

## Definitions and Background Information on Food Security and Insecurity

Prepared for Saint Paul – Ramsey County Community Health Services Advisory Committee: 4/28/2015

### Food Security:

*World Health Organization (WHO) definition:*

- “When all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. Including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences
- Food security is built on three pillars:
  - Food availability: sufficient quantities of food available on a consistent basis.
  - Food access: having sufficient resources to obtain appropriate foods for a nutritious diet.
  - Food use: appropriate use based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation.

*United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) definition:*

- **High food security** (*old label=Food security*): no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
- **Marginal food security** (*old label=Food security*): one or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.

### Food Insecurity:

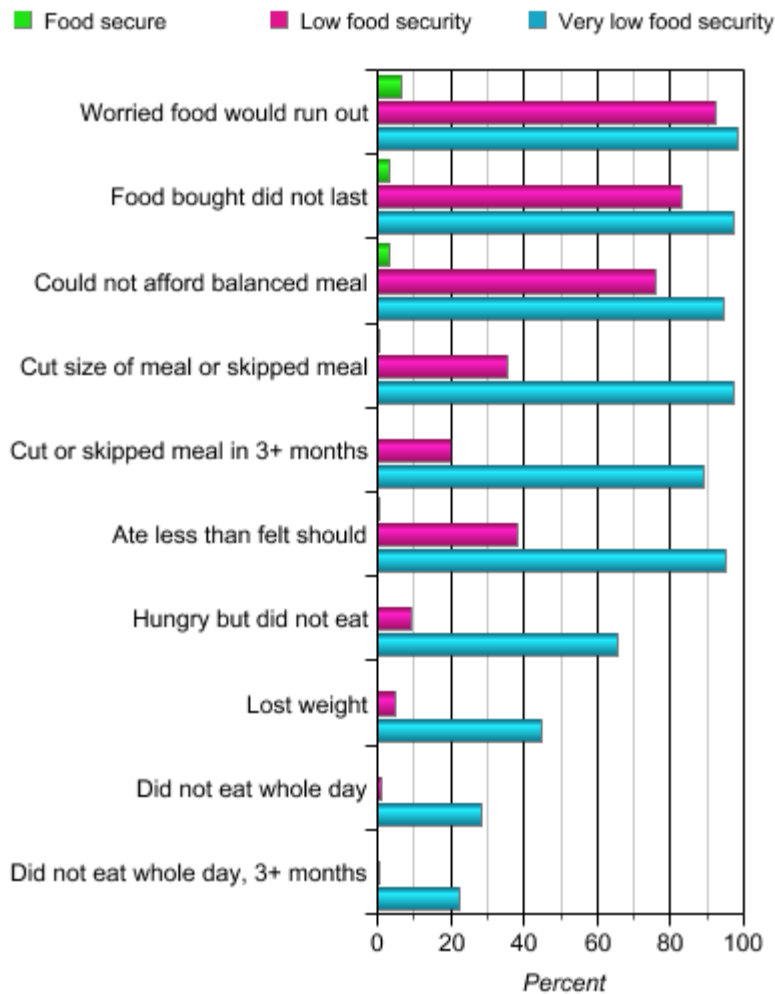
*USDA definition:* (In 2006, the USDA traded the term “hunger” for “food insecurity”)

- **Low food security** (*old label=Food insecurity without hunger*): reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- **Very low food security** (*old label=Food insecurity with hunger*): Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

“Today the hungry are almost always employed, a sea change since the 1960s. In 2012, 60 percent of all food-insecure Americans lived in households with a full-time worker; another 15 percent lived in households with a part-time worker.”

Link: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/07/140716-hunger-america-food-poverty-nutrition-diet/>

**Percentage of households reporting indicators of adult food insecurity, by food security status, 2013**



Source: Calculated by ERS using data from the December 2013 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement.

**Links to resources:**

- ✓ WHO: <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>
- ✓ USDA: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/definitions-of-food-security.aspx>