

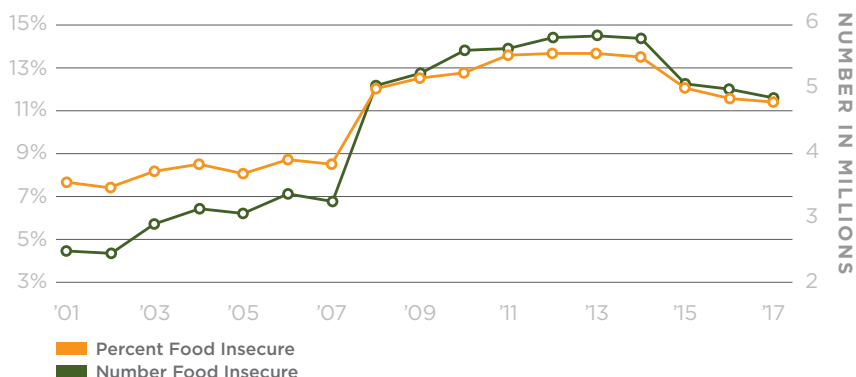
Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2017

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY MAY 2019



As of 2017, food insecurity—having limited access to adequate nutritious food to live a healthy lifestyle—affects 40 million people in the United States, which includes 5.5 million seniors age 60 and older. This also includes 4.8 million individuals age 50-59, equal to 11.3% of older adults in that age range. This is substantially higher than the 7.7% of seniors age 60 and older who are food insecure. Exploration of the extent and distribution of food insecurity among individuals age 50-59 reveals the challenges faced today by millions of aging adults and provides insight into the future challenges that may be faced by the next generation of seniors.

TRENDS IN OLDER-ADULT FOOD INSECURITY



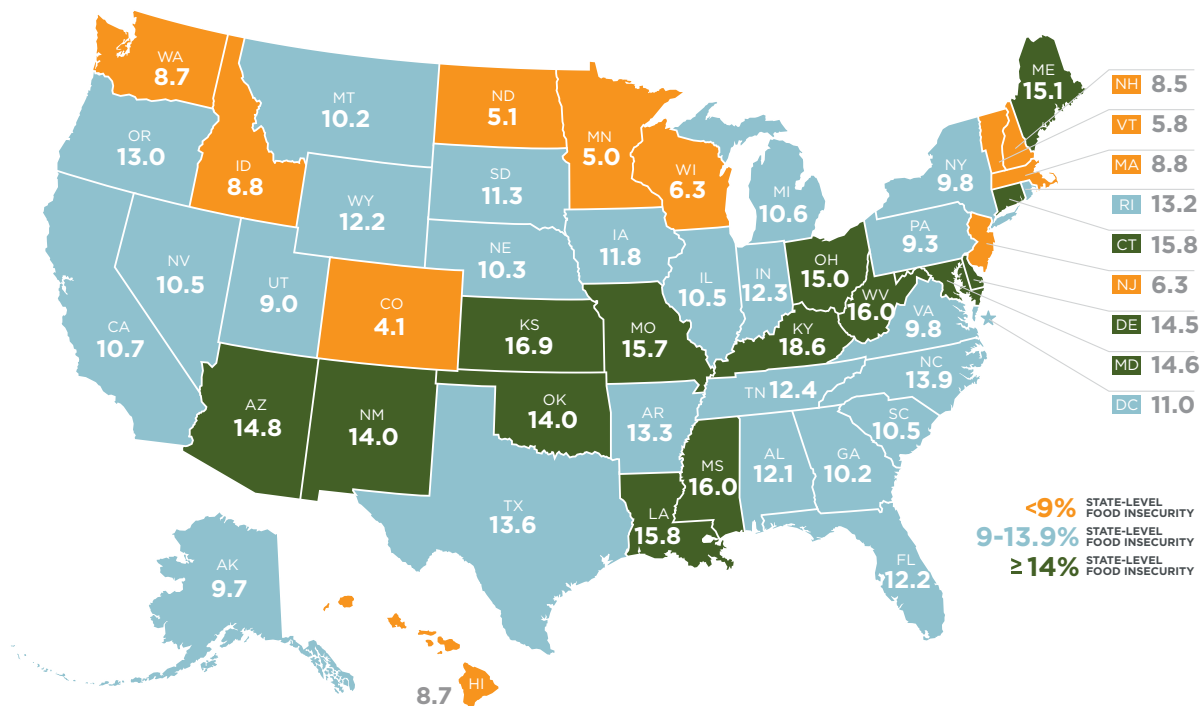
4.8
MILLION

older adults
are food insecure
as of 2017.

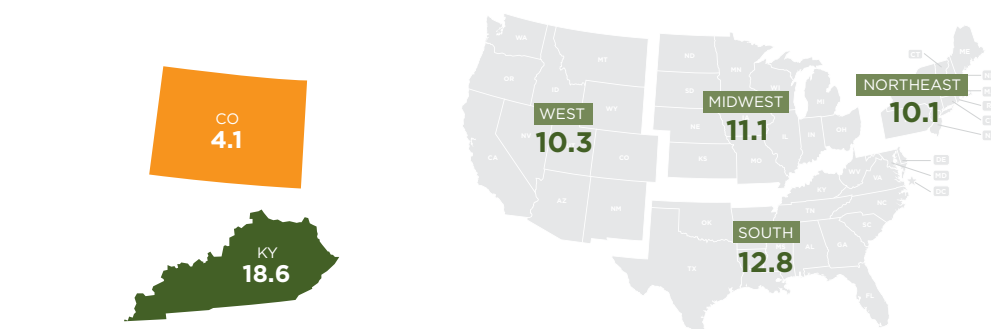
Older-Adult Food Insecurity Varies by Geography

Similar to other national population-level trends, food insecurity among individuals age 50-59 varies by geography. The map below highlights state-level food insecurity rates.

STATE-LEVEL OLDER-ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES IN 2017



Every state & metro area is home to older adults who experience food insecurity.



LOWEST/HIGHEST STATE OLDER-ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

Older Adult food insecurity rates at the state level range from 4.1% in Colorado to 18.6% in Kentucky.

REGIONAL OLDER-ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

The food insecurity rate among older adults living in the South (12.8%) is higher than the rate among older adults living in the Midwest, West, and Northeast regions.

THREE HIGHEST METRO-LEVEL RATES

- 1 **19.6%** CT Hartford / West Hartford / East Hartford
- 2 **16.0%** KY / IN Louisville
- 3 **15.8%** OH Cleveland / Elyria / Mentor

THREE LOWEST METRO-LEVEL RATES

- 48 **6.9%** TX Austin / Round Rock
- 50 **6.4%** CA San Francisco / Oakland / Fremont
- 51 **5.3%** CO Denver / Aurora

METRO-LEVEL OLDER-ADULT FOOD INSECURITY RATES

Among 51 metropolitan areas that have a population of more than 1 million people, food insecurity among older adults ranges from 5.3% in Denver-Aurora (CO) to 19.6% in Hartford (CT).

FOOD INSECURITY RATES AMONG OLDER ADULTS AGE 50-59 ALSO VARY ACCORDING TO DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CATEGORIES.

Percentages represent older adult food insecurity rates by category.

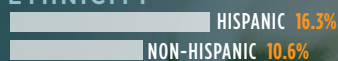
INCOME



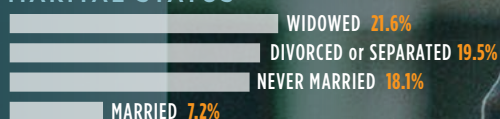
RACE



ETHNICITY



MARITAL STATUS



METRO LOCATION



AGE



EMPLOYMENT STATUS



GENDER



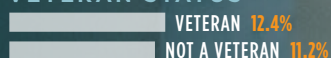
MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS



HOUSING



VETERAN STATUS



The trends are similar to those seen among the population of seniors age 60 and older, but the magnitude of the variation is often greater, reinforcing the elevated risk of food insecurity experienced by this cohort of aging adults.

INCOME

Income is a strong driver of food insecurity.¹ Among older adults living below the poverty line, 43.5% are food insecure. Yet, poverty alone does not determine food insecurity, and consistent with national trends, the majority of older adults who are food insecure have incomes above the poverty line.²

EMPLOYMENT/DISABILITY

Unemployment and disability are also drivers of food insecurity, and they can be particularly problematic for adults in their 50s who are pre-retirement.^{3,4} The proportion of food-insecure older adults who report having a disability is particularly high. Too young to be eligible for retirement and certain other benefits, but at risk for age-related employment challenges, many older adults can struggle to make ends meet.⁵

RACE/ETHNICITY

Consistent with trends among seniors and the population overall, older adults of racial or ethnic minority status tend to be at higher risk for experiencing food insecurity. Because of population size, the majority of food-insecure older adults are white, but minority groups are disproportionately affected.

MARITAL STATUS

The elevated risk for food insecurity among older adults who are single may reflect the struggle to support oneself on a single income, which may be particularly great in the wake of separation from or death of a spouse. For single older adults who are also supporting children or grandchildren, or facing unemployment or disability, it may be particularly difficult to stretch limited financial resources.



Implications

Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2017 explores the extent and distribution of food insecurity among adults age 50-59 in the United States. Food insecurity is more prevalent among this population than among seniors 60 and older, signaling that many among the next wave of adults joining a growing senior population may struggle to make ends meet. More research is needed to understand the relationship between age and food insecurity and the unique challenges faced by adults age 50-59, who may begin to experience the economic and health complications that can be associated with age, but who are too young to benefit from various supports that are not available before retirement age. Given the anticipated growth of the senior population, it is critical that policymakers protect and strengthen the existing federal nutrition programs, especially SNAP, as well as invest in public-private partnerships in order to reduce food insecurity and end hunger in America.



This summary highlights key findings from *Hunger Among Adults Age 50-59 in 2017*, a research report authored by Dr. James P. Ziliak and Dr. Craig Gundersen and released for the first time in 2019 as part of *The State of Senior Hunger in America* study series. Using publicly available data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), the report examines the prevalence and distribution of food insecurity among individuals age 50-59 (referred to throughout as older adults). To access the full set of reports and references, visit feedingamerica.org/stateofseniorhunger.