The State of Senior Hunger in 2020

FEEDING AMERICA

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The State of Senior Hunger in America in 2020: An Annual Report

Prepared for Feeding America

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
I. FOOD INSECURITY IN 2020 4
Table 1. The Extent of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020 4
Table 2. The Distribution of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020 6
Table 3. State-Level Estimates of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020 7
Map 1: Top 10 States with the Highest Rates of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020 9
Map 2. Top 10 States for Rates of Very Low Food Security among Seniors* 10
Table 4. Estimates of Senior Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2020 10
II. FOOD INSECURITY OVER TIME 12
Table 5. Percentage Point Changes in the Composition of Senior Hunger from 2019 to 2020 13
III. CONCLUSION 17
Appendix Table 1: Questions on the Food Security Supplement 19
Appendix Table 2: Selected Characteristics of Seniors Age 60 and older in 2020 20
Appendix Table 3a. The Extent of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020 21
Appendix Table 3b. The Distribution of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020 23
Appendix Table 3c. State-Level Estimates of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020 25
Appendix Table 3d. Estimates of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2020 26
Appendix Table 3e. Percentage Point Changes in the Composition of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity from 2019 to 2020 28
REFERENCES 30
ABOUT THE AUTHORS 31

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this report, we provide a broad overview of the extent and distribution of food insecurity among seniors (those 60 years of age and older) in the United States in 2020, along with trends over the past two decades using national, state-level, and metropolitan-level data from the December Supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS).

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 and six or more in households without children. All VLFS persons are also included in the food insecure category.

In 2020, we find that:

- Out of 76 million persons age 60 and over, 6.8% are food insecure and 2.6% are VLFS. This translates into 5.2 million and 2.0 million seniors, respectively.
- From 2019 to 2020, there was not a statistically significant change in the rate or numbers for food insecurity or VLFS.
- Compared to 2001, the fraction of food insecure and VLFS seniors increased by 29% and 84%. The number of seniors in each group rose 126%, and 222%, which also reflects the growing population of seniors.
- Continuing with historic trends documented in prior reports, we find that food insecurity is greatest among Blacks and Hispanics, those with lower incomes, those who are younger (ages 60-69), and those who are renters.
- State-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 13.1% (District of Columbia) to a low of 2.9% (North Dakota).
- Metro-level food insecurity rates range from a high of 13.2% (New Orleans) to a low of 2.5% (Minneapolis/St. Paul and Rochester, New York).

The Covid-19 Pandemic was a major health and economic shock, resulting in hundreds of thousands of deaths that fell disproportionately on seniors. Despite this health shock, food insecurity among seniors did not increase like we saw in the Great Recession of 2007-2009. This likely reflects the nature of the coronavirus shock insofar as the financial situation of seniors did not materially change, and if anything improved with the robust growth in financial markets in the second half of the year and the massive infusion of government aid, including a major increase in food assistance benefits. However, unlike the population overall, senior rates of food insecurity and VLFS still have not returned to their pre-Great Recession levels, and thus millions of seniors still remain vulnerable to food hardships and the associated negative health consequences. This risk is particularly acute among those seniors experiencing VLFS, the ranks of which have especially swelled since 2001.

I. FOOD INSECURITY IN 2020

We document the state of hunger among senior Americans ages 60 and older in 2020 using data from the most recently available Current Population Survey (CPS). This is part of a series of reports on food insecurity among seniors, which began with Ziliak et al. (2008) and has been produced annually since 2012. In December of each year, households respond to a series of 18 questions (10 questions if there are no children present in the household) that make up the Food Security Supplement (FSS) in the CPS (see the Appendix for more details on the CPS and FSS). Each question 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. Appendix Table 2 presents selected summary statistics for the CPS sample, adjusted using the FSS survey weight to make the sample nationally representative among adults age 60 and over.

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). All VLFS seniors are also included in the food insecure category and, thus, VLFS seniors constitute a subset of food insecure seniors. Another measure, marginal food insecurity (one or more affirmative responses), is included in Appendix Tables 3a-e.)

In Table 1, we present estimates of food insecurity among seniors in 2020. We find that 6.8% were food insecure (5.2 million seniors) and 2.6% were VLFS (2.0 million seniors). The table also presents estimates of food insecurity across selected socioeconomic categories. Here we see great heterogeneity across the senior population. For example, for those with incomes below the poverty line, 26.5% were food insecure and 11.7% were VLFS. In contrast, for seniors with incomes greater than twice the poverty line, these numbers fall dramatically to 2.9%, and 0.9%. Turning to race, Black seniors have a food insecurity rate that is close to four times that of white seniors. Similarly, the food insecurity rate of Hispanics (of any racial category) is just over twice the rate of non-Hispanics.

Table 1. The Extent of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	6.8%	2.6%
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	26.5	11.7
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	15.6	5.4
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	2.9	0.9
Income Not Reported	5.7	2.4
By Race		
White	5.2	1.9
Black	19.1	7.7

Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	7.2	2.8
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	13.2	4.4
Non-Hispanic	6.1	2.4
By Marital Status		
Married	4.0	1.1
Widowed	8.5	3.4
Divorced or Separated	12.7	5.8
Never Married	12.8	6.0
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	7.3	2.9
Metro	6.7	2.5
By Age		
60-69	8.1	3.4
70-79	6.0	2.0
80 and older	4.5	1.1
By Employment Status		
Employed	4.7	1.7
Unemployed	20.1	8.4
Retired	5.2	1.6
Disabled[1]	21.6	11.1
By Gender		
Male	6.3	2.5
Female	7.3	2.6
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	6.3	2.3
Grandchildren Present	17.8	8.0
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	4.4	1.4
Renter	18.3	8.2
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	4.9	2.5
Not a Veteran	7.1	2.6
By Disability Status[2]		
Without a disability	5.3	1.8
With a disability	11.6	5.1

Source: Authors' calculations from 2020 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 divorced or separated seniors and for never married seniors is more than three times greater than married seniors. As age increases, food insecurity rates generally fall. For example, seniors between the ages of 60 and 69 have food insecurity rates that are almost two times higher than those aged 80 and older, and VLFS rates that are over three times higher than those aged 80 and older. In terms of employment categories, food insecurity rates are over four times higher among those who report being disabled as the reason for being out of the labor

force in comparison to the retired. For VLFS the difference is over five times higher. For seniors with a grandchild present, food insecurity rates for both measures are substantially higher than when no grandchildren are present. Seniors who are renters have much higher rates of both food insecurity and VLFS in comparison to homeowners. Non-Veteran seniors have slightly higher food insecurity and VLFS rates than seniors who are Veterans. We also include a 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 limitations on activities of daily living (ADLs): hearing, visual, cognitive, ambulatory, self-care, or independent living. Seniors with ADLs have food insecurity rates over two times higher and VLFS rates almost three times higher as those without an ADL.[1]

Table 1 allows us to see the proportions of persons within various categories who are food insecure and, with this information, we can make statements about who is most in danger of being food insecure. For example, those with lower incomes are more likely to be food insecure than those with higher incomes. Also, of interest is the distribution of senior hunger. In other words, out of those who are food insecure, what proportion fall into a particular category? We present these results in Table 2.

As seen in Table 2, the majority of seniors in either food insecurity category have incomes above the poverty line. For example, out of those reporting income, 7 of 10 food-insecure seniors have incomes above the poverty line. A similar story holds for race—while Black seniors are at greater risk of food insecurity under either measure than white seniors, almost 2/3 of food-insecure seniors are white. Despite the lower food insecurity rates among older seniors, 10.7% of food-insecure seniors are over the age of 80; the figure is 6.8% for VLFS. And while the rates of food insecurity are lowest for retired persons, they make up a large portion of both categories—47.5%, and 38.0%.

Table 2. The Distribution of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	21.8%	25.2%
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	30.1	27.2
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	20.9	17.9
Income Not Reported	27.1	29.7
By Race		
White	62.7	61.1
Black	29.9	31.5
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	7.3	7.5
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	18.6	16.2
Non-Hispanic	81.4	83.8
By Marital Status		

[1] We note that those seniors who are out of the labor force due to disability likely overlap with the group reporting ADLs. The fact that their rates of food insecurity are higher than the rate overall for those with ADLs suggests that disability associated with labor force exit is likely more severe.

Married	34.6	24.9
Widowed	22.3	23.3
Divorced or Separated	28.7	34.0
Never Married	14.5	17.9
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	17.2	18.0
Metro	82.8	82.0
By Age		
60-69	60.7	67.7
70-79	28.6	25.5
80 and older	10.7	6.8
By Employment Status		
Employed	19.0	18.4
Unemployed	4.9	5.4
Retired	47.5	38.0
Disabled[1]	28.5	38.3
By Gender		
Male	42.3	44.7
Female	57.7	55.3
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	88.5	86.4
Grandchildren Present	11.5	13.6
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	53.9	46.1
Renter	46.1	53.9
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	9.9	13.2
Not a Veteran	90.1	86.8
By Disability Status[2]=		
Without a disability	59.8	53.6
With a disability	40.2	46.4

Source: Authors' calculations from 2020 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.

In Table 3, we present state-level estimates of senior food insecurity for 2020 based on averages of 2019-2020 data. The range for food insecurity spans from 2.9% in North Dakota to 13.1% in the District of Columbia and, for VLFS, from 0.6% in New Hampshire to 5.7% in Louisiana.

Table 3. State-Level Estimates of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020

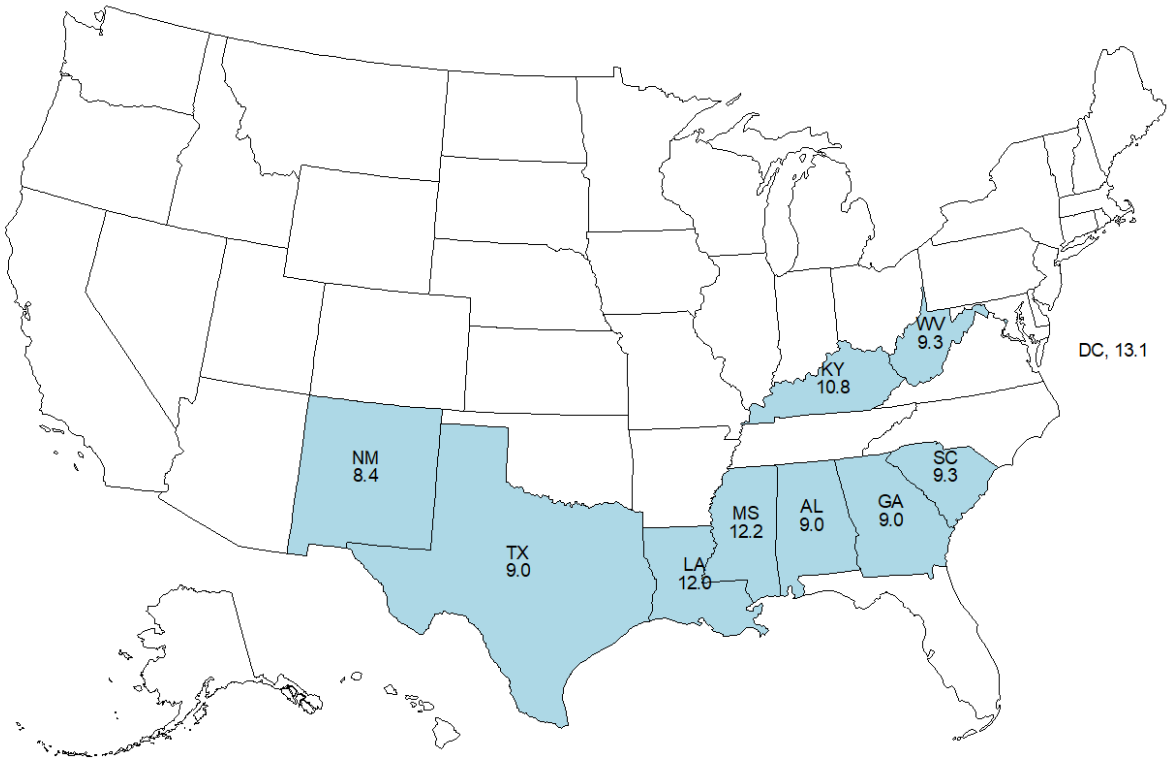
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure		Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
AL	9.0%	2.9%	MT	3.6%	1.2%
AK	5.9	3.8	NE	4.7	2.2
AZ	6.9	2.6	NV	6.2	3.0
AR	6.3	2.8	NH	3.0	0.6
CA	6.5	2.1	NJ	6.1	2.0

CO	7.5	3.1	NM	8.4	3.6
CT	6.6	4.0	NY	7.6	2.6
DE	5.4	2.5	NC	7.7	2.9
DC	13.1	3.5	ND	2.9	0.8
FL	7.8	3.2	OH	5.6	1.7
GA	9.0	3.4	OK	8.1	2.5
HI	3.6	1.0	OR	4.5	2.5
ID	4.6	2.0	PA	5.0	1.5
IL	7.1	2.3	RI	6.0	1.5
IN	6.6	3.3	SC	9.3	4.2
IA	6.2	2.1	SD	5.0	1.1
KS	6.5	2.2	TN	6.8	3.2
KY	10.8	2.8	TX	9.0	3.5
LA	12.0	5.7	UT	3.5	1.8
ME	5.2	2.6	VT	4.6	1.2
MD	5.7	2.8	VA	5.8	1.6
MA	5.3	1.8	WA	4.6	1.5
MI	5.3	1.8	WV	9.3	3.4
MN	3.8	1.0	WI	6.4	3.1
MS	12.2	4.0	WY	8.2	3.4
MO	7.3	3.3			

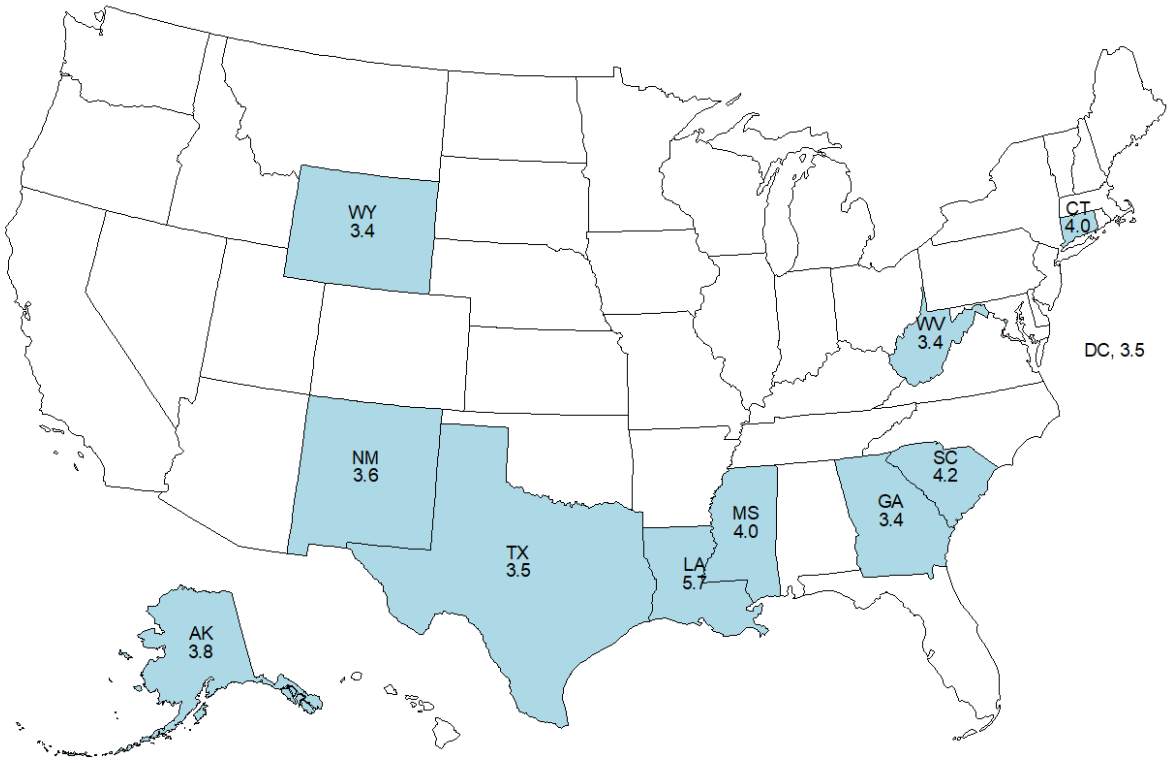
Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers are two-year averages found by summing the number of food-insecure seniors in each category by state across the 2019-2020 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each state across the two years.

In the maps below we highlight the ten states with the highest rates of senior hunger in 2020 (eleven states for VLFS owing to a three-way tie). For food insecurity, all states are located in the South and West. The same holds for VFLS, with the notable exception of Connecticut and Wyoming. There is some movement in the top ten classifications from one year to the next both because of changes in economic circumstances within states and variation from survey sample sizes, but overall, many of the states consistently appear. For example, eight of the ten states with the highest rates of food insecurity were on the list last year and five of the eleven states with the highest rates of VLFS were on the list last year.

Map 1: Top 10 States with the Highest Rates of Senior Food Insecurity in 2020



Map 2. Top 10 States for Rates of Very Low Food Security among Seniors*



* 11 states are depicted reflecting a tie.

In Table 4 are estimates of food insecurity and VLFS rates by large metropolitan areas (i.e., more than 1 million in total population). These are based on data from 2016 to 2020. Like with state rates, there is a wide range of estimates. For food insecurity, the highest rate, in the New Orleans metro area, is over five times higher than the lowest rate, in Minneapolis/St. Paul and Rochester, New York (13.2% versus 2.5%). For VLFS, the highest rate is, like last year, in the Indianapolis metro area (5.2%) and the lowest, like the last three years, is in San Diego (0.3%). The relevancy of looking at VLFS for geographies below the state level is demonstrated by that fact that Indiana (home to Indianapolis) is not even in the top 10 for VLFS rates.

Table 4. Estimates of Senior Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2020

	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	7.0%	2.1%
Austin-Round Rock, TX	6.5	2.5
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	8.4	4.2
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	8.3	2.7
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	6.0	1.9
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	7.4	2.8
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	5.6	2.2
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	7.7	3.0
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	6.3	1.8

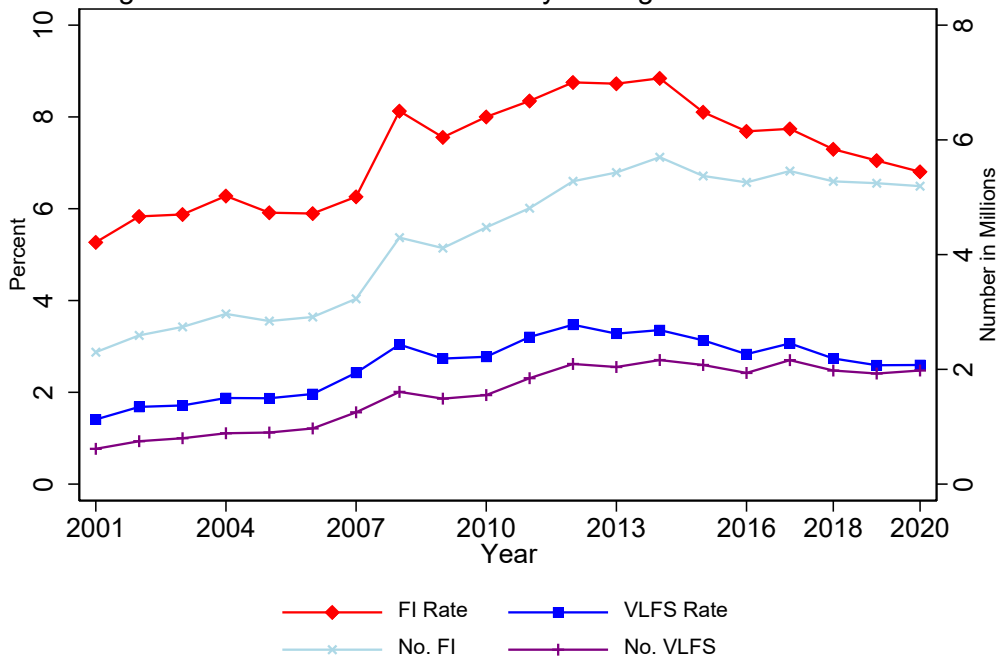
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	8.1	3.9
Columbus, OH	5.2	2.7
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	6.9	2.4
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	6.6	2.5
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	7.1	2.7
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	8.5	1.9
Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	10.3	3.7
Indianapolis, IN	8.6	5.2
Jacksonville, FL	8.2	3.7
Kansas City, MO-KS	8.3	3.6
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	7.2	3.4
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	9.0	3.0
Louisville, KY-IN	8.7	3.1
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	11.4	3.8
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	8.9	2.7
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	9.2	4.9
Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	2.5	0.8
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	4.4	2.8
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	13.2	4.7
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	7.1	2.4
Oklahoma City, OK	5.6	2.0
Orlando, FL	6.1	1.6
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	5.9	2.1
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	6.6	2.8
Pittsburgh, PA	5.1	2.0
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	4.4	1.9
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	7.5	2.9
Raleigh, NC	11.6	4.8
Richmond, VA	4.3	1.7
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	7.6	2.9
Rochester, NY	2.5	1.5
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	4.6	3.3
St. Louis, MO-IL	7.5	3.7
Salt Lake City, UT	5.9	2.0
San Antonio, TX	10.1	3.8
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	3.3	0.3
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	5.3	1.3
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	7.6	1.9
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	4.6	1.4
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	7.7	3.2
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	4.3	1.2
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	4.7	2.0

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 2016-2020 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 place the 2020 estimates into perspective, we now examine trends in food insecurity since 2001. In Figure 1, we display results for the full population in terms of the percentage of seniors (left-hand axis) and number of seniors in millions (right-hand axis). From 2019 to 2020, there was a statistically insignificant decline in food insecurity and no change in VLFS. These food insecurity rates remain stubbornly high insofar as the rate is still higher than before the Great Recession that started in December 2007 (6.8% versus 6.3%). This is in contrast to the population overall whose food security rate fell below that at the start of the Great Recession (11.8% versus 12.2%) as reported in Coleman-Jensen et al. (2021). Likewise, the senior VLFS rate also slightly exceeds its 2007 level (2.6% versus 2.4%). Both rates are far higher than in 2001— the fraction of seniors experiencing food insecurity and VLFS has increased by 29%, and 84%—and the number of seniors in each group rose 126%, and 220%, reflecting both the growing number of seniors and their rising food insecurity rates.

Figure 1. Trends in Food Insecurity among Senior Americans



In Table 5, we take a deeper look into underlying changes in the composition of food-insecure seniors from 2019 to 2020. The table presents percentage point changes in both categories of food insecurity by the same set of socioeconomic characteristics in Table 1. Insofar as there were not statistically significant changes in food insecurity or VLFS, it is not surprising that there are not many statistically significant declines by categories either. For food insecurity, there were statistically significant declines among poor seniors (an especially large 5.4 percentage point decline), white seniors, , retired seniors, and those without a disability. Worrisome, though, is

the substantial and statistically significant increase of 3.9 percentage points for Black seniors. For VLFS, a few groups saw large and statistically significant increases—Black seniors (2.0 percentage points), unemployed seniors (5.8 percentage points), and households with grandchildren present (4.2 percentage points).

Table 5. Percentage Point Changes in the Composition of Senior Hunger from 2019 to 2020

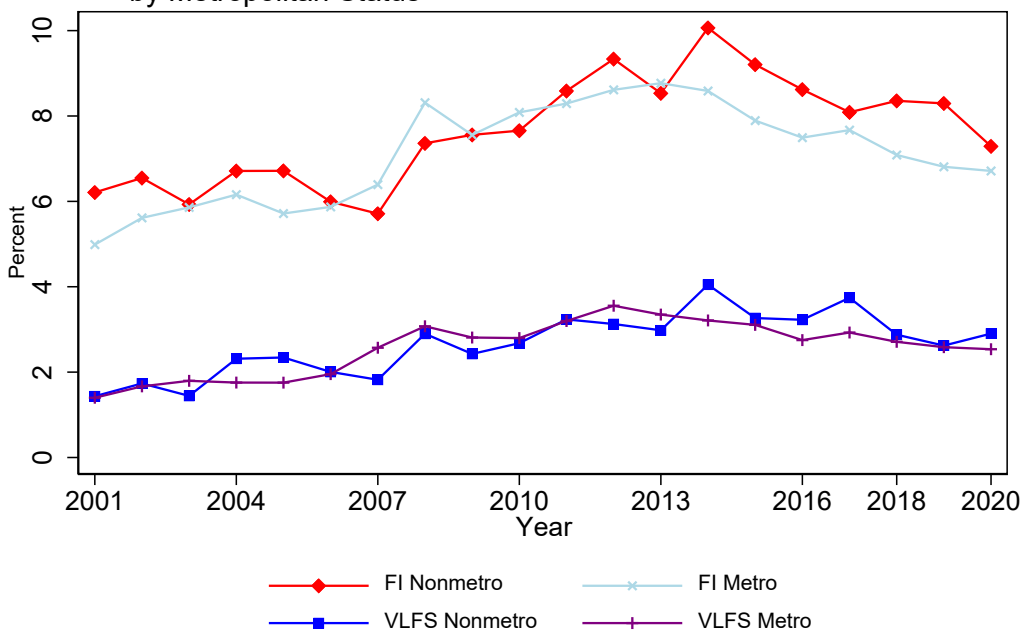
	Food Insecure	Very Low Food Secure
Overall	-0.24	0.00
By Income		
Below the Poverty Line	-5.54***	-1.41
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	-0.13	-0.01
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	0.31	0.06
Income Not Reported	0.62	0.49
By Race		
White	-0.75***	-0.24
Black	3.92***	2.04**
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	-0.77	-0.31
By Hispanic Status		
Hispanic	-0.25	-0.16
Non-Hispanic	-0.27	0.01
By Marital Status		
Married	0.20	-0.09
Widowed	-0.40	-0.22
Divorced or Separated	-1.18	0.02
Never Married	-0.76	1.59
By Metropolitan Location		
Non-Metro	-1.00	0.28
Metro	-0.10	-0.05
By Age		
60-69	-0.17	0.23
70-79	-0.45	-0.08
80 and older	-0.04	-0.52
By Employment Status		
Employed	0.26	0.35
Unemployed	5.26	5.81***
Retired	-0.69**	-0.57***
Disabled[1]	-0.87	1.66
By Gender		
Male	-0.07	0.30
Female	-0.39	-0.24
By Grandchild Present		
No Grandchild Present	-0.34	-0.19
Grandchildren Present	2.28	4.25***
By Homeownership Status		
Homeowner	-0.23	-0.14
Renter	0.00	0.81
By Veteran Status		
Veteran	-0.18	0.56
Not a Veteran	-0.27	-0.09

By Disability Status[2]		
Without a disability	-1.64**	-0.20
With a disability	0.40	0.16

Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers in the table reflect percentage point changes from 2019-2020. 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.

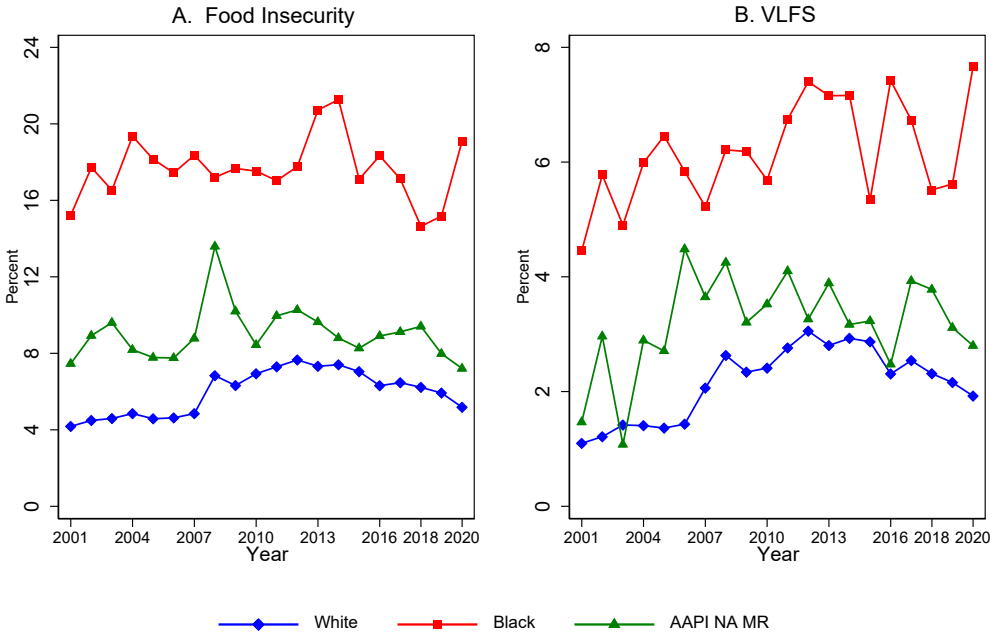
In the next set of figures, we examine trends in food insecurity since 2001 across a variety of subpopulations found in Tables 1 and 5. We begin in Figure 2 with trends in food insecurity for seniors living in metropolitan areas versus nonmetropolitan areas. The figure shows that, for most years, but not all, food insecurity rates were higher in nonmetro areas. After an increase in this gap in both 2018 and 2019, the gap fell in 2020. For VLFS, though, whether the rates are higher or lower in nonmetro areas shows no clear pattern.

Figure 2. Trends in Food Insecurity among Senior Americans 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 seniors are much higher than for white seniors. These figures reveal that these differences were present in each year from 2001 to 2019. Of note, though, is the sharp increase in this difference in 2020. With respect to Black seniors, this represents a departure of the closing of the gap. From 2001 to 2019, the gap in food insecurity rates fell from 11.0 percentage points to 9.3 percentage points. However, in 2020, the gap rose dramatically to 13.9 percentage points. Comparing white seniors and the Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial category, rates are higher among the latter category in all years except one for VLFS.

Figure 3. Trends in Senior Americans Food Insecurity by Race



Note: 'AAPI NA MR' denotes Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial

In Figure 4, we present trends broken down by Hispanic status. For food insecurity, the rates are higher among Hispanic seniors than non-Hispanic seniors in all years. The trends in VLFS are similar, with the exception of 2005. In 2007, interestingly, the VLFS rate of Hispanic seniors was higher than the food insecurity rate of non-Hispanic seniors, highlighting the impact of the Great Recession on Hispanic seniors.

Figure 4. Trends in Senior Americans Food Insecurity by Hispanic Ethnicity

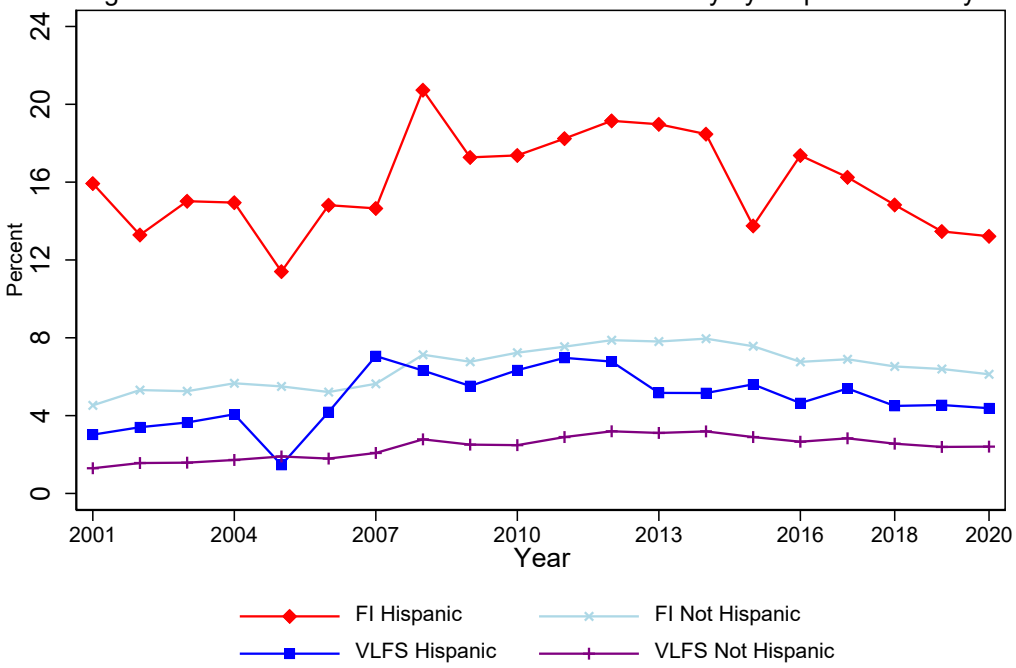
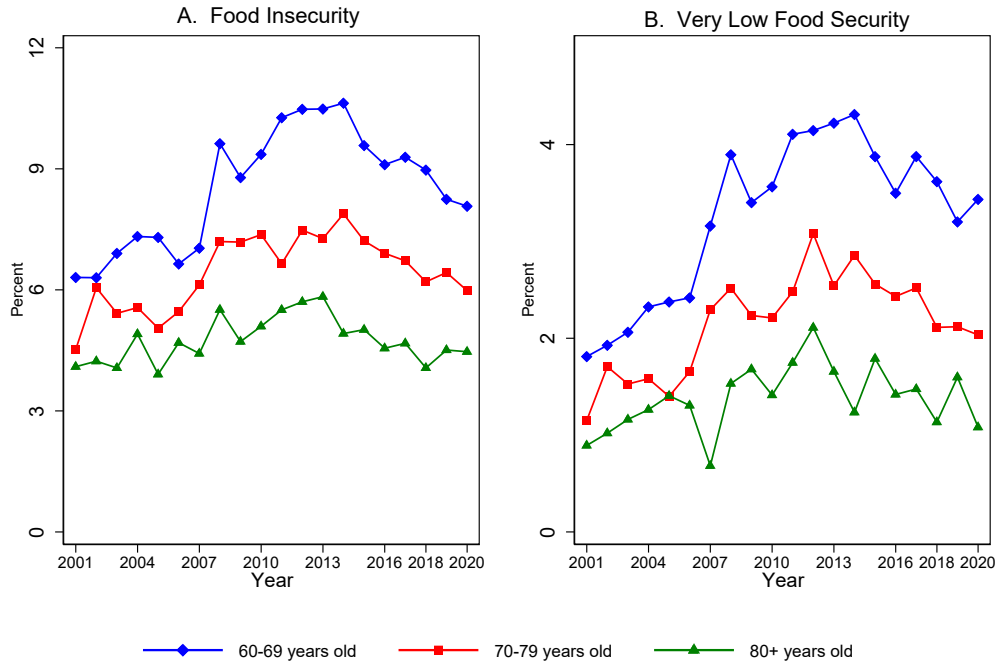


Figure 5 presents a parallel set of results for seniors broken down into three age groups – 60-69 years-old, 70-79 years old, and age 80 and older. In all years, the rates of food insecurity are highest for those between 60 and 69, followed by 70–79-year-olds, and 80+ year-olds. However, the patterns over time do show differences in trajectories and relative gaps between age categories. The figure makes clear that the persistence in food insecurity and VLFS rates from the Great Recession are driven by 60–69-year-olds. However, for those in this group, there has been declines in food insecurity since 2017.

Figure 5. Trends in Senior Americans Food Insecurity by Race



III. CONCLUSION

Despite the massive loss of life among seniors from the Covid-19 Pandemic, this report shows that food insecurity did not worsen overall in 2020 compared to 2019. This likely reflects that the financial situation of seniors did not materially deteriorate given the rebound in financial markets and massive infusion of government spending in the form of Economic Impact Payments and expansion of SNAP benefits; notably, raising all households to the maximum benefit, which affected roughly 60 percent of the total SNAP caseload.

However, taken from a longer-term perspective, food insecurity among seniors in America is a continuing challenge facing the nation insofar as rates of senior food insecurity remain elevated compared to the Great Recession of 2007-2009. Especially troubling is the astonishing 222% increase in the number of VLFS seniors in 2020 compared to 2001. Given the compelling evidence in Gundersen and Ziliak (2021) that food insecurity is associated with a host of poor nutrition and health outcomes among seniors, this report implies that food insecurity among seniors will continue to lead to additional public health challenges and costs for our country (Berkowitz et al., 2017; Berkowitz et al., 2019), underscoring the need for ongoing monitoring of food insecurity among older individuals in the U.S.

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. Because our focus is on food insecurity among seniors, our CPS sample is of persons age 60 and older. In 2020, this results in 21,977 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 Seniors Age 60 and older in 2020	
Income Categories	
Below the Poverty Line	0.06
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	0.13
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	0.49
Missing Income	0.32
Racial Categories	
White	0.82
Black	0.11
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	0.07
Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	0.10
Non-Hispanic	0.90
Marital Status	
Married	0.59
Widowed	0.18
Divorced or Separated	0.15
Never Married	0.08
Metropolitan Location	
Non-Metro	0.16
Metro	0.84
Age	
60 to 69	.51
70 to 79	.33
80 and older	.16
Employment Status	
Employed	0.28
Unemployed	0.02
Retired	0.62
Disabled	0.09
By Gender	
Male	0.46
Female	0.54
Grandchild Present	
No Grandchild Present	0.96
Grandchild Present	0.04
By Homeownership Status	
Homeowner	0.83
Renter	0.17
By Veteran Status	
Veteran	0.14
Not a Veteran	0.86
By Disability Status	
Without a disability	0.76
With a disability	0.24

Source: Authors' calculations from 2020 December Current Population Survey.
[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.

Appendix Table 3a. The Extent of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020	
Overall	11.9%
By Income	
Below the Poverty Line	43.5
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	27.6
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	5.8
Income Not Reported	9.4
By Race	
White	9.6
Black	29.4
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	13.1
By Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	21.5
Non-Hispanic	10.9
By Marital Status	
Married	7.4
Widowed	15.6
Divorced or Separated	20.3
Never Married	21.7
By Metropolitan Location	
Non-Metro	13.9
Metro	11.6
By Age	
60-64	15.4
65-69	12.3
70-74	10.8
75-79	10.4
80 and older	8.2
By Employment Status	
Employed	8.9
Unemployed	28.7
Retired	9.8
Disabled[1]	33.0
By Gender	
Male	11.0
Female	12.7
By Grandchild Present	
No Grandchild Present	11.3
Grandchildren Present	26.0
By Homeownership Status	
Homeowner	8.4
Renter	29.2
By Veteran Status	
Veteran	9.1
Not a Veteran	12.4
By Disability Status[2]	

Without a disability	9.6
With a disability	19.5

Source: Authors' calculations from 2020 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.

Appendix Table 3b. The Distribution of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020	
By Income	
Below the Poverty Line	20.4%
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	30.3
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	23.9
Income Not Reported	25.4
By Race	
White	66.1
Black	26.3
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	7.6
By Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	17.3
Non-Hispanic	82.7
By Marital Status	
Married	36.7
Widowed	23.3
Divorced or Separated	26.1
Never Married	14.0
By Metropolitan Location	
Non-Metro	18.7
Metro	81.3
By Age	
60-64	35.4
65-69	24.4
70-74	17.6
75-79	11.4
80 and older	11.2
By Employment Status	
Employed	20.5
Unemployed	4.0
Retired	50.7
Disabled[1]	24.8
By Gender	
Male	42.3
Female	57.7
By Grandchild Present	
No Grandchild Present	90.5
Grandchildren Present	9.5
By Homeownership Status	
Homeowner	58.1
Renter	41.9
By Veteran Status	
Veteran	10.5
Not a Veteran	89.5
By Disability Status[2]	

Without a disability	61.5
With a disability	38.5

Source: Authors' calculations from 2020 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.

Appendix Table 3c. State-Level Estimates of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in 2020			
AL	15.3%	MT	9.2%
AK	12.1	NE	8.5
AZ	12.8	NV	10.8
AR	11.5	NH	6.4
CA	11.4	NJ	9.7
CO	11.0	NM	13.5
CT	12.9	NY	12.4
DE	9.3	NC	13.7
DC	18.8	ND	6.5
FL	13.4	OH	10.2
GA	14.3	OK	17.7
HI	7.5	OR	9.6
ID	9.7	PA	10.9
IL	13.7	RI	13.8
IN	9.8	SC	15.0
IA	8.5	SD	10.0
KS	11.2	TN	13.6
KY	20.0	TX	16.3
LA	21.0	UT	7.4
ME	13.1	VT	9.6
MD	9.5	VA	10.0
MA	9.5	WA	8.4
MI	9.3	WV	16.9
MN	6.6	WI	9.5
MS	20.7	WY	12.6
MO	14.0		

Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers are two-year averages found by summing the number of marginally food-insecure seniors in each category by state across the 2019-2020 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each state across the two years.

Appendix Table 3d. Estimates of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity in Metropolitan Areas > 1,000,000 Persons in 2020	
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	12.7%
Austin-Round Rock, TX	13.3
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	13.0
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	14.3
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	9..0
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	10.9
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	10.4
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	13.5
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	11.2
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	15.4
Columbus, OH	9..0
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	12.7
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	9.9
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	11.9
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	14..0
Houston-Baytown-Sugar Land, TX	17.1
Indianapolis, IN	12.9
Jacksonville, FL	11.7
Kansas City, MO-KS	12.5
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	15.8
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	14.3
Louisville, KY-IN	16.9
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	16.1
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	16.1
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	13.2
Minneapolis-St Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	6.5
Nashville-Davidson-Murfreesboro, TN	8.5
New Orleans-Metairie, LA	21.4
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	12.6
Oklahoma City, OK	14.3
Orlando, FL	11.5
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE	12.6
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	11.1
Pittsburgh, PA	11.2
Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	7.2
Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	14.9
Raleigh, NC	15.7
Richmond, VA	8.1
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	14.6
Rochester, NY	5.6
Sacramento-Arden-Arcade-Roseville, CA	10.6
St. Louis, MO-IL	13.4

Salt Lake City, UT	10.0
San Antonio, TX	20.2
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	7.1
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	9.2
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	11.2
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	8.0
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	13.6
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	7.9
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	8.0

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 2016-2020 December Current Population Surveys and dividing by the corresponding total number of seniors in each metro area across the five years.

Appendix Table 3e. Percentage Point Changes in the Composition of Senior Marginal Food Insecurity from 2019 to 2020	
Overall	-0.64*
By Income	
Below the Poverty Line	-3.62
Between 100% and 200% of the Poverty Line	-1.10
Above 200% of the Poverty Line	0.07
Income Not Reported	0.29
By Race	
White	-1.15***
Black	3.68**
Asian American, Pacific Islander, Native American, and people who identify as multi-racial	-1.38
By Hispanic Status	
Hispanic	-1.96
Non-Hispanic	-0.54
By Marital Status	
Married	-0.57
Widowed	-0.37
Divorced or Separated	-1.62
Never Married	1.16
By Metropolitan Location	
Non-Metro	-0.28
Metro	-0.70*
By Age	
60-64	0.35
65-69	-0.74
70-74	-1.91***
75-79	-0.33
80 and older	-0.85
By Employment Status	
Employed	0.15
Unemployed	6.81
Retired	-1.36***
Disabled[1]	-0.90
By Gender	
Male	-0.55
Female	-0.71
By Grandchild Present	
No Grandchild Present	-0.70*
Grandchildren Present	1.44
By Homeownership Status	
Homeowner	-0.85
Renter	0.84**
By Veteran Status	
Veteran	-0.67
Not a Veteran	-0.66
By Disability Status[2]	
Without a disability	-3.15***
With a disability	0.48

Source: Authors' calculations. The numbers in the table reflect percentage point changes from 2019-2020. 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.

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