Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2019

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Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2019: An Annual Report

Prepared for Feeding America

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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 2019, 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 (2021).

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. One should note that all VLFS persons are also included in the food insecure category.

Specifically, in 2019, we find that:

- Out of 42 million persons between 50 and 59, 9.5% are food insecure and 4.2% are VLFS. This translates into 4.0 million and 1.7 million persons, respectively.
- From 2018 to 2019, there was a 1.1 percentage point decline in food insecurity and this is statistically significant. The change in VLFS was statistically insignificant.
- Compared to 2001, the fraction of food insecure and VLFS persons between ages 50 and 59 increased by 23% and 61%, respectively. The number in each group rose 61% and 110%.
- We find that food insecurity is greatest among racial or ethnic minorities, those with lower incomes, and those who are renters.
- State-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 16.9% (Kentucky) to a low of 3.5% (Colorado).
- Metro-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 16.7% (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) to a low of 3.4% (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 2019, 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 remains in the midst of the COVID-19 health pandemic, with dire health and economic consequences for millions of 50-59 year-olds. Older adults, especially those with front-line employment responsibilities, remain particularly vulnerable to the virus and thus their food and health security status require ongoing monitoring in the coming years.

I. FOOD INSECURITY IN 2019

We document the state of food insecurity among adults between the ages of 50 and 59 in the United States spanning 2001-2019. This study complements our annual report on food insecurity of seniors ages 60+ (Ziliak and Gundersen, 2021), and is the third annual report for this age group.

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 2019, this results in 10,784 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 and, thus, VLFS seniors constitutes a subset of food insecure seniors

In Table 1, we present estimates of food insecurity among adults ages 50 to 59 in 2019. We find that 9.5% were food insecure (4.0 million) and 4.2% were VLFS (1.7 million). These rates are greater than rates for seniors ages 60+ as reported in Ziliak and Gundersen (2021). Among seniors, we found that 7.1% were food insecure and 2.6% 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 (5.2 million) and VLFS (1.9 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, 41.4% were food insecure and 19.3% were VLFS. In contrast, for those with incomes greater than twice the poverty line, these numbers fall to 4.1%, and 1.5%. Turning to race, white older adults have food insecurity rates that are substantially less than the rates for Black older adults. Similarly, Hispanic older adults (of any racial category) have food insecurity rates that are higher than non-Hispanic older adults, though rates of VLFS were comparable.

Table 1. The Extent of 50-59 Food Insecurity in 2019

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	9.5%	4.2%
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	41.4	19.3
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	24.0	10.3
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	4.1	1.5
Income Not Reported	8.2	4.2
By Race		
White	8.8	3.9
Black	15.0	7.0
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	8.4	3.7
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	13.6	4.5
Non-Hispanic	8.8	4.1
By Marital Status		
Married	5.6	2.0
Widowed	15.9	8.1
Divorced or Separated	17.0	8.8
Never Married	16.1	7.4
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	12.6	5.8
Metro	9.0	3.9
By Age		
50-54	9.5	4.0
55-59	9.5	4.4
By Employment Status		
Employed	5.6	2.2
Unemployed	20.0	10.0
Retired	7.3	2.3
Disabled[1]	26.6	13.1
By Gender		
Male	8.4	3.5
Female	10.6	4.9
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	9.2	4.1
Grandchildren Present	17.7	5.7
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	5.5	2.3
Renter	23.0	10.8

By Veteran Status		
Veteran	8.7	4.3
Not a Veteran	9.6	4.2
By Disability Status[2]		
Without a disability	6.7	2.5
With a disability	31.6	17.6

Source: Authors' calculations from 2019 December Current Population Survey. The numbers in the table show the rates of food insecurity under two measures for various groups. [1]Disabled employment status means the person is out of the labor force because of a disability or other reason. [2]Disability status refers to those with limitations on select activities of daily living.

Food insecurity among persons age 50-59 who are divorced or separated, widowed, or never married are up to two and a half times higher 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 remain the same, 9.5% for both the 50-54 and 55-59 categories. VLFS rates actually increase slightly from 4.0% to 4.4%. This differs from those in the age 60+ range where rates of food insecurity and VLFS generally fall in five-year age increments after age 60 (Ziliak and Gundersen, 2021). 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 much higher than when no grandchildren are present, especially for the food insecurity measure. Renters have food insecurity and VLFS rates that are more than four times higher than homeowners. Veterans and non-veterans have essentially the same food insecurity and VLFS rates.

Starting last year, we included 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 - 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. A similar story holds for race - while Black older adults are at greater risk of food insecurity under either measure than white older adults, over 70% of food-insecure or VLFS persons are white. Looking at disability status, the proportion of those with a disability is greater in the VLFS category (52.3%) than those in the without a disability category (47.7%). This is especially stark insofar as persons with disabilities in the 50-59 group are 11% of the population.

Table 2. The Distribution of 50-59 Food Insecurity in 2019		
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	27.7%	29.4%
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	26.1	25.4
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	25.0	20.5
Income Not Reported	21.2	24.8
By Race		
White	73.7	72.9
Black	18.5	19.4
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	7.8	7.7
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	22.0	16.6
Non-Hispanic	78.0	83.4
By Marital Status		
Married	37.8	30.1
Widowed	5.2	5.9
Divorced or Separated	35.2	41.3
Never Married	21.9	22.6
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	19.0	19.7
Metro	81.0	80.3
By Age		
50-54	48.5	46.3
55-59	51.5	53.7
By Employment Status		
Employed	43.9	39.0
Unemployed	4.2	4.8
Retired	4.6	3.4
Disabled[1]	47.3	52.8
By Gender		
Male	43.0	40.1
Female	57.0	59.9
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	92.7	94.7
Grandchildren Present	7.3	5.3
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	45.0	41.5
Renter	55.0	58.5
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	6.2	7.1
Not a Veteran	93.8	92.9

By Disability Status[2]		
Without a disability	62.2	52.2
With a disability	37.8	47.8

Source: Authors' calculations from 2019 December Current Population Survey. The numbers in the table show the distribution of food insecurity under two measures for various groups. [1]Disabled employment status means the person is out of the labor force because of a disability or other reason. [2]Disability status refers to those with limitations on select activities of daily living.

Table 3. State-Level Estimates of 50-59 Food Insecurity in 2019

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure		Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
AL	15.6%	5.6%	MT	6.5%	3.5%
AK	10.7	3.8	NE	14.6	6.2
AZ	10.4	3.7	NV	10.9	4.1
AR	12.9	6.5	NH	4.8	2.1
CA	9.9	3.3	NJ	7.5	4.0
CO	3.5	2.3	NM	12.5	4.1
CT	10.2	3.5	NY	9.8	3.2
DE	9.7	3.6	NC	9.0	2.9
DC	7.8	2.0	ND	6.7	1.6
FL	9.6	4.2	OH	10.8	6.2
GA	9.7	4.1	OK	15.7	7.6
HI	7.0	1.1	OR	8.1	5.3
ID	9.0	3.4	PA	9.8	5.5
IL	8.9	4.2	RI	13.8	6.1
IN	12.0	3.1	SC	11.7	5.8
IA	6.0	2.7	SD	7.8	3.9
KS	10.7	4.6	TN	14.6	4.9
KY	16.9	7.6	TX	11.6	4.9
LA	11.3	5.2	UT	10.0	3.2
ME	7.5	3.7	VT	8.4	2.9
MD	4.9	2.7	VA	8.9	4.3
MA	7.8	3.7	WA	9.7	4.1
MI	9.6	5.5	WV	15.0	5.9
MN	7.7	4.0	WI	8.6	2.4
MS	13.4	4.9	WY	9.4	4.4
MO	12.1	6.2			

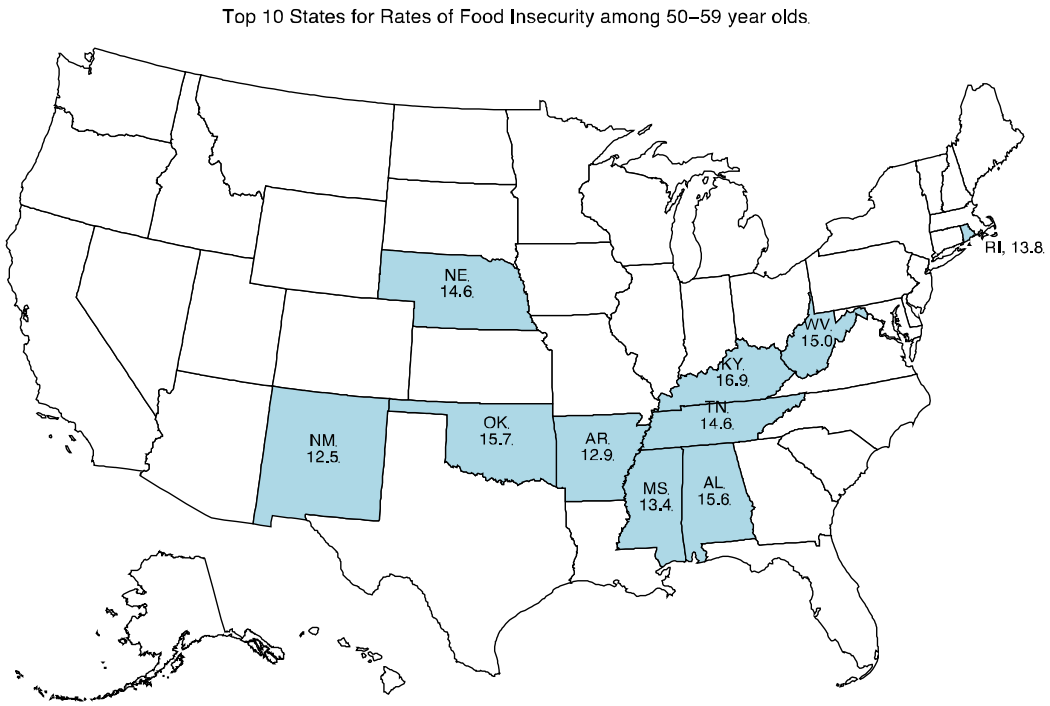
Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers are two-year averages found by summing the number of food-insecure seniors in each category by state across the 2018-2019 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each state across the two years.

In Table 3, we present state-level estimates of food insecurity among those between 50 and 59 for 2019 based on averages of 2018-2019 data. The range for food insecurity spans from 3.5% in Colorado to 16.9% in Kentucky and, for VLFS, from 1.1% in Hawaii to 7.6% in Kentucky and

Oklahoma. This cross-state range of food insecurity and VLFS exceeds that found among seniors ages 60+. However, after adjusting for the differences in means, the level of cross-state inequality is actually higher among seniors 60+.[1]

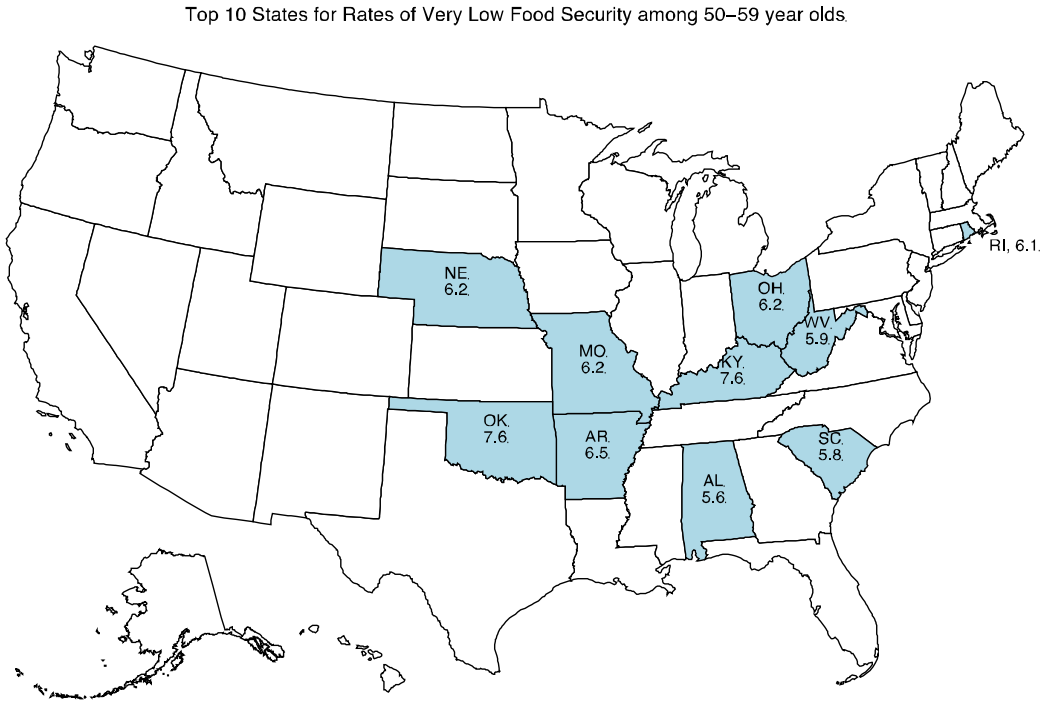
In the maps below we highlight the ten states with the highest rates of hunger among those between 50 and 59 in 2019. For food insecurity, eight of the ten are located in the South and Southwest. The ten-highest states for VLFS are slightly less concentrated in the South with six of the ten states are in those regions. For the past two years, Kentucky has led the nation with the highest rates of food insecurity and VLFS among 50-59 year-olds, and this is the third consecutive year for highest rate of food insecurity.

Map 1. Top 10 States for Rates of Food Insecurity among 50-59 Year Olds



[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 0.29, while it is 0.35 for VLFS. Among those ages 60+ the respective CVs are 0.34 and 0.41.

Map 2. 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 2014 to 2019. This is found in Table 4. Like with state rates, there is a wide range of estimates. For food insecurity, the highest rate, in the Oklahoma City, Oklahoma metro area, is over four times higher than the lowest rate, in Denver, Colorado (16.7% versus 3.4%). For VLFS, the highest is in Memphis, Tennessee metro area and the lowest is, like last year, Raleigh, North Carolina (9.4% and 0.8%).

Table 4. Estimates of 50-59 Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2019

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	7.9%	2.6%
Austin-Round Rock, TX	6.6	3.5
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	12.5	5.5
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.7	4.4
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	7.5	3.6
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	9.3	2.5
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	5.1	2.4
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	9.4	4.0
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	11.3	4.1
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	11.8	6.1
Columbus, OH	10.3	6.0

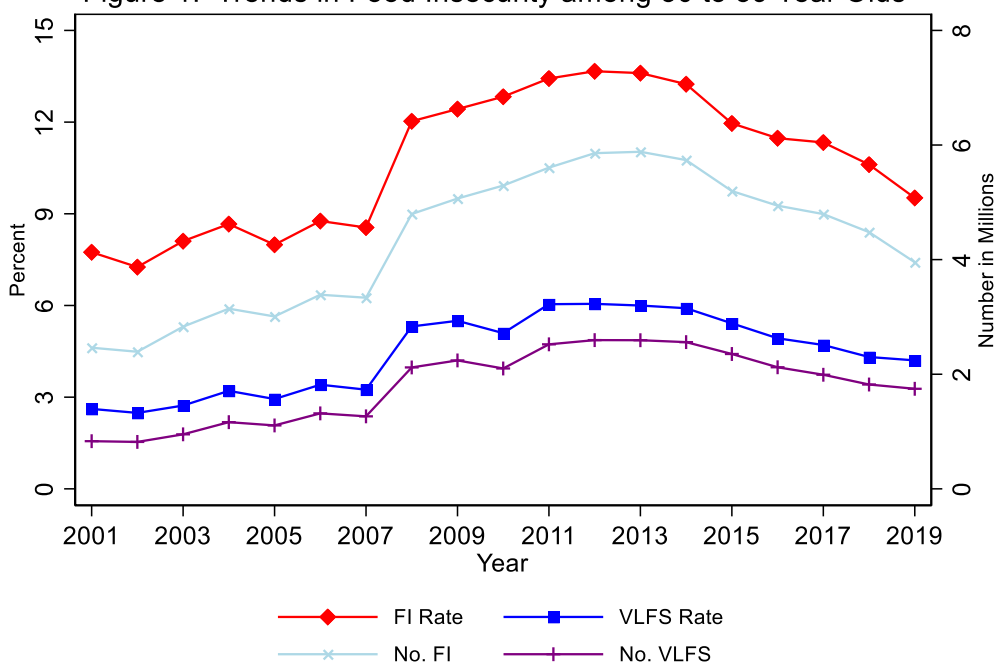
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	10.7	3.7
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	3.4	2.4
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	11.5	5.1
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	16.4	8.3
Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	11.2	4.7
Indianapolis, IN	13.8	6.8
Jacksonville, FL	12.3	2.4
Kansas City, MO-KS	12.4	4.3
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	11.0	3.7
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	10.7	4.3
Louisville, KY-IN	11.1	5.5
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	14.4	9.4
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	10.5	1.9
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	7.6	3.2
Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	7.3	3.3
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	8.7	2.2
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	12.8	6.6
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	8.7	3.5
Oklahoma City, OK	16.7	8.8
Orlando, FL	9.5	3.6
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	8.7	3.1
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	12.8	6.6
Pittsburgh, PA	8.4	5.0
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	9.6	4.8
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	13.6	4.7
Raleigh, NC	8.2	0.8
Richmond, VA	5.6	3.9
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	11.2	4.1
Rochester, NY	11.9	4.4
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	6.9	2.8
St. Louis, MO-IL	10.0	5.3
Salt Lake City, UT	11.3	5.9
San Antonio, TX	9.4	5.3
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	6.6	3.3
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	5.7	1.6
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	5.0	1.2
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue. WA	6.9	2.4
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	8.5	4.4
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	15.2	7.3
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	5.7	2.7

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 2015-2019 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 2019 food insecurity and VLFS estimates compare to prior years, in Figure 1 we provide estimated trends in food insecurity since 2001. We display results for all those between ages 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., 2020) but seniors also continue to have rates higher than in 2007 (Ziliak and Gundersen, 2021). Since 2001, the fraction of older adults experiencing food insecurity and VLFS has increased by 23%, and 61%. In terms of the number of food insecure persons, this rose in each group rose by 61%, and 110%.

Figure 1. Trends in Food Insecurity among 50 to 59 Year Olds



In Table 5, we take a deeper look into underlying changes in the composition of food insecurity among 50-59-year-olds from 2018 to 2019. 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 statistically significant change in overall food insecurity, there are many statistically significant changes from 2018 to 2019 across demographic groups. Some were especially large. For example, food insecurity rates for Black persons fell by over 4 percentage points. For VLFS, no category had a statistically significant change.

Table 5. Percentage Point Changes in the Composition of 50-59 Food Insecurity from 2018 to 2019

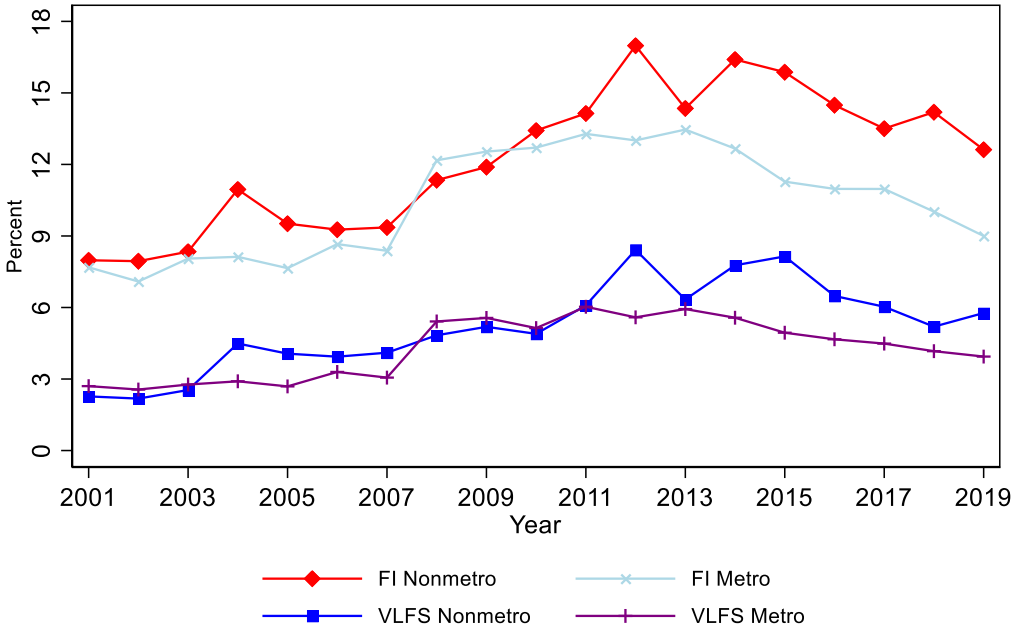
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	-1.09**	-0.11
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	-0.09	-1.52
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	-2.23	-0.05
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	-0.64*	-0.17
Income Not Reported	-1.76	0.49
By Race		
White	-0.46	0.17
Black	-4.16**	-1.38
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	-2.07	-0.68
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	-1.28	-0.08
Non-Hispanic	-1.12**	-0.12
By Marital Status		
Married	-0.80*	-0.09
Widowed	-3.46	-1.92
Divorced or Separated	-1.84	0.05
Never Married	-2.29	-0.74
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	-1.57	0.57
Metro	-1.02**	-0.23
By Age		
50-54	-0.90	-0.23
55-59	-1.27*	0.00
By Employment Status		
Employed	-1.16***	0.04
Unemployed	-1.86	0.88
Retired	-1.06	-1.08
Disabled[1]	0.00	-0.19
By Gender		
Male	-1.23*	-0.34
Female	-0.96	0.11
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	-0.89*	0.01
Grandchildren Present	-5.49*	-2.78
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	-1.16***	-0.44
Renter	-0.41	1.20
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	-1.54	0.11
Not a Veteran	-1.06**	-0.13
By Disability Status[2]		
Without a disability	-1.34	0.32
With a disability	-0.91**	-0.08

Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers in the table reflect percentage point changes from 2018-2019. The asterisks denote statistical significance at the following levels: *** p<0.01; ** p<0.05; * p<0.1. [1]Disabled

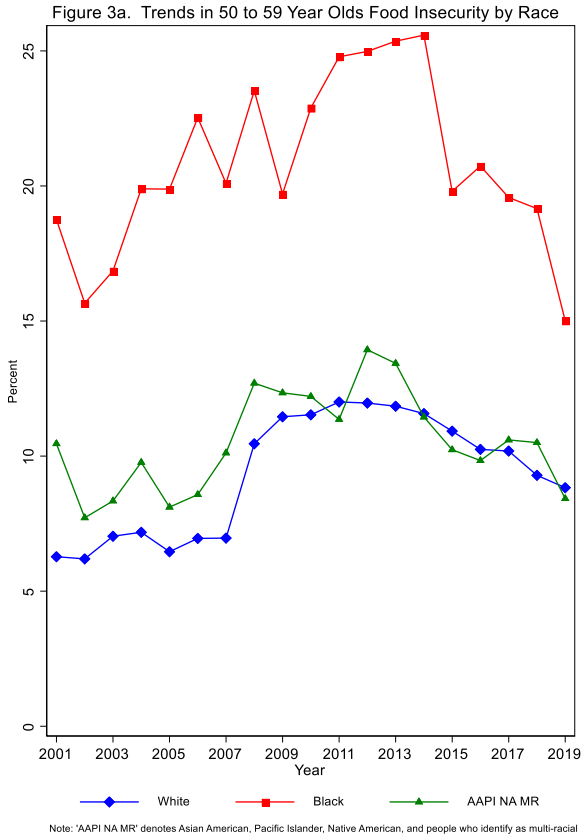
employment status means the person is out of the labor force because of a disability or other reason. [2]Disability status refers to those with limitations on select activities of daily living.

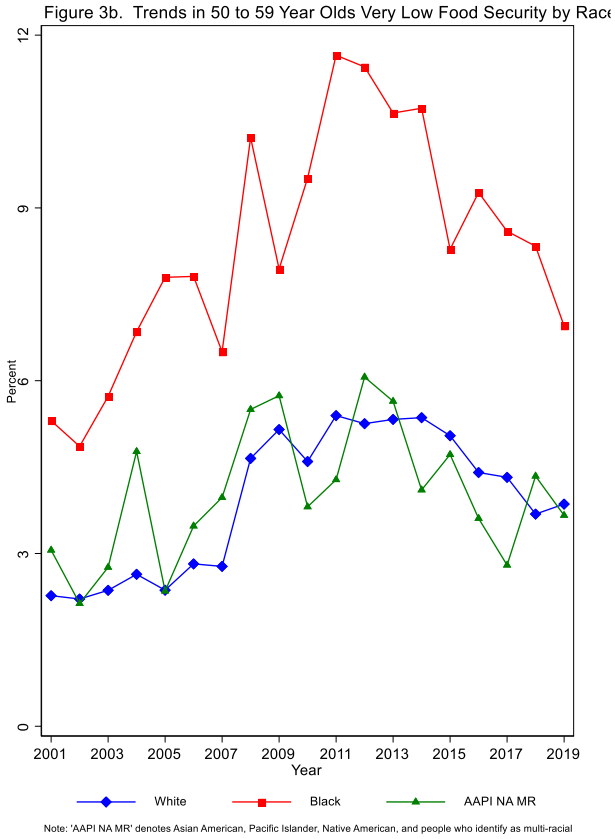
In the next set of figures, we examine trends in food insecurity since 2001 across a variety of subpopulations found in Tables 1 and 5. We begin in Figure 2 with trends in food insecurity for those living in metropolitan areas versusta nonmetropolitan areas. The figure shows that for most years, food insecurity rates were higher in nonmetro areas, and every year after the Great Recession. For VLFS, a similar pattern holds, with rates being higher in nonmetro areas every year since 2011. For both measures, the lack of progress in returning to pre-Great Recession levels appears to be driven by the slower recovery in nonmetro areas, a result consistent with the 60+ age group.

Figure 2. Trends in Food Insecurity among 50 to 59 Year Olds by Metropolitan Status



Panel a of Figure 3 depicts trends in food insecurity across different races and panel b is for VLFS. As discussed above, food insecurity and VLFS for Black older adults are substantially higher than for white older adults. These figures reveal that these differences were present in each year from 2001 to 2019. Of note, though, is that, looking at 2001 versus 2019, the food insecurity rates rose for white but not Black older adults over this time period; in fact Black food insecurity rates are lower in 2019 than in 2001. For VLFS, though, both Black older adults and white older adults have higher rates in 2019 than in 2001. Comparing white older adults and the older adults in the category Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial , rates are generally higher among the latter category, but there are many years for both measures where this does not hold, including in 2019 where rates were higher for white older adults for both food insecurity and VLFS.





In Figure 4, we present trends broken down by Hispanic status. For food insecurity, the rates are higher among Hispanic than non-Hispanic adults age 50-59 in all years, albeit this gap narrowed dramatically starting in 2014 when rates for Hispanics declined substantially and stayed relatively similar for non-Hispanic adultss. The trends in VLFS are similar up until 2014 when the rates become almost identical.

Figure 4. Trends in 50 to 59 Year Olds Food Insecurity by Hispanic Ethnicity

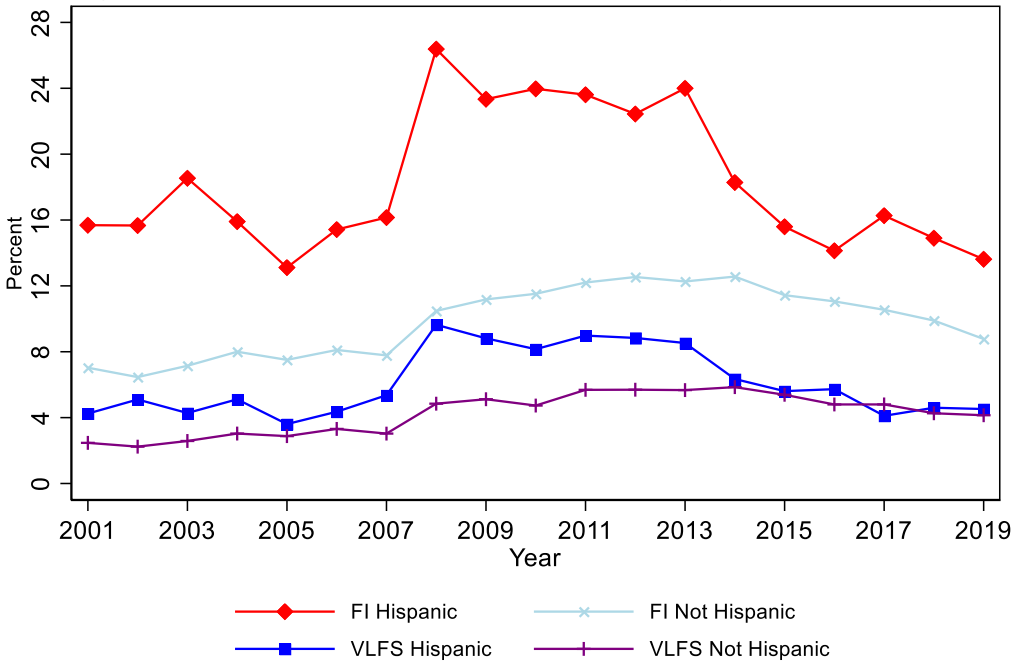
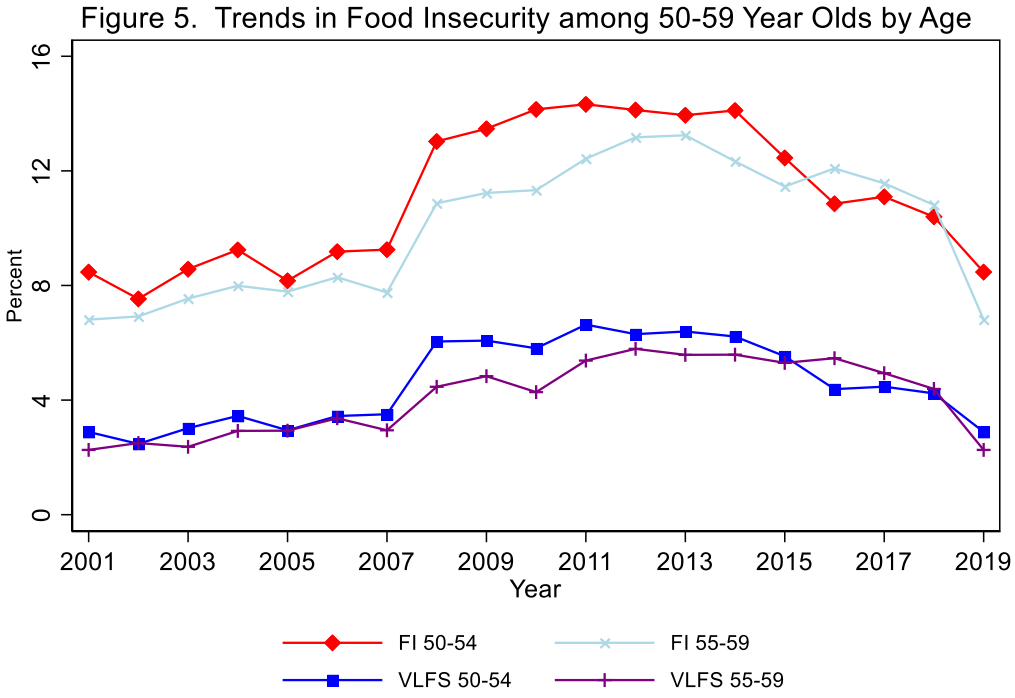


Figure 5 presents a parallel set of results broken down into two age groups—50-54 year-olds and 55-59 year-olds. For the 60+ group in every year rates of food insecurity and VLFS are highest for those 60-69, then 70-79, then 80+. In contrast, for the two age groups in Figure 5, with the exception of the years surrounding the Great Recession when food insecurity and VLFS were higher among 50-54 year-olds compared to 55-59 year-olds, the rates were quite similar across the two age groups.



III. CONCLUSION

This report demonstrates that food insecurity is an ongoing challenge among those between the ages of 50 and 59 in America. Just under one in ten persons between the ages of 50 and 59 were food insecure in 2019, which is 23% higher than in 2001. VLFS has grown even more – up 61% 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 (Ziliak and Gundersen, 2021), a particular concern at this writing is the global pandemic brought about by the novel coronavirus which continues to impose great costs in terms of lost life and economic security. 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 fall 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. This underscores the need for ongoing monitoring of food insecurity among older adults separate from seniors.

APPENDIX

The Current Population Survey (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. For this report and previous reports, we use data from the December Supplement which contains the Food Security Supplement (FSS). The questions from the FSS are found in Appendix Table 1. Our CPS sample is restricted to those between the ages of 50 and 59. In 2019, this results in 10,784 sample observations. Appendix Table 2 presents selected summary statistics for the CPS sample.

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 50-59 Year Olds in 2019	
Income Categories	
Below the Poverty Line	0.06
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	0.10
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	0.59
Missing Income	0.25
Racial Categories	
White	0.79
Black	0.12
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	0.09
Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	0.15
Non-Hispanic	0.85
Marital Status	
Married	0.64
Widowed	0.03
Divorced or Separated	0.20
Never Married	0.13
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	0.89
With a disability	0.11

Source: Authors' calculations from 2019 December Current Population Survey.

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