



Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2018

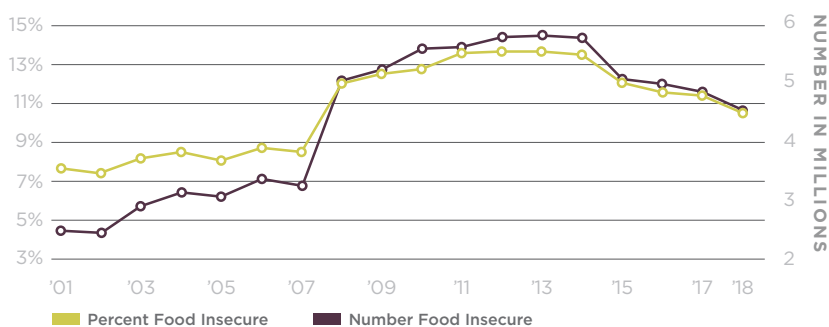
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY RELEASED MAY 2020



As of 2018, food insecurity—having limited access to adequate nutritious food to live a healthy lifestyle—affects more than 37 million people in the United States.¹ This includes 4.5 million individuals age 50-59, referred to henceforth as *older adults*. Nearly eleven percent (10.6%) of older adults are food insecure—a substantially higher rate than the 7.3% of seniors age 60 and older who are food insecure.

Currently in 2020, the nation is confronting the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. While this health shock affects everyone, the death rate increases as age rises, putting older adults at a heightened risk.² The pandemic will likely reverse the improvements to food insecurity that have occurred over the past decade. Now more than ever, it is important to focus on improving food security for vulnerable groups like older adults.

TRENDS IN OLDER ADULT FOOD INSECURITY



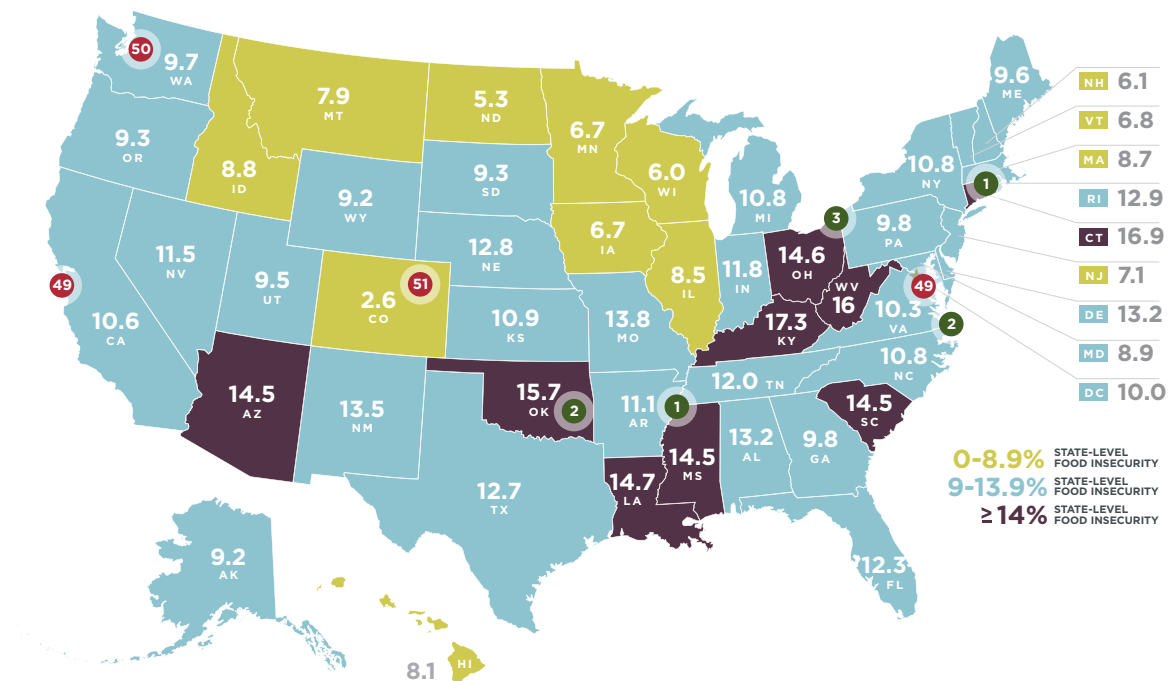
4.5
MILLION

older adults
are food
insecure

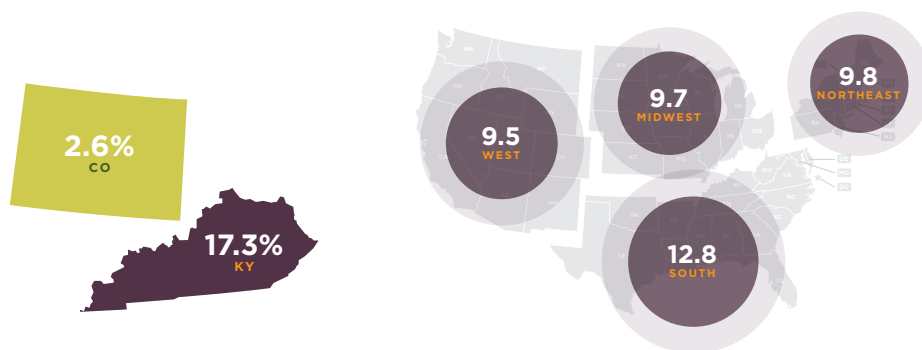
Older Adult Food Insecurity Varies by Geography

Similar to other national population-level trends, food insecurity among individuals age 50-59 varies by geography. The map below highlights state-level food insecurity rates.

STATE-LEVEL OLDER ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES IN 2018



Every state and metro area is home to older adults who experience food insecurity.



LOWEST/HIGHEST STATE OLDER ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

Older adult food insecurity rates at the state level range from 2.6% in Colorado to 17.3% in Kentucky.

REGIONAL OLDER ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

The food insecurity rate among older adults living in the South (12.8%) is substantially higher than the rate among older adults living in the Northeast, West, and Midwest.

THREE HIGHEST METRO-LEVEL RATES

- 17.4%** TN / MS / AR Memphis
CT Hartford / West Hartford / East Hartford
- 15.4%** OK Oklahoma City
VA Virginia Beach / Norfolk / Newport News
- 15.1%** OH Cleveland / Elyria / Mentor

THREE LOWEST METRO-LEVEL RATES

- 6.9%** CA San Francisco / Oakland / Fremont
DC / VA / MD Washington / Arlington / Alexandria
- 6.7%** WA Seattle / Tacoma / Bellevue
- 4.6%** CO Denver / Aurora

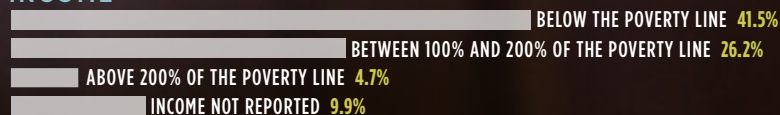
METRO-LEVEL OLDER ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

Among 51 metropolitan areas that have a population of more than 1 million people, food insecurity among older adults ranges from 4.6% in the Denver, Colorado metro area to 17.4% in the Hartford, Connecticut and Memphis, Tennessee metro areas.

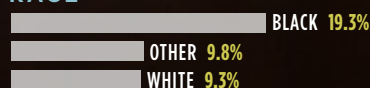
FOOD INSECURITY RATES AMONG OLDER ADULTS AGE 50-59 ALSO VARY ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CATEGORIES.

Percentages represent older adult food insecurity rates by category.

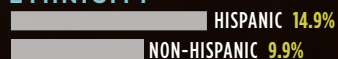
INCOME



RACE



ETHNICITY



DISABILITY



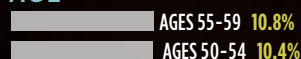
MARITAL STATUS



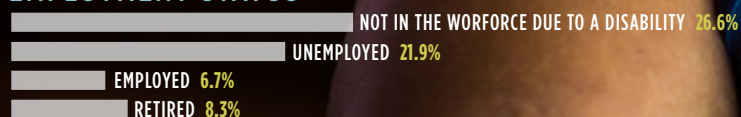
METRO LOCATION



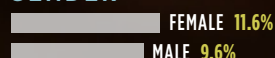
AGE



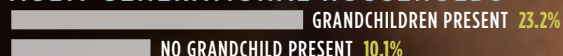
EMPLOYMENT STATUS



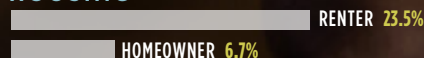
GENDER



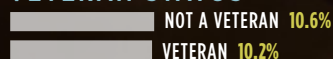
MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS



HOUSING



VETERAN STATUS



The trends are similar to those seen among the population of seniors age 60 and older, but the magnitude of the variation is often greater, reinforcing the elevated risk of food insecurity experienced by this cohort of aging adults.

INCOME

Income is a strong driver of food insecurity.³ Among older adults living below the poverty line, 41.5% are food insecure. Yet, poverty alone does not determine food insecurity, and consistent with national trends, the majority of older adults who are food insecure have incomes above the poverty line.¹

RACE/ETHNICITY

Consistent with trends among seniors and the population overall, older adults of racial or ethnic minority status tend to be at higher risk of food insecurity. Because of population size, the majority of food-insecure older adults are White, but minority groups are disproportionately affected.

MARITAL STATUS

The elevated risk of food insecurity among single older adults may reflect the struggle to support oneself on a single income, which may be particularly great in the wake of separation from or death of a spouse. For single older adults who are also supporting children or grandchildren, or facing unemployment or disability, it may be particularly difficult to stretch limited financial resources.

DISABILITY

A staggering one-third of older adults living with a disability are food-insecure. Among all age groups, disabilities can amplify income challenges, which is especially concerning for older adults who are nearing retirement age.^{4,5} Living with a disability leads to higher medical costs, which means even at the same income level, people with disabilities are more likely to be food insecure than people without disabilities.⁶ Furthermore, without sufficient nutritious food, disabilities and chronic health conditions can worsen and become more severe.



Implications

Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2018 explores the extent and distribution of food insecurity among older adults in the United States. Food insecurity is more prevalent among this population than among seniors 60 and older, signaling that many among the next wave of adults joining a growing senior population may struggle to make ends meet. Older adults face unique challenges as they may begin to experience the economic and health complications that can be associated with aging while being too young to benefit from supports available to seniors. Given the anticipated growth of the senior population and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is critical that policymakers protect and strengthen the existing federal nutrition programs, especially SNAP, as well as invest in public-private partnerships in order to reduce food insecurity and end hunger in America.



This summary highlights key findings from *Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2018*, a research report authored by Dr. James P. Ziliak and Dr. Craig Gundersen. The *Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59* report was released for the first time in 2019 as part of *The State of Senior Hunger in America* study series. Using publicly available data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the report examines the prevalence and distribution of food insecurity among older adults, or individuals age 50-59. To access the full set of reports and references, visit FeedingAmerica.org/StateOfSeniorHunger.