

Reliable, consistent, and publicly available food security data is essential for understanding hunger in America, evaluating the effectiveness of anti-hunger programs, and measuring the impact of economic and policy changes. The federal government terminated the nation's premier food security survey — the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) — in 2025. Food security data makes policy impacts visible; Congress must act to restore and protect this critical data collection.

## ? WHAT Was the Food Security Supplement?

The Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS) was an annual survey sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (USDA-ERS) and administered through the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey.<sup>1</sup> Each year, approximately 40,000 households across all 50 states and the District of Columbia completed the survey, answering questions about food security, food spending, and participation in nutrition assistance programs.<sup>2</sup> USDA-ERS used these data to publish annual reports on household food security, while researchers, policymakers, advocates, and the public relied on the publicly available data to better understand hunger in the U.S.

Established in 1995, the CPS-FSS provided nearly 30 years of consistent national food security data before USDA announced in September 2025 it would discontinue the survey and cease publishing future household food security reports, arguing that the survey was redundant, expensive, and politicized.<sup>3</sup> The most recent available data are from 2024.

## ? HOW Did the CPS-FSS Measure Food Security?

USDA ERS defines food security as consistent access to enough food for all household members to live active, healthy lives. Food insecurity occurs when households lack sufficient resources to obtain adequate food at some point during the year due to insufficient money or other means.<sup>4</sup>

The CPS-FSS used a validated 18-question survey to measure whether households experienced difficulty obtaining enough food due to limited financial resources.<sup>5</sup> Based on their responses, households were classified as being food secure, having low food security, or having very low food security.

Because USDA had used the same methodology for nearly three decades, the CPS-FSS uniquely enabled the tracking of trends over time and the identification of disparities across states, racial and ethnic groups, households with children, older adults, and other populations.

## ? WHY Does the CPS-FSS Matter?

The CPS-FSS was the nation's gold standard for measuring food security. Its long-standing methodology allowed policymakers and researchers to identify changes in hardship, determine which populations are most affected, and assess the effects of public policies and economic conditions.<sup>6</sup>

The survey's publicly available data have supported decades of research on nutrition, health, education, economic mobility, and public policy.<sup>7</sup> USDA's claim that the survey is "redundant" does not reflect reality. No other national

survey matches the CPS-FSS' combination of annual data collection, national and state-level estimates, a large, representative sample size, a full 18-item food security questionnaire, and nearly 30 years of consistent methodology.

Alternative surveys often use abbreviated food security measures, smaller sample sizes, shorter reference periods, or different data collection methods, making them unsuitable replacements for the CPS-FSS's continuity, rigor, or historical comparability.<sup>8,9,10,11</sup>

**Without the CPS-FSS, policymakers and the public lose their most reliable tool for assessing the effects of changes to SNAP, Medicaid, school meals, and other programs that affect household well-being.**

## ? HOW Can Congress Restore Food Security Data?

Sens. Lisa Blunt Rochester (DE) and Ben Ray Lujan (NM) and Reps. Wesley Bell (MO-1) and Nanette Barragán (CA-44) have introduced the Food Assurance and Security Act (H.R. 6252), which would restore and protect the federal government's annual food security reporting.<sup>12</sup> The legislation would require USDA, in coordination with the U.S. Census Bureau, to:

1. reinstate the Food Security Supplement using the same validated questionnaire and methodology; and
2. resume publication of annual household food security reports.



## TAKE ACTION

Ask your Members of Congress to support and co-sponsor the Food Assurance and Security Act (H.R. 6252). Restoring the CPS-FSS is essential to understanding the effects of harmful changes to SNAP and other nutrition programs, accurately tracking hunger, and ensuring policymakers have reliable evidence to guide future decisions.

Enshrining food security data collection in federal law is the most effective way to guarantee that policymakers, researchers, advocates, and government agencies continue to have access to credible, consistent, and transparent information about hunger and food insecurity in America.

**ENDNOTES:** **1** U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. *Food security in the United States*. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-security-in-the-united-states> **2** U.S. Census Bureau. Current Population Survey (CPS). <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps.html> **3** U.S. Department of Agriculture. (September 20, 2025). *USDA terminates redundant food insecurity survey*. <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2025/09/20/usda-terminates-redundant-food-insecurity-survey> **4** U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service. *Food security in the U.S. — Measurement*. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-security-in-the-united-states> **5** Bickel, G., Nord, M., Price, C., Hamilton, W., and Cook, J. (2000). *Guide to measuring household food security*. U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. <https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis/resources/FSGuide.pdf> **6** Plata-Nino, G., Klein, M., Jarosz, B., & Dick, C. (March 6, 2026). National food security data is critical to anti-hunger policies and programs. *FRAC Chat*. <https://frac.org/blog/national-food-security-data-is-critical-to-anti-hunger-policies-and-programs> **7** For example: Loibl, Căzilia, Anastasia Snyder, and Travis Mountain. (2017). Connecting saving and food security: Evidence from an asset-building program for families in poverty. *Journal of Consumer Affairs* 51 (3); Cantor, Jonathan, Robin Beckman, Rebecca L. Collins, Madhumita Ghosh Dastidar, Andrea S. Richardson, and Tamara Dubowitz. (2020). SNAP participants improved food security and diet after a full-service supermarket opened in an urban food desert. *Health Affairs* 39 (8); Rohatgi, Karthik W., Hilary K. Seligman, & Anand R. Habib. (2026). Improving food security in the context of a stagnating federal minimum wage. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*; and Starr, Katherine. (2026). The impact of school closures on food hardship: Evidence from the pandemic. SSRN Scholarly Paper No. 6158577. *Social Science Research Network* **8** Klein, M., Jarosz, B., Briefel, R., & Plata-Nino, G. (October 31, 2025). Threats to food security data: Why the ‘redundancy’ claim doesn’t hold up.” *FRAC Chat*. <https://frac.org/blog/threats-to-food-security-data-why-the-redundancy-claim-doesnt-hold-up> **9** Ver Ploeg, M., Heflin, C., and Waxman, E. (April 2026). *Assessing national survey options for food security measurement following CPS-FSS suspension*. Urban Institute. [https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/Assessing\\_National\\_Survey\\_Options\\_for\\_Food\\_Security\\_Measurement\\_Following\\_CPS-FSS\\_Suspension.pdf](https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2026-05/Assessing_National_Survey_Options_for_Food_Security_Measurement_Following_CPS-FSS_Suspension.pdf) **10** Kosar, G., Mehta, I., & van der Klaauw, W. May 27, 2026. Food insecurity and consumer pessimism. *Federal Reserve Bank of New York: Liberty Street Economics*. <https://libertystreeteconomics.newyorkfed.org/2026/05/food-insecurity-and-consumer-pessimism> **11** Perez, Rocio. (May 29, 2026). Census Bureau’s Household Trends Survey shows high food insufficiency among families with children. *FRAC Chat*. <https://frac.org/blog/census-bureaus-household-trends-survey-shows-high-food-insufficiency-among-families-with-children> **12** H.R.6252 – Food Assurance and Security Act. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/6252>