

Advocacy Update 09.10.2021



NTFB VOICE

Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

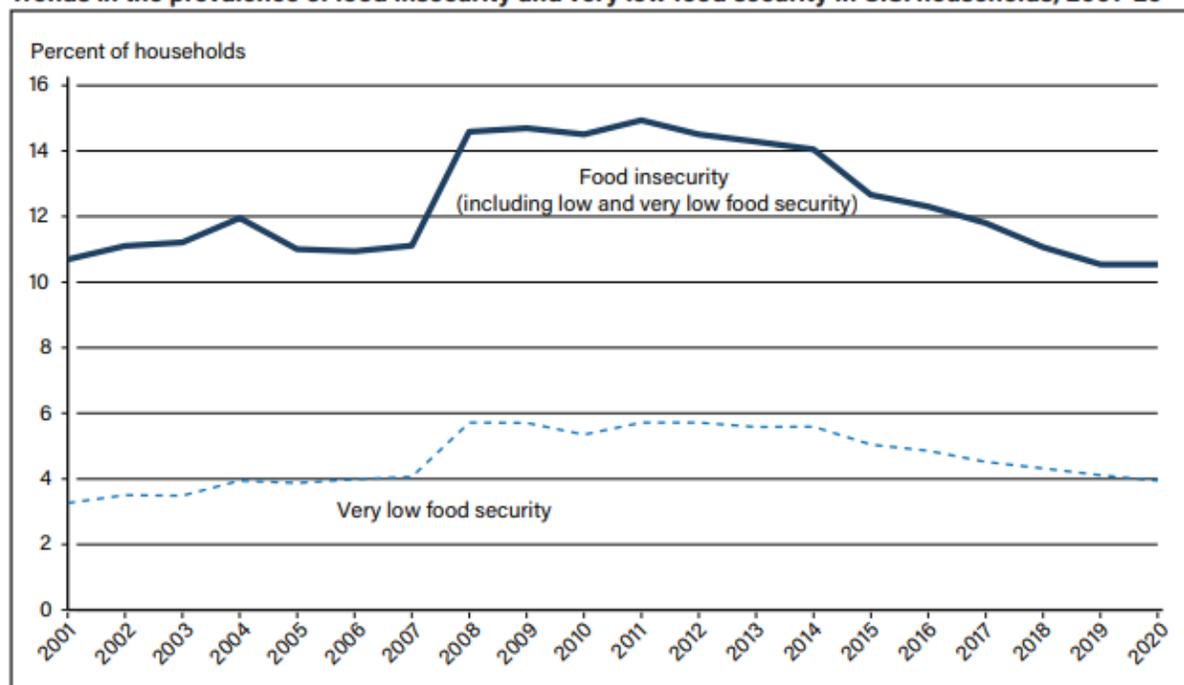
In Brief -

- USDA announces that annual Food Insecurity Rates did not rise during the pandemic
- Silver Linings and More Work Ahead

USDA Annual Household Food Security Report finds national food insecurity rate unchanged since 2019

Yes, you read that correctly. Much to the surprise of, well, everyone, the report concluded that overall food insecurity rates remain stable since before the pandemic. The report showed that 38 million Americans (10.5%) are living in food insecure households, and the rates of very low food insecurity have decreased since 2019.

Figure 3
Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in U.S. households, 2001-20



Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 2020 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

Though those 2020 days are gone, the memory of mile long lines of cars, shouting family sizes across parking lots, and the relief on present on people’s faces, is still fresh in the minds of all those who rose to the occasion by lifting a box into a trunk in order to lift up their neighbor.

The 2020 prevalence of food insecurity (10.5%) was unchanged from 10.5% in 2019.

But...Hunger was unprecedented, families needed help, people lost their jobs, children had no school meals, week after week the food pantries and food banks pumped out millions more pounds of food, our economy shook; little to no change?

[FULL REPORT HERE](#)

Silver Linings and More Work Ahead

For those who distinctly remember 2020, it is easy to quickly disagree and question this benchmark study, it feels like that line should be shooting to the sky.

However, looking at it in another way, the report is telling a story of the overall success of the charitable food network, and government programs.

In a year with serious economic downturn and record unemployment, food insecurity should have been right along side of these measures, skyrocketing to new heights. However, two major efforts prevented that from happening: government relief actions and the charitable food network.

Our government has provided Americans with stimulus checks, increased unemployment benefits, 15% boosts to SNAP benefits, emergency allotments for food purchases, massive investments into traditional food programs,

new food box programs, pandemic-EBT benefits to children to replace school meals, and Child Tax Credits that have lifted 3 million children out of poverty.

Additionally, food banks and food pantries rose to the need. Everyone reorganized their operations, found innovative solutions to new issues, and the public support us all along the way with their generosity, time, and concern. It is the combination of both actions that allowed food insecurity rates to stay stable during a crisis and the food insecurity blip to be absent on the line graph of time.

Though the overall national food insecurity rates stayed the same, **it was worse for some households**. Single parent households (27.7% for single mothers) and households with young children (15.3%) had much higher rates of food insecurity. 24% of Black households experienced food insecurity in 2020, up from 19.2% in 2019. 19.3% of Latino families experienced food insecurity in 2020, compared to 15.8% in 2019. And overall, the south increased its household food insecurity rate from 11.4% in 2019 to 13.6%. This finding deserves immediate attention.

The pandemic has further increased the inequities of food security, emphasizing the need for targeted programs and planning. Anti-hunger organizations and policy must continue to expand beyond traditional approaches to food relief further moving this sharp needle. We must remain hyper-focused on increasing equitable support for food security, and we must support proven government programs, such as SNAP to continue fighting hunger.

Questions or Comments?

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