

Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2018

Dr. James P. Ziliak
University of Kentucky

Dr. Craig Gundersen
University of Illinois

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Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2018: An Annual Report

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Dr. Craig Gundersen, University of Illinois
Dr. James P. Ziliak, University of Kentucky

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report, we provide a broad overview of the extent and distribution of food insecurity among individuals between the ages of 50 and 59 in the United States in 2018, along with trends over the past decade and a half using national, state-level, and metropolitan-level data from the December Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). This study complements the annual report on senior hunger from Ziliak and Gundersen (2020).

We concentrate on two measures of food insecurity: food insecurity and very low food security (VLFS). These are based on the full set of 18 questions in the Food Security Supplement (FSS), the module used by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to establish the official food insecurity rates of households in the United States. We define food insecurity by three or more affirmative responses and very low food security as eight or more affirmative responses in households with children or six or more in households without children.

Specifically, in 2018, we find that:

- 10.6% of persons between 50 and 59 are food insecure and 4.3% are very low food secure. This translates into 4.5 million and 1.8 million persons, respectively.
- From 2017 to 2018, there were no statistically significant changes in food insecurity or VLFS. This holds across almost all the demographic categories as well.
- Compared to 2001, the fraction of food insecure and VLFS persons between ages 50 and 59 increased by 37% and 65%. The number in each group rose 82% and 119%.
- We find that food insecurity is greatest among those who are racial or ethnic minorities, those with lower incomes, and those who are renters.
- State-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 17.3% (Kentucky) to a low of 2.6% (Colorado).
- Metro-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 17.4% (Hartford, Connecticut; Memphis, Tennessee) to a low of 4.6% (Denver, Colorado).
- Compared to persons ages 60+, rates of food insecurity among 50-59-year-olds are higher, but the trend increase since 2001 is greater among seniors, especially VLFS. In addition, the number of food-insecure seniors exceeds that of 50-59-year-olds because of a larger population of those 60+ in America.

Despite the strong economy and financial markets in 2018, millions of 50-59-year-olds in the United States went without enough food due to economic constraints. During the writing of this report, the nation is in the midst of the COVID-19 health pandemic, with dire health and economic consequences. While this health shock affects everyone, the virus' death rate increases with age, putting 50-59-year-olds at a higher risk than younger adults (Centers for Disease Control, 2020). Given the links between food insecurity and negative health outcomes, this is particularly concerning for this age group.

I. FOOD INSECURITY IN 2018

We document the state of food insecurity among adults between the ages of 50 and 59 in the United States spanning 2001-2018. This study complements our annual report on food insecurity of seniors ages 60+ (Ziliak & Gundersen, 2020), and is the second annual report for this age group (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2019).

In December of each year, households respond to a series of 18 questions (10 questions if there are no children present) that make up the Food Security Supplement (FSS) in the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is a nationally representative survey conducted by the Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics, providing employment, income and poverty statistics. Households are selected to be representative of civilian households at the state and national levels, using suitably appropriate sampling weights. The CPS does not include information on individuals living in group quarters, including nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Each question on the FSS is designed to capture some aspect of food insecurity and, for some questions, the frequency with which it manifests itself. Respondents are asked questions about their food security status in the last 30 days, as well as over the past 12 months. Following the standard approach used by the USDA, we focus on the questions referring to the past year. The questions from the FSS are found in Appendix Table 1. Because our focus is on food insecurity among those between 50 and 59 years of age, in 2018, this results in 11,846 sample observations. Appendix Table 2 presents selected summary statistics for the CPS sample, adjusted using the FSS survey weight to make the sample nationally representative among 50-59-year-olds.

Based on the full set of 18 questions in the FSS, the module used by the USDA to establish the official food insecurity rates of households in the United States, we concentrate on two measures: food insecurity (three or more affirmative responses) and very low food security (VLFS; eight or more affirmative responses in households with children; six or more in households without). One should note that all VLFS persons are also included in the food insecure category.

In Table 1, we present estimates of food insecurity among adults ages 50 to 59 in 2018. We find that 10.6% were food insecure (4.5 million) and 4.3% were VLFS (1.8 million). These rates are greater than rates for seniors ages 60+ as reported in Ziliak and Gundersen (2020). Among seniors, we found that 7.3% were food insecure and 2.7% were VLFS. However, since the population of those 60+ is substantially greater than those ages 50-59, there are more seniors who are food insecure (5.3 million) and VLFS (2.0 million).

The table also presents estimates of food insecurity across selected socioeconomic categories. Here, we see great heterogeneity across the population. For example, for those with incomes below the poverty line, 41.5% were food insecure and 20.9% were VLFS. In contrast, for those with incomes greater than twice the poverty line, these numbers fall to 4.7%, and 1.6%. Turning to race, White older adults have food insecurity rates that are less than half the rates for Black older adults. Similarly, Hispanics (of any racial category) have food insecurity rates that are fifty percent higher than non-Hispanics, though rates of VLFS were comparable.

Table 1. The Extent of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds in 2018

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	10.6%	4.3%
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	41.5	20.9
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	26.2	10.4
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	4.7	1.6
Income Not Reported	9.9	3.7
By Race		
White	9.3	3.7
Black	19.3	8.6
Other	9.8	3.8
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	14.9	4.6
Non-Hispanic	9.9	4.3
By Marital Status		
Married	6.4	2.1
Widowed	19.4	10.0
Divorced or Separated	18.8	8.8
Never Married	18.4	8.1
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	14.2	5.2
Metro	10.0	4.2
By Age		
50-54	10.4	4.2
55-59	10.8	4.4
By Employment Status		
Employed	6.7	2.1
Unemployed	21.9	9.1
Retired	8.3	3.4
Disabled	26.6	13.3
By Gender		
Male	9.6	3.8
Female	11.5	4.8
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	10.1	4.1
Grandchildren Present	23.2	8.4
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	6.7	2.7
Renter	23.5	9.6
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	10.2	4.2
Not a Veteran	10.6	4.3
By Disability Status		
Without a disability	7.6	2.6
With a disability	33.0	17.3

Source: Authors' calculations from 2018 December Current Population Survey. The numbers in the table show the rates of food insecurity under two measures for various groups. The category of "other race" includes American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander.

Food insecurity among persons age 50-59 who are divorced or separated, widowed, or never married is almost three times greater than among those who are married in this age range, and even wider among the more severe VLFS category. As age increases, food insecurity rates actually increase slightly, from 10.4% to 10.8% for food insecurity and from 4.2% to 4.4% for VLFS. This is interesting because rates of food insecurity successively fall in five-year age increments after age 60 (Ziliak & Gundersen, 2020). In terms of employment categories, the rates are much higher for persons who are unemployed or report being out of the labor force due to a disability in comparison to those who are retired or employed. For persons between the ages of 50 and 59 with a grandchild present, food insecurity rates for both measures are substantially higher than when no grandchildren are present. Those who are renters have rates of both food insecurity and VLFS that are more than three times higher in comparison to homeowners. Veterans and non-veterans have essentially the same food insecurity and VLFS rates.

This year we include a new measure of disability in addition to the one tied to labor force participation noted above. This measure defines an individual as having a disability if they report any of the following disabilities: hearing, visual, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, independent living. Older adults with disabilities have food insecurity rates more than four times as high and VLFS rates more than six times as high as those without a disability. This is an astonishing difference and much higher than we see among those 60 and older.

Table 2 presents the distribution of food insecurity among those between 50 and 59. In other words, out of those who are food insecure (or VLFS), what proportion fall into a particular demographic category? As seen in the table, the majority in either food insecurity category have incomes above the poverty line. For example, out of those reporting income, almost two-thirds of food-insecure persons have incomes above the poverty line. Compared to those ages 60+, a larger share of the food-insecure 50-59-year-old population have incomes above 200% of the poverty line, even though the risk of food insecurity is lower (4.7% in Table 1). A similar story holds for race—while Black older adults are at greater risk of food insecurity under either measure than Whites, more than two in three food-insecure or VLFS persons are White. For the new variable included this year, whether someone has a disability, almost half of VLFS seniors have a disability despite constituting 12.0% of older adults.

Table 2. The Distribution of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds in 2018

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	26.3%	32.5%
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	24.8	24.1
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	26.1	22.3

Income Not Reported	22.8	21.1
By Race		
White	69.4	67.6
Black	23.3	25.4
Other	7.3	6.9
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	20.1	15.3
Non-Hispanic	79.9	84.7
By Marital Status		
Married	39.7	31.4
Widowed	6.7	8.5
Divorced or Separated	33.3	38.1
Never Married	20.3	22.0
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	18.9	17.0
Metro	81.1	83.0
By Age		
50-64	47.6	47.7
55-69	52.4	52.3
By Employment Status		
Employed	47.3	37.1
Unemployed	4.8	4.8
Retired	4.6	4.6
Disabled	43.4	53.4
By Gender		
Male	44.1	42.8
Female	55.9	57.2
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	91.1	92.1
Grandchildren Present	8.9	7.9
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	48.5	48.0
Renter	51.5	52.0
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	6.7	6.8
Not a Veteran	93.3	93.2
By Disability Status		
Without a disability	63.0	52.2
With a disability	37.0	47.8

Source: Authors' calculations from 2018 December Current Population Survey. The numbers in the table show the distribution of food insecurity under two measures for various groups. The category of "other race" includes American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander.

In Table 3, we present state-level estimates of food insecurity among those between 50 and 59 for 2018 based on averages of 2017-2018 data. The range for food insecurity spans from 2.6% in Colorado to 17.3% in Kentucky and, for VLFS, from 0.8% in Colorado to 9.0% in Kentucky. This cross-state range of food insecurity and VLFS exceeds that found among seniors ages 60+,

though adjusted for the differences in means, the level of cross-state inequality is actually higher among seniors 60+.¹

Table 3. State-Level Estimates of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds in 2018

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure		Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
AL	13.2%	6.9%	MT	7.9%	3.9%
AK	9.2	3.0	NE	12.8	5.2
AZ	14.5	7.8	NV	11.5	4.9
AR	11.1	5.3	NH	6.1	1.9
CA	10.6	4.0	NJ	7.1	2.5
CO	2.6	0.8	NM	13.5	4.5
CT	16.9	3.5	NY	10.8	3.9
DE	13.2	4.2	NC	10.8	4.2
DC	10.0	4.6	ND	5.3	2.5
FL	12.3	3.1	OH	14.6	6.7
GA	9.8	3.7	OK	15.7	6.6
HI	8.1	2.4	OR	9.3	3.9
ID	8.8	2.5	PA	9.8	4.5
IL	8.5	4.2	RI	12.9	7.2
IN	11.8	4.0	SC	14.5	4.6
IA	6.7	2.8	SD	9.3	5.2
KS	10.9	4.1	TN	12.0	5.3
KY	17.3	9.0	TX	12.7	5.6
LA	14.7	7.6	UT	9.5	3.1
ME	9.6	3.0	VT	6.8	1.6
MD	8.9	5.6	VA	10.3	5.7
MA	8.7	4.1	WA	9.7	4.3
MI	10.8	5.1	WV	16.0	6.6
MN	6.7	4.2	WI	6.0	2.4
MS	14.5	6.0	WY	9.2	3.9
MO	13.8	4.8			

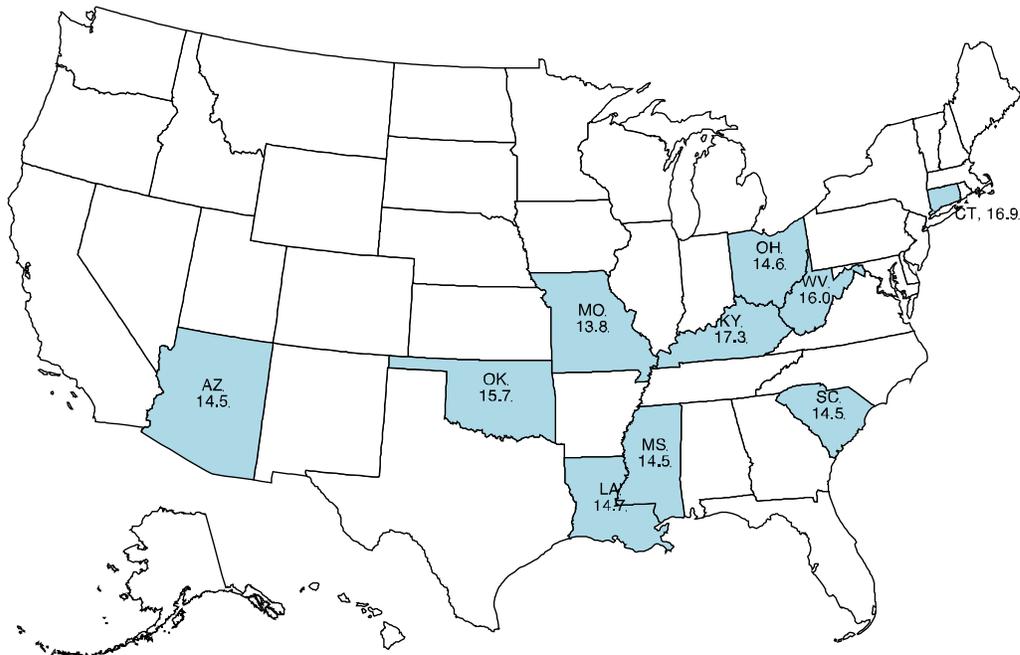
Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers are two-year averages found by summing the number of food-insecure seniors in each category by state across the 2017-2018 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each state across the two years.

In the maps below we highlight the ten states with the highest rates of hunger among those between 50 and 59 in 2018. For food insecurity, seven of the ten are located in the South and Southwest. The ten-highest states for VLFS are slightly more concentrated – eight of the ten

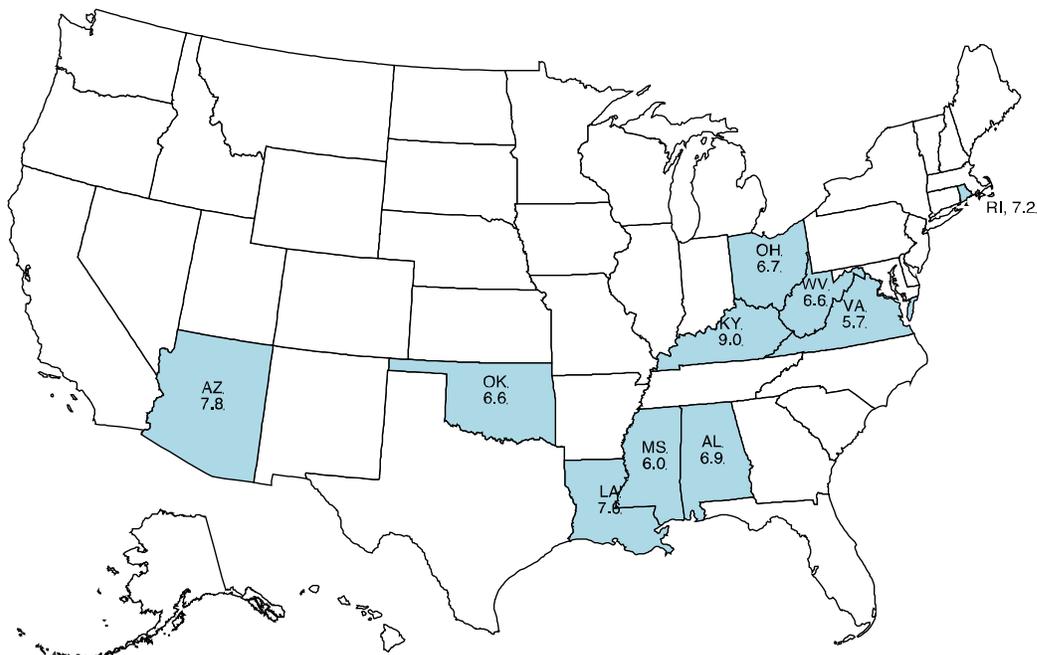
¹ This is determined by the coefficient of variation (CV), which measures the ratio of the standard deviation to the mean. The cross-state CV for food insecure 50-59 year olds is 0.30, while it is 0.38 for VLFS. Among those ages 60+ the respective CVs are 0.34 and 0.41.

states are in those regions. While there are some differences across categories (e.g., Connecticut has the second highest food insecurity rate but is not in the top ten for VLFS), Kentucky is the highest across both categories. In last year's report Kentucky was highest in food insecurity and second highest in VLFS.

Top 10 States for Rates of Food Insecurity among 50–59 year olds



Top 10 States for Rates of Very Low Food Security among 50–59 year olds



We now turn to food insecurity and VLFS rates by large metropolitan areas (i.e., more than 1 million in total population) for persons between the ages of 50 and 59. These are based on data from 2013 to 2018. This is found in Table 5. Like with state rates, there is a wide range of estimates. For food insecurity, the highest rate, in the Hartford, Connecticut and Memphis, Tennessee metro areas, are almost four times higher than the lowest rate, in Denver, Colorado (17.4% versus 4.6%). For VLFS, the highest is, again, the Hartford, Connecticut metro area and the lowest is Raleigh (9.9% and 0.9%).

Table 5. Estimates of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2018

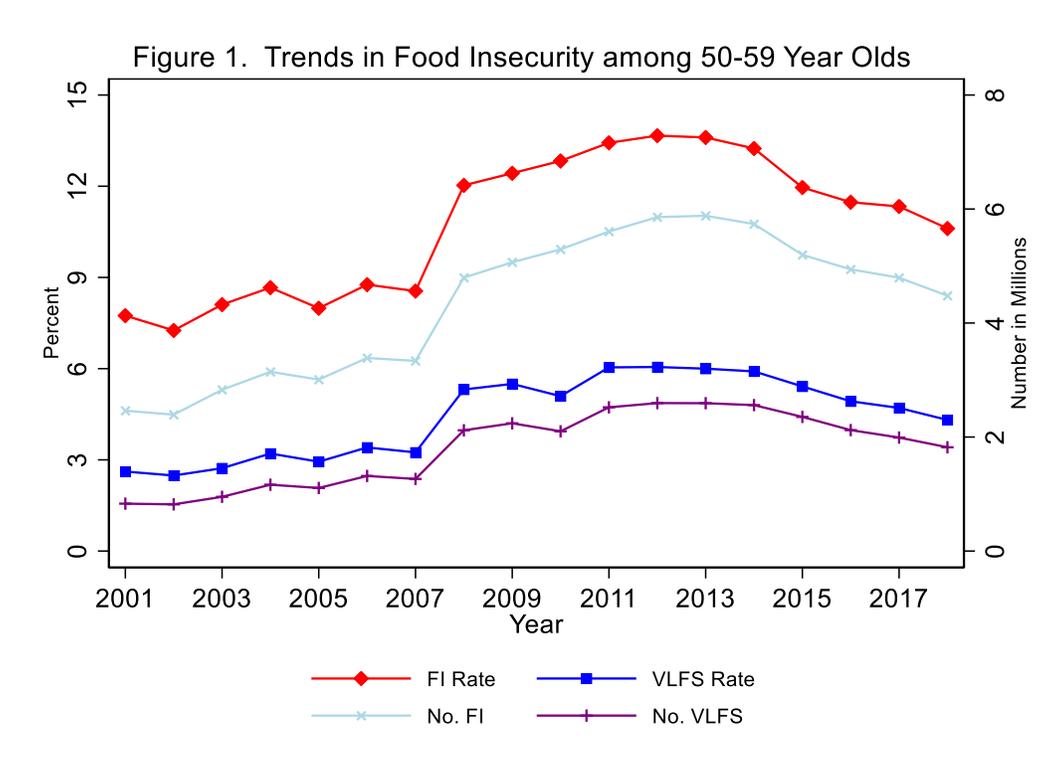
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Atlanta-Sandy_Springs-Roswell_GA	9.3%	3.9%
Austin-Round_Rock_TX	7.4	3.5
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson_MD	12.7	5.0
Birmingham-Hoover_AL	13.3	6.0
Boston-Cambridge-Newton_MA-NH	8.4	4.2
Buffalo_Cheektowaga_Nia_Falls_NY	12.8	3.4
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia_NC-SC	9.4	3.6
Chicago-Naper-Elgin_IL-IN-WI	8.7	3.6
Cincinnati_OH-KY-IN	13.0	4.7
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor_OH	15.1	7.7
Columbus_OH	12.4	5.4
Dallas-Fort_Worth-Arlington_TX	13.4	5.9
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood_CO	4.6	1.8
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn_MI	13.6	5.5
Hartford-W_Hford_E_Hford_CT	17.4	9.9
Houston-Baytown-Sugar_Land_TX	11.3	5.1
Indianapolis_IN	12.9	6.3
Jacksonville_FL	11.5	3.1
Kansas_City_MO-KS	13.5	4.4
Las_Vegas-Paradise_NM	12.0	4.7
Los_Ang-Long_Beach-Anaheim_CA	11.0	4.4
Louisville_KY-IN	14.4	7.1
Memphis_TN-MS-AR	17.4	7.2
Miami-F_Laud-W_Palm_Beach_FL	12.5	3.3
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West_Allis_WI	8.0	4.0
Minn-St_Paul-Bloom_MN-WI	7.8	3.4
Nville-Davidson-Murfreesboro_TN	9.6	3.9
New_Orleans-Metairie_LA	13.7	7.8
N_York-Newark-_J_City_NY-NJ-PA	10.2	4.1
Oklahoma_City_OK	15.4	7.1
Orlando_FL	11.2	5.3
Phila-Camden-Wmington_PA-NJ-DE	9.8	3.6
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale_AZ	14.1	7.2

Pittsburgh_PA	9.4	5.4
Pland-Vancouver-Hboro_OR-WA	13.6	7.2
Providence-Warwick_RI-MA	13.8	4.3
Raleigh_NC	7.0	0.9
Richmond_VA	7.9	4.3
Rside-San_Bernardino-Ontario_CA	13.8	5.0
Rochester_NY	14.7	6.6
Sacr-Arden-Arcade-Roseville_CA	9.8	3.9
St._Louis_MO-IL	11.2	6.2
Salt_Lake_City_UT	10.0	5.5
San_Antonio_TX	13.2	7.1
San_Diego-Carlsbad-San_Marcos_CA	7.3	3.2
San_Francisco-Oakland-Fremont_CA	6.9	2.7
S_Jose-Sunnyvale-S_Clara_CA	7.5	1.3
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue_WA	6.7	2.8
Tampa-St._Petersburg-Clearwater_FL	9.8	4.6
V_Beach-Norfolk-New_News_VA-NC	15.4	8.0
Wash-Aton-Alex_DC-VA-MD-WV	6.9	3.3

Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers are five-year averages found by summing the number of food-insecure seniors in each category by metro areas across the 2013-2018 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each metro area across the five years.

II. FOOD INSECURITY OVER TIME

To better understand how the 2018 food insecurity and VLFS estimates compare to prior years, in Figure 1 we provide estimated trends in food insecurity since 2001. In Figure 1, we display results for all those between 50 and 59 in terms of the percentage (left-hand axis) and number in millions (right-hand axis). The figure shows that there was a sharp increase in both food insecurity and VLFS with the onset of the Great Recession in 2008, and these rates continued to increase until 2012, before declining starting in 2014. Food insecurity and VLFS rates remain higher than before the Great Recession. This differs from the general population where the rates are now lower (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2019) but seniors also continue to have rates higher than in 2007 (Ziliak & Gundersen, 2020). Since 2001, the fraction of older adults experiencing food insecurity and VLFS has increased by 37%, and 65%. In terms of the number of food insecure persons, this rose in each group rose by 82%, and 119%.



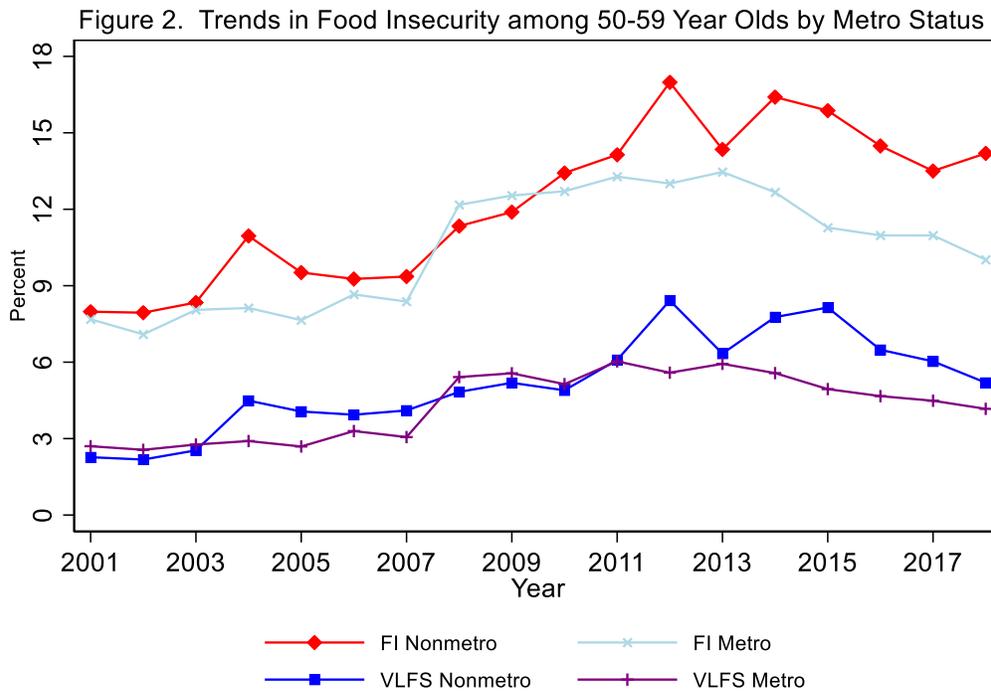
In Table 6, we take a deeper look into underlying changes in the composition of food insecurity among 50-59-year-olds from 2017 to 2018. The table presents percentage point changes in both categories of food insecurity by the same set of socioeconomic characteristics in Table 1. Consistent with the lack of statistically significant changes in overall food insecurity, there are not many statistically significant changes from 2017 to 2018 across demographic groups. For food insecurity, there were statistically significant declines among older adults who are White, living in metro areas, unemployed, homeowners, and those with a disability. For VLFS, the variables with statistically significant declines were for older adults who are White and those with a disability.

Table 6. Changes in the Composition of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds from 2017 to 2018		
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	-0.72	-0.39
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	-2.06	-0.21
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	-0.05	-1.33
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	-0.35	0.01
Income Not Reported	0.13	-0.21
By Race		
White	-0.90*	-0.64**
Black	-0.22	0.09
Other	-0.51	1.00
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	-1.37	0.49
Non-Hispanic	-0.66	-0.54

By Marital Status		
Married	-0.78	-0.11
Widowed	-2.16	0.12
Divorced or Separated	-0.68	-1.00
Never Married	0.32	-0.93
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	0.69	-0.83
Metro	-0.95*	-0.32
By Age		
50-54	-0.70	-0.23
55-59	-0.75	-0.55
By Employment Status		
Employed	-0.55	-0.17
Unemployed	-8.85**	-0.92
Retired	0.24	0.04
Disabled	-0.19	-1.16
By Gender		
Male	-0.87	-0.40
Female	-0.59	-0.38
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	-0.66	-0.43
Grandchildren Present	-1.65	0.63
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	-0.93**	-0.33
Renter	-0.07	-0.59
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	-2.24	-1.36
Not a Veteran	-0.60	-0.32
By Disability Status		
Without a disability	0.69	-0.28
With a disability	-1.05**	-0.49*

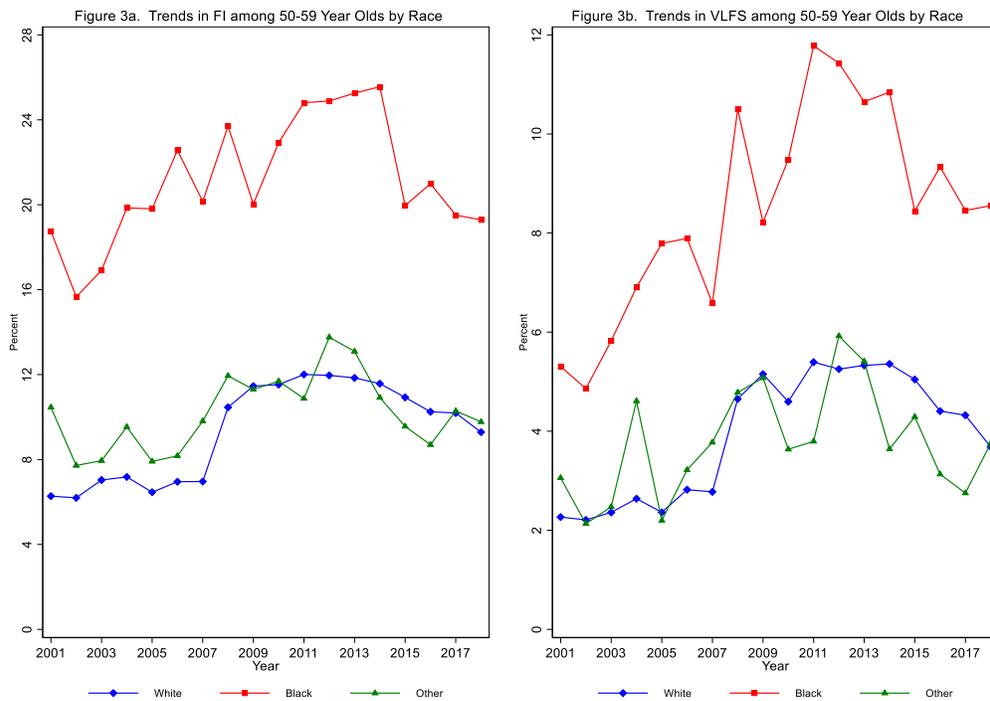
Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers in the table reflect percentage point changes from 2017-2018. The asterisks denote statistical significance at the following levels: *** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$. The category of "other race" includes American Indian, Asian, and Pacific Islander.

In the next set of figures, we examine trends in food insecurity since 2001 across a variety of subpopulations found in Tables 1 and 6. We begin in Figure 2 with trends in food insecurity for those living in metropolitan areas versus nonmetropolitan areas. The figure shows that for most years, food insecurity rates were higher in nonmetro areas and always after the Great Recession. There was especially a divergence in 2018 where food insecurity rates increased for those in non-metro areas but declined in metro areas. For VLFS, a similar pattern holds, albeit rates were higher in metro areas for six of the years prior to and including the Great Recession.



Panel A of Figure 3 depicts trends in food insecurity across different races and panel B is for VLFS.² As discussed above, food insecurity and VLFS for Black older adults are substantially higher than Whites. These figures reveal that these differences were present in each year from 2001 to 2018. Of note, though, is that, looking at 2001 versus 2018, the food insecurity rates rose substantially for White but not Black older adults over this time period. For VLFS, rates increased for both Blacks and Whites. Comparing Whites and the “other” category, rates are generally higher among the “other” category than among Whites but there are many years for both measures where this doesn’t hold.

² Asians, Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans are combined into “other” race because their sample sizes are too small to depict separately.



In Figure 4, we present trends broken down by Hispanic status. For food insecurity, the rates are higher among Hispanics than non-Hispanics in all years. The trends in VLFS are similar up until 2014 when the rates become very similar. What is interesting here is that the post-Great Recession recovery in food insecurity among 50-59-year-olds was led by the strong declines among Hispanics.

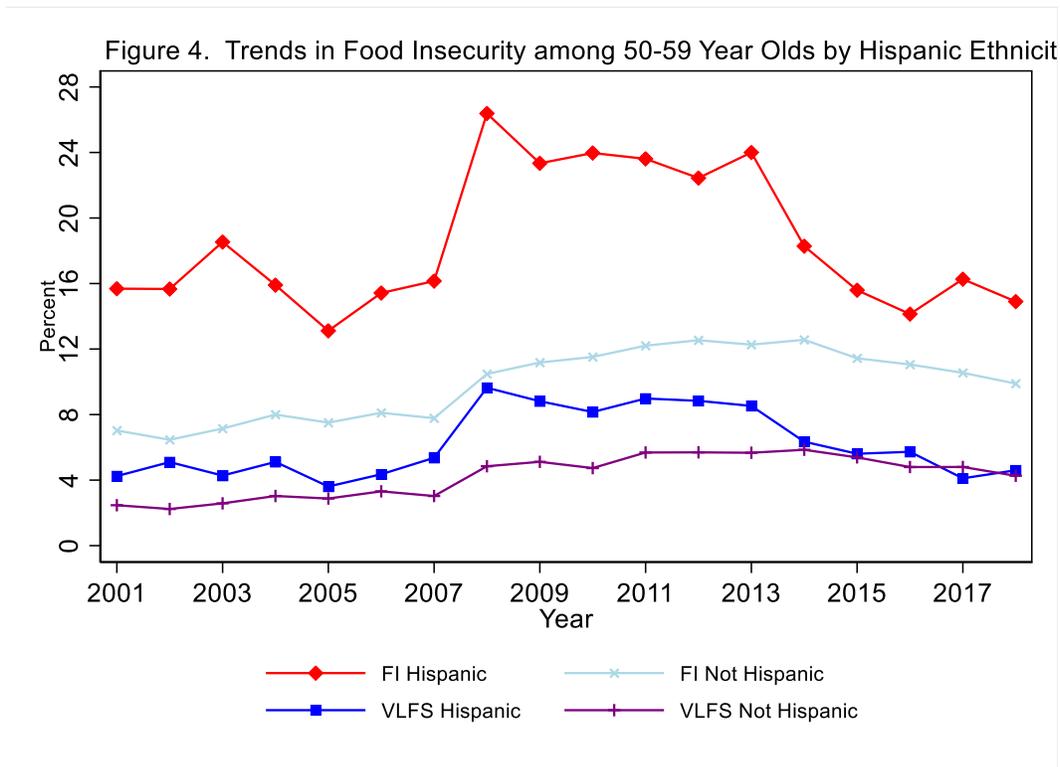
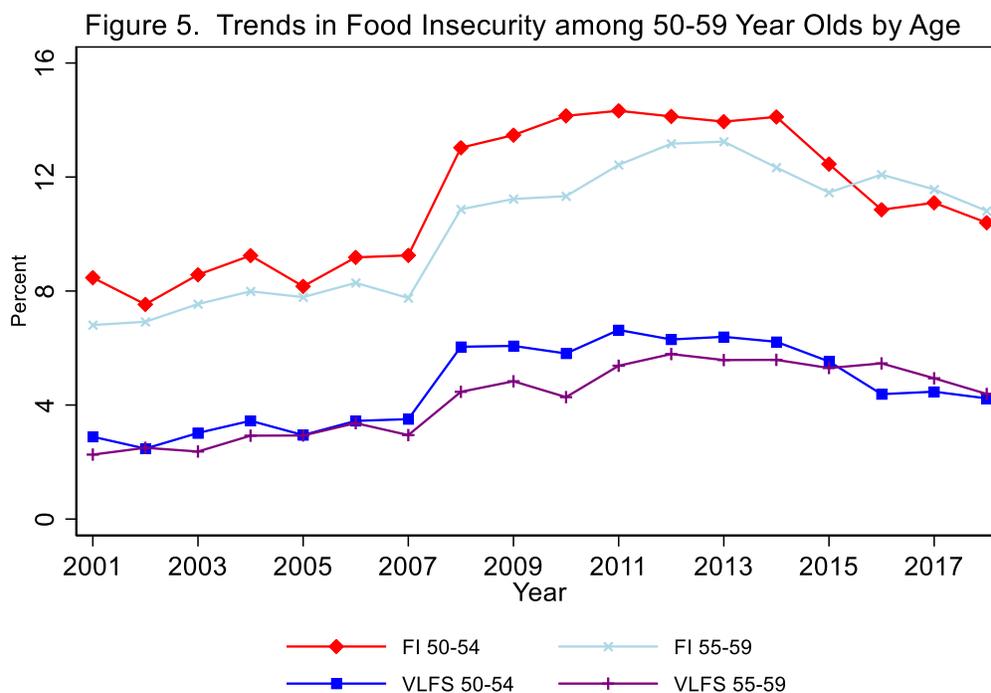


Figure 5 presents a parallel set of results broken down into two age groups—50-54 –years-old and 55-59-yearsold. While food insecurity rates and VLFS are higher in the younger group until 2015, this flipped in 2016 until 2018. This is in contrast to seniors whereby the rates of food insecurity are highest for those between 60 and 69, followed by 70-79-year-olds, and 80+-year-olds (Ziliak & Gunderson, 2020).



III. CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that food insecurity is an ongoing challenge among those between the ages of 50 and 59 in America. One in nine persons between the ages of 50 and 59 were food insecure in 2018, which is 37% higher than in 2001. VLFS has grown even more—up 65% since 2001. Gundersen and Ziliak (2015) surveyed the research literature on the links between food insecurity and health outcomes in the United States. They note that compared to children and seniors there is comparatively less work on health outcomes of food-insecure non-elderly adults, but there does appear to be evidence that food insecurity is associated with reduced nutrient intakes, heightened mental health challenges and depression, and risk of diabetes and related health outcomes. Many of these studies rely on data that pre-dates the stark rise of food insecurity during the Great Recession, suggesting more rigorous analyses on updated data are necessary to better inform public health policy on the consequences of rising food insecurity among older adults.

As noted in our report on senior food insecurity, at this writing is the global pandemic brought about by the novel coronavirus is bringing about unprecedented upheaval in labor and financial markets. The ramifications of the crisis for adult food insecurity are not known at this time, and the CPS data covering this period will not be available until late 2021. Because adults ages 50-59, unlike seniors, are more likely to be in the labor force and reliant on wage income, this shock to household budgets is likely to have substantial effects on food insecurity. During the Great Recession food insecurity rose about 30%, but this economic shock is orders of magnitude larger. As witnessed by the crushing need for emergency food aid at food pantries around the nation, we expect food insecurity among the population of 50-59 year olds to rise to heights not

seen in the past, and thus underscoring the need for ongoing monitoring of food insecurity among older adults.

Appendix Table 1: Questions on the Food Security Supplement

Food Insecurity Question	Asked of Households with Children	Asked of Households without Children
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?	x	x
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?	x	x
3. “We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes , or never true for you in the last 12 months?	x	x
4. “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?	x	
5. 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)	x	x
6. “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?	x	
7. 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)	x	x
8. (If yes to Question 5) How often did this happen— almost every month, some months but not every month , or in only 1 or 2 months?	x	x
9. “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?	x	
10. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry, but didn’t eat, because you couldn’t afford enough food? (Yes/No)	x	x
11. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn’t have enough money for food? (Yes/No)	x	x
12. 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)	x	
13. 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)	x	x
14. In the last 12 months, were the children ever hungry but you just couldn’t afford more food? (Yes/No)	x	
15. (If yes to Question 13) How often did this happen— almost every month, some months but not every month , or in only 1 or 2 months?	x	x
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)	x	
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?	x	
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)	x	

Notes: Responses in bold indicate an “affirmative” response.

Appendix Table 2: Selected Characteristics of Americans between 50 and 59 in 2018

Income Categories	
Below the Poverty Line	0.07
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	0.10
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	0.59
Missing Income	0.24
Racial Categories	
White	0.79
Black	0.13
Other	0.08
Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	0.14
Non-Hispanic	0.86
Marital Status	
Married	0.66
Widowed	0.04
Divorced or Separated	0.19
Never Married	0.12
Metropolitan Location	
Non-Metro	0.14
Metro	0.86
Age	
50 to 54	0.49
55 to 59	0.51
Employment Status	
Employed	0.75
Unemployed	0.02
Retired	0.06
Disabled	0.17
By Gender	
Male	0.49
Female	0.51
Grandchild Present	
No Grandchild Present	0.96
Grandchild Present	0.04
By Homeownership Status	
Homeowner	0.77
Renter	0.23
By Veteran Status	
Veteran	0.07
Not a Veteran	0.93
By Disability Status	
Without a disability	0.88
With a disability	0.12

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

James P. Ziliak, Ph.D., holds the Carol Martin Gatton Endowed Chair in Microeconomics in the Department of Economics and is Founding Director of the Center for Poverty Research at the University of Kentucky. He received his BA/BS degrees in economics and sociology from Purdue University, and his Ph.D. in Economics from Indiana University. He served as assistant and associate professor of economics at the University of Oregon, and has held visiting positions at the Brookings Institution, University College London, University of Michigan, and University of Wisconsin. His research expertise is in the areas of labor economics, poverty, food insecurity, and tax and transfer policy. Recent projects include the causes and consequences of hunger among older Americans; trends in earnings and income volatility in the U.S.; trends in the antipoverty effectiveness of the social safety net; the origins of persistent poverty in America; and regional wage differentials across the earnings distribution. He is editor of *Welfare Reform and its Long Term Consequences for America's Poor* published by Cambridge University Press (2009) and *Appalachian Legacy: Economic Opportunity after the War on Poverty* published by Brookings Institution Press (2012), and co-editor of *SNAP Matters: How Food Stamps Affect Health and Well Being* at Stanford University Press (2015).

Craig Gundersen, Ph.D., is the ACES Distinguished Professor in in the Department of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois, is on the Technical Advisory Group for Feeding America, is the lead researcher on Feeding America's *Map the Meal Gap* project, and is the Managing Editor for *Applied Economic Perspectives and Policy*. He is also a Round Table Member of the Farm Foundation, a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, and a Faculty Affiliate of the Wilson Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO) at the University of Notre Dame. His research concentrates on the causes and consequences of food insecurity and on the evaluation of food assistance programs, with an emphasis on SNAP.

Contact information:

Dr. James P. Ziliak
 Center for Poverty Research, University of Kentucky
 550 South Limestone St
 Gatton Building, Suite 234
 Lexington, KY 40506-0034
 Phone: (859) 257-6902
 Email: jziliak@uky.edu

Dr. Craig Gundersen
 Department of Agriculture and Consumer Economics, University of Illinois
 324 Mumford Hall
 1301 W. Gregory Dr.
 Urbana, IL 61801
 Phone: (217) 333-2857
 Email: cggunder@illinois.edu