) ■ Food away from home (eating out)

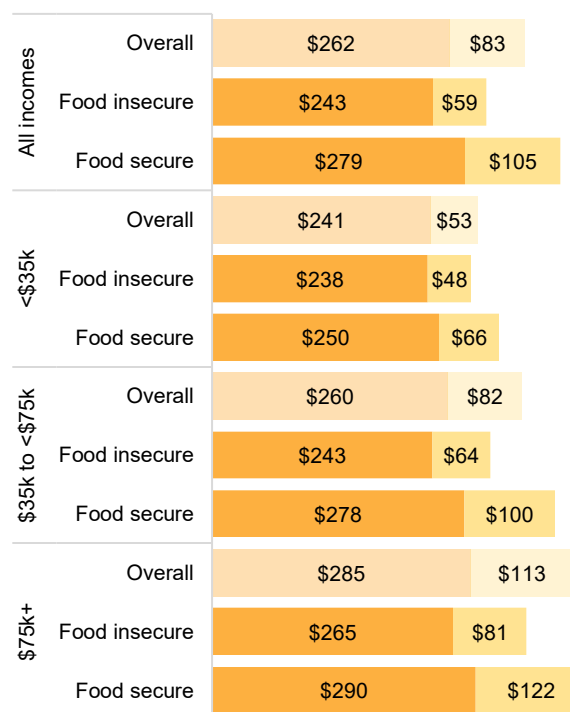


Figure 23. Monthly per person household food expenditures reported by WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by income level and household food security status

NUTRIENT-RICH, PERISHABLE FOODS HARDER TO AFFORD

- Households reported protein-rich foods and perishable foods as among the most difficult-to-afford, such as red meat, chicken, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, and eggs.
- For example, 56% of households reported difficulty affording red meat and 36% of households reported difficulty affording fresh fruit.

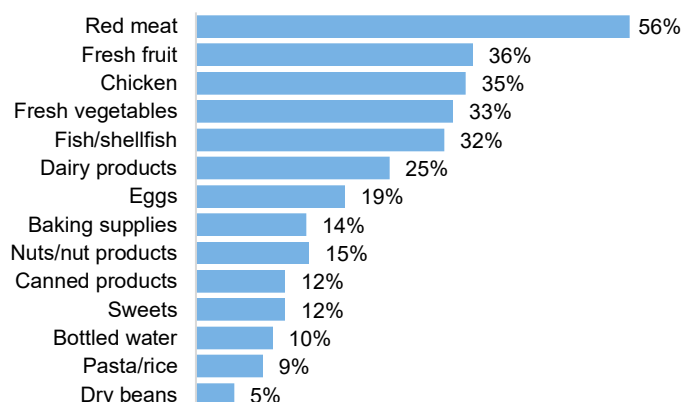


Figure 24. Food items reported as difficult-to-afford in the past 30 days by WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717)

PROTEIN-RICH AND FRESH FOODS ESPECIALLY HARD TO AFFORD FOR FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Food affordability was a bigger issue for food insecure households than food secure households, with protein-rich, fresh foods reported as most difficult-to-afford.
- For example, in food insecure households, 82% reported difficulty affording red meat; 58% affording fresh fruit; and 43% affording eggs.

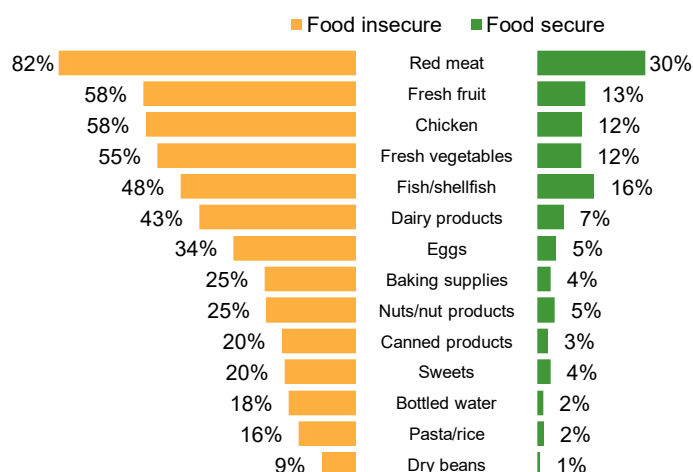


Figure 25. Food items reported as difficult-to-afford in the past 30 days by WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), by household food security status

LESS VEGETABLE, FRUIT, AND PROTEIN CONSUMPTION AMONG FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Almost half of WAFOOD6 respondents reported eating vegetables less than once a day, and more than half reported eating fruit less than once a day.
- Vegetables, fruit, and proteins were also eaten fewer times per day in food insecure households compared to food secure households.
- For example, while 72% of food secure households reported eating vegetables one or more times per day, only 46% of food insecure households reported eating vegetables one or more times per day.

■ 2+ ■ 1 to <2 ■ 0.5 to <1 ■ <0.5 ■ Prefer not to answer

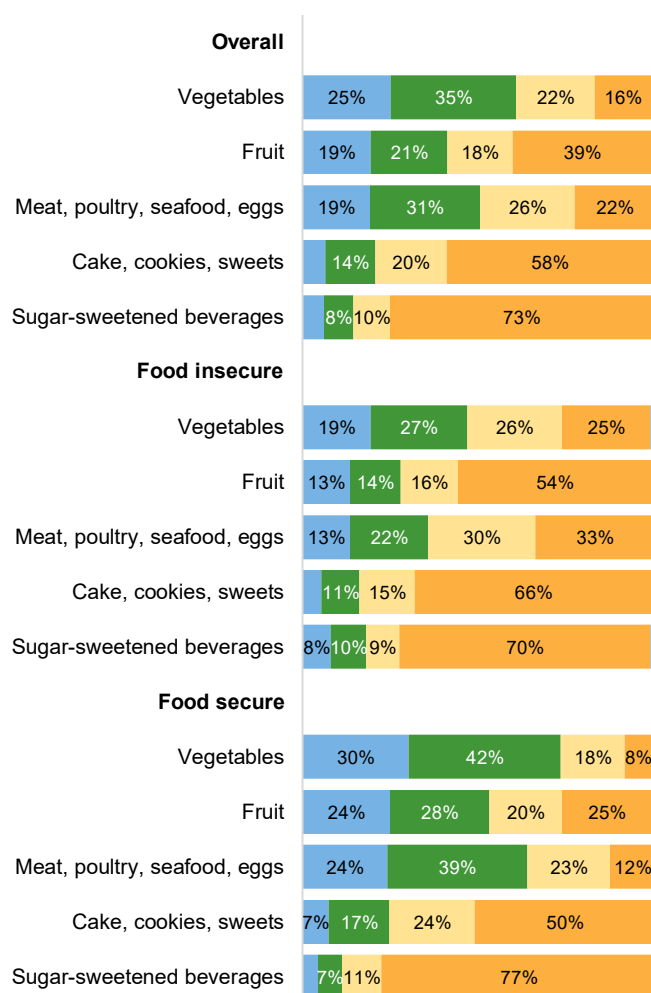


Figure 26. Reported typical food consumption (times per day), by food category, in the past 30 days among WAFOOD6 households (n=5,717), overall and by household food security status

FAIR OR POOR HEALTH AND DIET REPORTED BY HALF OF RESPONDENTS IN FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- When asked to report on their overall health and diet, responses differed by food security status.
- Among food insecure respondents, 49% reported their overall health as fair or poor and 49% reported their diet quality as fair or poor compared to 17% and 12% among food secure respondents, respectively.

■ Poor ■ Fair ■ Good ■ Very Good ■ Excellent ■ Prefer not to answer

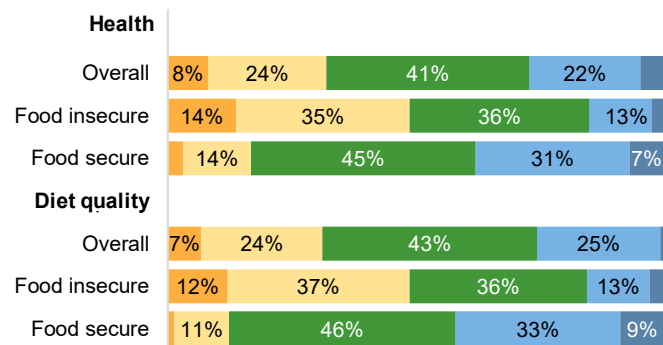


Figure 27. Health and diet quality of WAFOOD6 respondents (n=5,717), overall and by food security status

ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND STRESS COMMON AMONG FOOD INSECURE HOUSEHOLDS

- Feelings of anxiety, depression, and stress were more commonly reported in food insecure households compared to food secure households.
- For example, 86% of food insecure respondents and 45% of food secure respondents reported *high stress*.

■ Overall ■ Food insecure ■ Food secure

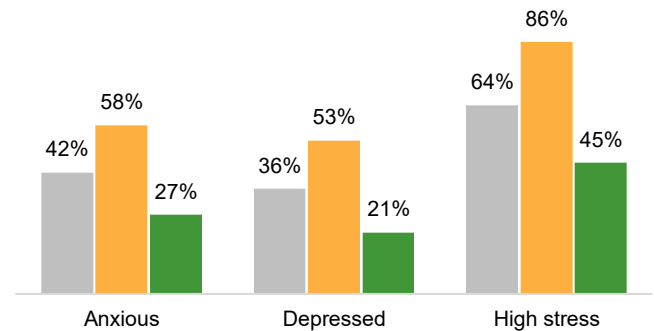


Figure 28. Mental health of WAFOOD6 respondents (n=5,717), overall and by food security status^k

Section 5: Data From Respondents Who Have Participated in Multiple WAFOOD Surveys

AMONG RESPONDENTS WITH 3+ WAVES OF DATA, FOOD INSECURITY REMAINS HIGH

- Among the 1,319 respondents who participated in **at least three** of WAFOOD Waves 1-6, **37%** experienced food insecurity during WAFOOD6.
- Among the 1,319 respondents who participated in **at least three** of WAFOOD Waves 1-6, **50%** experienced food insecurity during at least one survey wave (not shown on the graph).

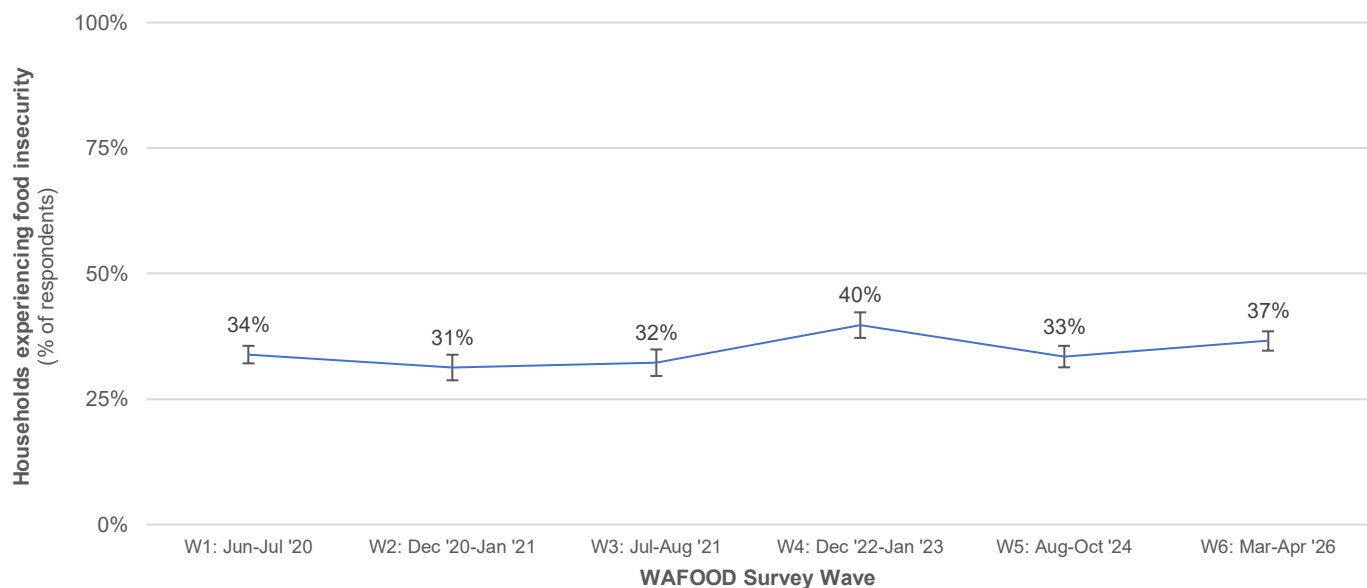


Figure 29. Percentage of households classified as food insecure, according to questions from the USDA Household Food Security Survey Module, at each survey wave among a group of $n=1,319$ respondents who participated in at least three of six WAFOOD Waves¹

Section 6: About the WAFOOD6 Sample

How to Interpret These Findings

The WAFOOD surveys *intentionally oversample households with lower incomes and those using food assistance*, in order to provide deeper insights on food insecurity throughout the state. This enables an analysis of the experience of food insecure households that is not possible with other data sources. All survey waves have used a mix of convenience and recontact sampling. The research team, together with a diverse network of partner organizations across WA State, recruited new respondents via social media, email, and text. Individuals who completed prior surveys and agreed to participate in newer waves were contacted directly via email. All six WAFOOD surveys were fielded online.

The limitations of convenience sampling and an online survey mean that some groups of Washingtonians could have been overrepresented, underrepresented, or in some cases—such as those without access to computers, tablets, smart phones, or the internet—missed entirely. In interpreting these findings, it is important to remember that WAFOOD data reflect those who responded to the surveys, but do not necessarily represent WA State's population as a whole; Table 1 shows how respondent demographics compared to the state overall. Nevertheless, WAFOOD data enable an important examination of economic and food needs among WA State residents.

Things to Remember about WAFOOD Data

- The percentage of WAFOOD households experiencing food insecurity (or other outcomes) *should not* be interpreted as the percentage of all Washington State households experiencing those outcomes.
- While some respondents have participated in multiple survey waves, each WAFOOD wave includes a distinct respondent sample. For this reason, we caution against drawing conclusions about changes over time.

WAFOOD6 STATE COVERAGE

- The WAFOOD6 survey included 5,717 unique respondents from all counties in WA State.

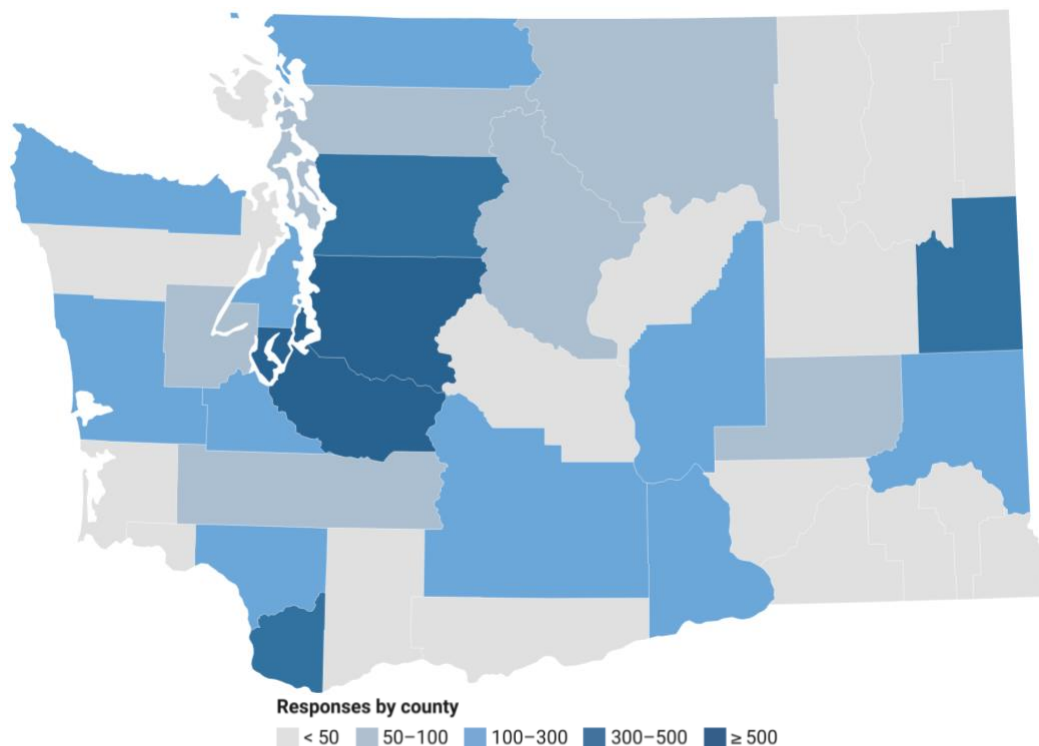


Figure 30. Number of WAFOOD6 responses by county

RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Compared to Washington State overall, the WAFOOD6 sample had more respondents over age 35, women, white and non-Hispanic respondents, respondents with some college education, households with annual incomes <\$100,000, households with children, and residents in rural areas.

Table 1. WAFOOD6 survey sample demographics compared to Washington State

Characteristic	WAFOOD6	WA
Age (years)		
18 to 24	3.4%	8.5%
25 to 34	14.4%	15.2%
35 to 44	22.7%	14.8%
45 to 54	19.2%	11.9%
55 to 64	17.6%	11.5%
65+	22.5%	17.3%
Gender^a		
Woman	77.9%	49.9%
Man	18.1%	50.1%
Transgender, nonbinary, another	3.1%	--
Race		
White	74.2%	64.0%
Black	6.3%	4.1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2.4%	1.2%
Asian	4.3%	10.7%
Pacific Islander	0.6%	0.8%
Multi-racial	6.3%	13.1%
Hispanic ethnicity	9.0%	15.0%
Education^b		
High school or less	13.6%	28.8%
Some college	38.4%	20.0%
College graduate	31.7%	34.6%
Graduate degree	15.7%	16.6%
Income^c		
Less than \$10,000	5.9%	3.9%
\$10,000 - <\$15,000	6.5%	2.5%
\$15,000 - <\$25,000	8.9%	4.6%
\$25,000 - <\$35,000	8.7%	5.0%
\$35,000 - <\$50,000	12.1%	8.2%
\$50,000 - <\$75,000	19.2%	14.1%
\$75,000 - <\$100,000	13.3%	12.4%
\$100,000 - <\$200,000	16.2%	19.2%
\$200,000 or more	3.7%	18.5%
Marital status		
Single, divorced, or widowed	38.6%	42.8%
Member of unmarried couple	9.3%	8.7%
Married	50.6%	48.5%
Households with children	39.9%	25.2%
Resident in rural area^d	22.2%	17.5%

Notes: Educational attainment, marital status, and households with children category percentages for WA are based on author calculations using US Census Bureau 2024 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates. Rurality percentages for WA are based on the most recent (2020) Rural-Urban Community Area Codes developed by the USDA Economic Research Service from ZIP codes and area population density.

^a Estimates based on population aged at least 18 years old. ^b Estimates based on population aged at least 25 years old. ^c US Census Bureau 2024 ACS 5-year estimates. ^d US 2020 Decennial Census summary estimates.

Technical Notes

- a. In this brief, *food security* is always presented in aggregate and refers to *high food security* and *marginal food security*. *Food insecurity*, where presented in aggregate, is the sum of *low food security* and *very low food security*. The USDA food security scale categories, based on the USDA 18-item food security scale, are:
 - High food security: no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
 - Marginal food security: one or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.
 - Low food security: reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
 - Very low food security: reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.
- b. “Transgender, nonbinary, another” gender includes otherwise gender non-conforming identities and self-described gender identities.
- c. “Another” race includes self-described racial identities.
- d. The textured bars indicate groups with fewer than 30 respondents. Because of the small sample size, these estimates may be less reliable. Sample sizes for each group are shown in parentheses.
- e. Urban versus rural definitions were based on respondent ZIP codes and area population density using the most current definitions developed by the USDA Economic Research Service.
- f. “Not in labor force” includes homemakers, students, retirees, and respondents who are unable to work.
- g. “Consumer-facing services” includes: 1) hospitality, hotels, real estate, and rental, 2) installation, repair, and construction, 3) personal care and services, 4) retail sales and related occupations, and 5) arts, design, entertainment, and sports. “Food-based services” includes: 1) farming agriculture, fishing, and livestock, 2) transportation and food delivery, 3) food sales (wholesale or retail), and 4) food preparation and services.
- h. “Other” housing status includes respondents who own mobile homes but pay to rent land, own boats but pay for moorage, live in transitional housing, and who live in a house paid for by family, friends, or an employer.
- i. “Mobile food banks/pantries” are distinct from “food bank/program delivery.” Food delivery programs deliver food directly to recipients whereas mobile programs change locations, but service more general areas.
- j. “Vegetables” includes the total consumption of “other vegetables” and “salad,” from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).
- k. In WAFOOD5 and WAFOOD6, stress was measured using the validated 4-item Perceived Stress Scale instead of a generalized question about stress. As such, results regarding stress may not be directly comparable to prior waves of data.
- l. During each survey wave, we recontact participants from prior waves. Data from this “longitudinal panel” can provide information about changes over time among this group of respondents.

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Further Information

For more information and prior WAFOOD briefs:

- The WAFOOD project page
<https://foodsystems.uw.edu/cphn/wafood/>
- The Washington State Food System Assessment
https://foodsystems.uw.edu/cphn_project/washington-state-food-systems-assessment/

About the WAFOOD Team

The WAFOOD survey is a joint effort between the University of Washington (UW) and Washington State University (WSU). The WAFOOD6 team comprises **Jennifer J. Otten**, Professor, Food Systems, Nutrition, and Health Program (FSNH) and DEOHS at the UW School of Public Health (SPH); **Marie L. Spiker**, Assistant Professor, FSNH, Epidemiology, and DEOHS at UWSPH; **Jane Dai**, Postdoctoral Associate, University at Buffalo; **James H. Buszkiewicz**, Research Assistant Professor, Epidemiology at University of Michigan SPH; **Shawna Beese**, Assistant Professor of Rural Health Promotion at WSU Health Sciences; **Sarah M. Collier**, Associate Professor, FSNH and DEOHS at UWSPH; and **Alan Ismach**, Research Coordinator, FSNH and DEOHS.

Contact Us: phisurvey@uw.edu

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