

2012

Scattered Site Food Assessment



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## Introduction

La Casa Norte's (LCN) mission is to serve youth and families confronting homelessness. LCN provides access to stable housing and delivers comprehensive services that act as a catalyst to transform lives and communities. One of LCN's core programs is the Scattered Site Supportive Housing Program.

The Scattered Site Supportive Housing Program provides permanent supportive housing to chronically homeless families and to domestic violence victims and their families. This program provides services and resources needed to achieve economic self sufficiency and housing stability. Clients are recruited from referrals from LCN's extensive community partnerships as well as walk-in clients seeking services. A Program Coordinator conducts intake and determines program eligibility, and if units are available to house the perspective client.

All seventeen families living in this program receive financial assistance for secure housing and case management services. Individual therapy and workshops on domestic violence are available for the families. A therapist provides mental health counseling to address depression, anxiety, and other issues that can impact stability. Case Managers work with clients to help them identify their strengths, goals, and barriers.

La Casa Norte marshals internal resources and community partners to assist clients in accomplishing the goals outlined in their individual service plans. Internal resources include access to transportation, access to limited emergency financial assistance for rent and furnishing, and access to a range of specialized programs. Clients are also provided with services to support job readiness skills such as: resume writing skills, interview skills, professionalism in the workplace, job search practices, and basic computer proficiency to help them attain employment.

## Methodology

Many families who participate in the Scattered Site program struggle with food insecurity and nutrition. Fortunately, there are government and private resources available to community members such as LINK<sup>1</sup> and food pantries. The purpose of this project is to determine what the food related needs are among Scattered Site participants, improve links between existing resources and participants, and inform future program development efforts to improve food security.

In order to establish trust with Scattered Site households I accompanied case managers to several mandatory house visits. Once trust was developed and a professional relationship flourished I introduced the project, administered, and collected surveys<sup>2</sup>. Surveys were voluntary and administered in English and Spanish. All heads of households were asked to participate in the project, but only fourteen of the seventeen households agreed to participate in the survey. Upon completion of the surveys I used Microsoft Excel to analyze the data.

To supplement the Scattered Site Food Assessment, a food security survey<sup>3</sup> was conducted, using the same food security core module questionnaire that the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS) uses to determine households' food security status. In addition, through the guidebook "Guide to Measuring Household Food Security" (Bickel et al., 2000), which provides standard procedures for measuring food insecurity<sup>4</sup> and hunger, households' food security statuses were calculated. The Core Module was designed for

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<sup>1</sup> LINK is the Illinois version of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix I

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix II

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix III

use in the national surveys and for local groups wanting to determine the prevalence and extent of food insecurity and hunger within their own communities. It provides a technically well grounded and tested method to produce estimates comparable with national benchmark figures (Bickel et al., 2000).

The household food security statistics presented in this analysis are based on a measure of food security calculated from responses to the eighteen questions<sup>5</sup> about conditions and behaviors that characterize households when they are having difficulty meeting basic food needs (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011).

Each question asks whether the condition or behavior occurred at any time during the previous twelve months and specifies a lack of money and other resources to obtain food as the reason. The food security status of the household was assigned based on the number of food-insecure conditions reported.<sup>6</sup>

Food security and insecurity, as measured for this study, are based on respondents' perceptions of whether the household was able to obtain enough food to meet their needs (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011). The measure does not specifically address whether the household's food intake was sufficient for active, healthy lives.

### **Demographics:**

Thirteen of the fourteen households' are single mothers with at least one child (average is 2.8 children), and one participant lives with her partner and two children. Eight of the fourteen participants are Hispanic/Latino and six are African American/Black. The average age of the heads of household is 32. The education level varies among the fourteen heads of household: five do not have a High School Diploma or GED<sup>7</sup>, six have at least a High School Diploma or GED, two attended college, and one earned an Associate's Degree. The Participants live across ten different Chicago zip codes. For twelve of the fourteen households, their gross monthly income<sup>8</sup> is between [\$1 - \$1,174], one household's income is between [\$1,175 - \$1,579] and another household reports her earnings are between [\$3,201 - \$3,605].

### **Current Food Programming:**

Although LCN does not currently have a food pantry, it gives Scattered Site households' access to a range of supportive food services, such as assistance with the food stamps application, referrals to emergency food providers, and sporadic deliveries of bags/baskets of food when households encounter severe cases of food insecurity.

### **Nutrition:**

Conventional wisdom says that nutrition is important to help keep a body's immune system healthy and to prevent chronic diseases. However, measuring a person's daily nutritional intake can be a difficult task. Therefore, for purposes of this study the United States Department of Agriculture daily intake recommendations<sup>9</sup> will be used as the standard to measure the nutrition level of heads of households'.

Using the average USDA 2,000 calorie dietary guidelines, the daily servings for grains is six-to-eight (one serving equates to one slice of bread), four-to-five vegetables, and four-to-five fruits. In addition, the daily servings for fat-free or low-fat milk or milk products is two-to-three (one cup of milk equates to one serving), and six or less servings of lean meats, poultry, and fish (equates to one ounce of cooked meats, poultry or fish) USDA, 2012.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix IV

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix V

<sup>7</sup> General Education Diploma is equivalent to a High School Diploma.

<sup>8</sup> An individual's total personal income before taking taxes or deductions into account.

<sup>9</sup> USDA. <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/PolicyDoc.pdf>

## Food Resource Findings

When the surveys were conducted, eight households reported having adequate food resources and six did not have sufficient food resources.

Out of the fourteen households who completed the survey, ten reported receiving food from a food pantry in the last twelve months and four did not. Some of the locations where they reported receiving food were San Lucas Church, Common Pantry, Salvation Army, Iglesia Concepcion, La Casa Norte, and churches located in Uptown. For the ten households that received food from food pantries, two reported that the food typically lasted them approximately two-to-three days. Three families reported four-to-five days, four families reported one-week, and one household reported two-weeks.

For the four households who did not receive food from a food pantry in the last twelve months, two reported that they are aware about the nearest pantry location, one reported not knowing the hours and locations of the pantries in her area, and one did not respond. Out of the same four households, one reported not seeking assistance from food pantries because she does not know the hours of operation, another responded that food pantries do not provide her with culturally appropriate foods, and two did not respond.

Only one household reported visiting food pantries once a week, two households reported visiting twice a week or more, one household reported twice a month, three households reported at least once per month, and one household reported once every few months. Additionally, three households reported only visiting a food pantry once during the last twelve months, one household reported visiting twice during the last twelve months, and two reported almost never visiting food pantries.

Almost all of the households reported receiving LINK. Thirteen households reported receiving LINK and one household reported not receiving benefits. The average amount of LINK benefits was \$383.27. The only household that is not receiving LINK reported that she is waiting to receive benefits. Of the thirteen households who receive LINK benefits, one reported that the benefits lasts one-week, two reported two-weeks, eight reported three-weeks, and two reported that LINK lasts the entire month.

Three households reported not spending any of their own (personal) money to purchase food per week, four reported spending between [\$1 - \$50], three reported spending between [\$51 - \$100], three reported spending between [\$101 - \$200], and one household reported spending [\$201 or more].

### **Most of the households' food comes from:**

- Six households reported that 100% of their food is purchased using the LINK card.
- One household reported that 50% of their food comes from food pantries and 50% is purchased with own money.
- One household reported that 75% of their food comes from food pantries and 25% is purchased using the LINK card.
- Two households reported that 25% of their food comes from food pantries and 75% is purchased using the LINK card.
- One household reported that 50% of their food is purchased with their own money and 50% is purchased using the LINK card.
- Two households reported that 25% of their food is purchased with their own money and 75% is purchased using the LINK card.
- One household reported that 25% of their food comes from food pantries, 50% is purchased with their own money, and 25% is purchased using the LINK card.

Six of the fourteen households reported having enough money to buy food in the last twelve months and did not have to choose between purchasing food and paying for other household necessities. On the other hand, in the last twelve months, two households reported having to choose between purchasing food and paying for utilities (e.g. heat, gas), one household reported having to choose between purchasing food and paying for rent, and one household reported having to choose between purchasing food and paying for transportation. Furthermore, one household reported having to choose between purchasing food and buying toiletries, clothing, school materials, and diapers. Two households reported having to choose between food and two or more household necessities.

## **Nutritional Intake Findings**

Only three of the fourteen reported having dietary restrictions: one is a cancer survivor and has a special diet, one is diabetic, and another one is lactose intolerant.

Eight respondents reported that they are able to eat the diet that they prefer, while five respondents reported that they are not able to eat the diet they prefer because they either have dietary restrictions, food is too expensive, or because they are restricted by high costs of food.

Two households reported eating four-to-five fruits and vegetables a day, two households reported eating two-to-three a day, and six reported eating one-to-two a day. One household reported eating a few fruits and vegetables a week and three households reported eating one a week.

Four households reported eating foods with whole grains every day, three households twice a week, and three other households once a week. One household reported eating foods with whole grains twice a month, another household at least once per month, and two households once every other month.

Five households reported eating foods with protein every day, four households reported eating foods with protein every-other day, and three households reported twice a week. Only one household reported eating food with protein once a week and another household twice a month.

Four households reported eating dairy foods every-day, another four households reported eating dairy foods every-other day, and two households reported eating dairy foods twice a week. Two households reported eating dairy foods once a week and two other twice a month.

Ten households reported having at least one meal at a fast-food restaurant in the last month (prior to administering the survey) and three households reported having at least three meals at a fast-food restaurant in the last two weeks (prior to administering the survey).

### **List of the food households had for dinner the night before the survey was administered:**

- One household reported having rice and beans
- One household reported having baked chicken and white rice
- One household reported having six-piece chicken nugget and a soda
- One household reported having beef tacos
- One household reported having pot roast and macaroni and cheese
- One household reported having baked chicken and macaroni
- One household reported having fired mushrooms, rice, bread, and iced tea
- One household reported having rice, beans, and chicken
- One household reported having ramen noodles-soup

One household reported having beans  
 One household reported having rice, beans, and steak  
 One household reported having an apple-banana shake and a beef sandwich  
 One household reported having fruit

Nine households reported that they can afford to feed their children a well-balanced meal during school breaks and five reported not having the resources to feed their children a well-balanced meal. The five families that cannot afford to feed their children reported supplementing their food budgets by going to community centers where food is provided, attending food pantries, and buying inexpensive food items.

Nine of the fourteen households reported that they need more free food during school breaks to feed their children, four households reported having enough, and one did not respond.

In twelve households, the children reported receiving free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch, in one household the child is too young to attend school, and one household did not respond to this question.

Scattered Site households reported a variety of factors preventing them from eating healthy food on a regular basis. Eight reported that healthy food is too expensive, limited time for preparing healthy meals, or limited healthy options in emergency food programs. Two reported that they already eat healthy food on a regular basis and four other households identified multiple reasons. *Figure 1.1* demonstrates the multiple reasons that prevent the four households from eating healthy food on the regular basis.

Reasons	1	2	3	4
Buying healthy food is too expensive	x	x		x
Healthy food is not easily accessible in the community	x	x		x
I am limited to eating what is available in free food lines and programs			x	
I do not have time to eat healthy and balanced meals				x
Lack of transportation to large markets		x	x	x
I choose not to eat healthy food				
I currently eat healthy food on the regular basis				

*Figure 1.1*

Out of the fourteen households in this study, two affirmed that it would be easier to add more fruits and vegetables to their diets if they get help with budgeting and managing expenses and two others suggested that the availability of more food outlets with fresh fruits and vegetables would help. Participants reported that they would add more fruits and vegetables to their diet if a farmer’s market or community garden was accessible (2 respondents), if fruits and vegetables were less expensive (2 respondents). One household did not respond this question. *Figure 1.2* demonstrates the multiple changes that would make it easier for five households to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet.

Changes that would make it easier for five households to add more fruits and vegetables to their diet	1	2	3	4	5
Help with budgeting and managing expenses	x	x		x	
More food outlets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables	x			x	
A farmer's market or community garden where I live	x	x	x		x
More knowledge about nutritional benefits		x		x	
Cheaper fruits and vegetables			x	x	x
More fruits and vegetables at food pantries or soup kitchens				x	

Figure 1.2

### Food Program Scenarios:

Eight participants expressed interest in cooking and/or nutrition classes and six expressed interest in participating in a community garden, where they can grow their own food. Four participants expressed interest in joining a club or cooperative to get better prices on food, seven participants expressed interest in programs that will feed their children during school breaks, and one participant did not respond to the question.

### Food Security Status

Using the standard procedures for measuring food insecurity and hunger demonstrated that all (13) but one Scattered Site household were food insecure throughout the whole year (December 2010 to December 2011). Food-insecure households (those with low and very low food security) reported having difficulty at some time during the year providing enough food for all their household members due to a lack of resources. Out of the thirteen food insecure households, three had low food security, five had very low food security (moderate), and five had very low food security (severe). Very low food security<sup>10</sup> indicates that the food intake of one or more household members was reduced and their eating patterns were disrupted at times during the year because the household lacked money and other resources for food (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011).

When interpreting food security statistics in this study, it is important to keep in mind that households were classified as having low or very low food security if they experienced the condition at any time during the previous 12 months. Rates of food insecurity for the Scattered Site population were substantially higher than the national average for households. On a typical day, the households were at a high risk of being the low or very low food secure. Similar to national data, reliable monitoring of food security contributes to the effective operation of programs.

### Key Points

According to the Gross Monthly Income eligibility standards for LINK, almost all households are at or below 130 percent of the poverty line.

Five of the ten households that have received food from a food pantry in the last twelve months, at least 25% of their monthly food supply come from food pantries.

Six of the fourteen households are single mothers and have more than two children. Five of those six households reported spending some of their personal money every week to supplement their LINK benefits.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix VI



Also, four of these six households reported having enough money to buy food in the last twelve months and did not have to choose between purchasing food and paying other household necessities. Two households reported choosing between purchasing food and other household necessities: one reported choosing between food and rent, and the other between buying toiletries, clothing, school materials, and diapers.

Twelve of the fourteen heads' of household reported eating less than four-to-five fruits and vegetables a day, which is recommended by the USDA's 2,000 caloric standards. Only two heads of household reported eating the recommended daily servings. (This assumes that the heads of household use the 2,000 calorie dietary guideline.)

Only four heads' of household reported eating foods with whole grains every-day and ten reported eating it every-other day or less often. The ten heads' of household reported not eating foods with whole grains everyday consume less than the recommended USDA daily servings using the 2,000 caloric standards. (This assumes that the heads of household use the 2,000 calorie dietary guideline.)

Five heads' of households reported eating foods with protein every-day and nine reported eating these foods every-other day or less often. The nine heads' of household that reported eating foods with protein every-other day or less consume less than what is recommended by the USDA. (This assumes that the heads of household use the 2,000 calorie dietary guideline.)

Ten heads' of household reported eating dairy foods every-other day or less, which is less than the recommended by the USDA. (This assumes that the heads of household use the 2,000 calorie dietary guideline.). On the other hand, only four heads' of household reported eating dairy foods every-day.

The six heads' of household that reported not having adequate food resources at this moment also average one to two fruits/vegetables a day and do not regularly eat foods with whole grains. The fruits and vegetables daily intake along with foods with whole grains is well below the recommended USDA daily servings using the 2,000 caloric standards. (This assumes that the heads of household use the 2,000 calorie dietary guideline.)

## Discussion

Despite households' coping strategies to minimize food insecurity (carefully and strategically using food stamps to buy enough food to last and frequent visits to food pantries), Scattered Site households have difficulty feeding their families, run out of money for food, and have difficulty serving nutritious foods. Access to food and eating healthy foods is an ongoing concern for these households. The circumstances here reflect national food insecurity trends, which also find that some members of the household, particularly young children, experience only mild effects or none at all, while adults are more severely affected.

All but one household are food insecure, current LCN food programs seem to be working well for these families, particularly the informal delivery of food bags/baskets during mandatory house visits. As LCN strives to deliver comprehensive services to Scattered Site households, these findings indicate that it is necessary to implement a system where food is delivered on the more regular basis.

Findings also demonstrate households' are interested in participating in proposed LCN food programs. This is a clear sign that households' would be receptive to future programming around food. For instance, a number of households are interested in participating in community garden programs. As such, these families may be good candidates for "Casa on the Vine."

## **Conclusion**

This study provided an in-depth understanding of LCN’s clients’ food needs to help shape the development of current and future food security programming at LCN. To make a measurable impact on food insecurity in the Scattered Site Housing Program, LCN should help create innovative programs or adapt existing models that combine nutrition education, cooking, healthy living, and urban agriculture. In an effort to bolster the self-sufficiency of households, additional planning should examine the types of interventions that can ensure the families get enough food, increase nutritional knowledge, and advance their economic and job security.

## **Recommended Next Steps**

- Engage LCN’s therapist and Scattered Site case managers in discussions about future food programming for households.
- Identify the most feasible methods of distributing food (bags/baskets) more regularly to Scattered Site households.
- Continue bringing food bags to monthly visits, especially to those families with very low food security.
- Scattered Site staff and the Food Security Team should engage in discussions with management about how the new building project will alter current and future food programming for Scattered Site households.
- Begin collaborating with Scattered Site participants who expressed an interest in food programming.

Appendix I

**Scattered Site Household Food Security Assessment**

ID: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How many people live with you? (living/staying with you)? (*Choose only ONE answer*)
  - a. Single without children
  - b. Single with child/children: Age of child/children: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. With spouse/partner without children
  - d. With spouse/partner with child/children: Age of child/children, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
  
2. What is your total household Gross Monthly Income? (Gross income means a household's total before any deductions have been made)
  - a. \$1 -- \$1,174
  - b. \$1,175 -- \$ 1,579
  - c. \$1,580 -- \$1,984
  - d. \$1,985 -- \$2,389
  - e. \$2,390 -- \$2,794
  - f. \$2,795 -- \$3,200
  - g. \$3,201 -- \$3,605
  - h. \$3,606 or more

**Part I: Household Food Resource Use**

3. Does your household have adequate food resources at this moment?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  
4. Do other people/places assist you with food?
  - a. My family/friends
  - b. Government assistance programs
  - c. my church
  - d. Pantry or soup kitchen
  - e. I do not get food assistance
  
5. How often do you receive food from pantries, friends or family?
  - a. 1-2 days
  - b. 2-3 days
  - c. 4-5 days
  - d. Once a week
  - e. Once every two weeks
  - f. Once every three weeks
  - g. Once a month
  
6. Have you received food from a food pantry in the last 12 months?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No (skip to 6c)
  - 6a. If **YES**, can you identify a place/places where you have received free food in the last 12 months:  
\_\_\_\_\_
  
  - 6b. If **YES**, Approximately, how long does the food last you?
    - a. 1-2 days
    - b. 2-3 days
    - c. 4-5 days
    - d. 1 week
    - f. 2 weeks
    - f. 3 weeks
    - f. 1 month
  
  - 6c. If **NO**, do you know where food pantries are located in your neighborhood?
    - a. Yes
    - b. No
  
  - 6d. If **NO**, why don't you seek assistance from food pantries? (*circle all the apply*)
    - a. Don't know the hours or locations
    - b. Free food places are not open at hours I need them
    - c. Free food places are not within walking distance from my house

- d. I feel embarrassed to get free food
- e. Free food lines are not controlled/dangerous
- f. I feel that other people need it more than me
- g. I need proof of address
- h. I feel uncomfortable using the program
- i. lack of appropriate places to store the free food
- j. Because of my legal status
- k. Lack of transportation
- l. No one to take care of my children
- m. The time I spend at the free food place is not worth the benefits
- n. There are negative stigmas attached to food pantries
- o. Have difficulty carrying the food home from a pantry
- p. Food pantries do not provided me with culturally appropriate food
- q. Other: please specify, \_\_\_\_\_
- r. I do not need the food

7. How often do you receive food from a pantry?

- a. Once a week
- b. Twice a week or more
- c. Twice a month
- d. At least once per month
- e. Once every few months
- f. Once during the last 12 months
- g. Twice during the last 12 months
- h. Never

8. Do you or any member of your household receive Food Stamps/SNAP (LINK)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

8a. If **YES**, approximately how much money do you get in SNAP (LINK)? \_\_\_\_\_

8b. If **YES**, approximately how long does your SNAP (LINK) cover what you need to eat?

- a. One week
- b. Two weeks
- c. Three weeks
- d. All month

8c. If **NO**, why not? (*circle all the apply*)

- a. I have never applied for food stamps/SNAP (LINK)
- b. I do not qualify because my income is too high
- c. Because of my legal status
- d. I don't know how to apply for food stamps
- e. The requirements of the program are not worth the benefits
- f. Other: please specify, \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I do not need food stamps

9. How much do you generally spend on food each week? (do not include SNAP /LINK)

- a. \$0
- b. \$1 - \$50
- c. \$51 - \$100
- d. \$101 - \$200
- e. \$201 or more

10. Where does most of your food come from? (*circle only one*)
- 100% food from food pantries
  - 75% from food pantries and 25% purchased food with own money
  - 50% from food pantries and 50% purchased food with own money
  - 25% from food pantries and 75% purchased food with own money
  - 100% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 75% from food pantries and 25% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 50% from food pantries and 50% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 25% from food pantries and 75% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 100% purchased food with own money
  - 75% purchased food with own money and 25% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 50% purchased food with own money and 50% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 25% purchased food with own money and 75% I use my LINK card to buy food at the store
  - 50% from food pantries, 25% purchased food with own money, 25% LINK card
  - 25% from food pantries, 50% purchased food with own money, 25% LINK card
  - Other, Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
11. In the last 12 months did you have to ...(*circle only one*)
- Choose between purchasing food and paying the rent or mortgage
  - Choose between purchasing food and paying for medicine or healthcare
  - Choose between purchasing food and paying for utilities (e.g. heat, gas)
  - Choose between purchasing food and paying for transportation
  - Choose between purchasing food and other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Did not have to choose, had enough money to buy food

**Part II: Nutrition**

12. Do you have any dietary restrictions? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
13. Are you able to eat the diet that you prefer?
- Yes
  - No
- 13a. If **NO**, why not? Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Please describe what you ate last night for supper? Please specify:  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. How many fruits and vegetables do you eat a day?
- More than 5 a day
  - 4-5 a day
  - 2-3 a day
  - 1-2 a day
  - a few a week
  - 1 a week or less
16. How often do you eat foods with whole grains? (e.g. brown rice, whole wheat tortillas, whole wheat cereal flakes, whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers)
- Everyday
  - Every-other day
  - Twice a week
  - Once a week

- e. Twice a month
- f. At least once per month
- g. Once every few months

17. How often do you eat foods with protein? (e.g. beef, ham, lamb, pork, veal, chicken, black beans)

- a. Everyday
- b. Every-other day
- c. Twice a week
- d. Once a week
- e. Twice a month
- f. At least once per month
- g. Once every few months

18. How often do you eat dairy foods? (e.g. yogurt, cheese, milk-based desserts, milk)

- a. Everyday
- b. Every-other day
- c. Twice a week
- d. Once a week
- e. Twice a month
- f. At least once per month
- g. Once every few months

19. Does any of the following prevent you from eating healthy food on a regular basis?(*Circle all that apply*)

- a. Buying healthy food is too expensive
- b. Healthy food is not easily accessible in the community
- c. I am limited to eating what is available in free food lines and programs
- d. I do not have time to eat healthy, balanced meals
- e. Lack of transportation to large markets
- f. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- g. I choose not to eat healthy food
- h. I currently eat healthy food on the regular basis

20. It would be easier for me to add more fruits and vegetables in my diet if I could have...(Circle all that apply)

- a. Help with budgeting and managing expenses
- b. More food outlets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables
- c. A farmer's market or community garden where I live
- d. More knowledge about nutritional benefits
- e. Cheaper fruits and vegetables
- f. More fruits and vegetables at food pantries or soup kitchens
- g. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
- h. I currently eat enough fruits and vegetables on the regular basis

21. In the last month, how often did you eat fast-food (e.g. McDonald's, Burger King)

- a. \_\_\_\_ Often (5-8 meals)
- b. \_\_\_\_ Sometimes (3-4 meals)
- c. \_\_\_\_ Less often (1-2 meals)
- d. \_\_\_\_ Never

22. Which of the following would you participate in? ...(*Circle all that apply*)

- a. In cooking and/or nutrition classes

- b. In a community garden, where I can grow my own food
- c. In buying clubs or cooperatives to get better prices on food
- d. In programs that feed my children during school breaks (e.g. winter break, holidays, summer)
- e. Other, please specify:\_\_\_\_\_

23. During school breaks (e.g. winter break, holidays, summer) can you afford to feed your children a well-balanced and nutritious meals?

- a. Yes
- b. No

23a. If **NO**, how do you get enough food to feed your children? Please specify:

\_\_\_\_\_

24. During school breaks (e.g. winter break, holidays, summer) do you need more free food in order to feed your children?

- a. Yes
- b. No

25. Do your children receive free or reduced-price school breakfast and lunch?

- a. Yes
- b. No

## Appendix II

### U.S. HOUSEHOLD FOOD-SECURITY/HUNGER SURVEY MODULE: 3-STAGE DESIGN (2 INTERNAL SCREENERS)

The next questions are about the food eaten in our household in the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year, and whether you were able to afford the food you need.

General food sufficiency questions/screener: Questions 1, 1a, 1b (these questions are Not used in calculating the food-security/hunger scale.)

1. [IF ONE PERSON IN HOUSEHOLD, USE "I" IN PARENTHEICALS, OTHERWISE, USE "WE."]

Which of these statements best describes the food eaten in your household in the last 12 months: --enough of the kinds of food (I/we) want to eat; --enough, but not always the kinds of food (I/we) want; --sometimes not enough to eat; or, --often not enough to eat?

- [1] Enough of the kinds of food we want to eat [SKIP 1a and 1b]
- [2] Enough but not always the kinds of food we want [SKIP 1a; ask 1b]
- [3] Sometimes not enough to eat [Ask 1a; SKIP 1b]
- [4] Often not enough [Ask 1a; SKIP 1b]
- [ ] DK or Refused (SKIP 1a and 1b)

1a. [IF OPTION 3 OR 4 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have enough to eat. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have enough to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

- | YES                      | NO                       | DK                       |  |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not enough money for food                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not enough time for shopping or cooking            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Too hard to get to the store                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | On a diet  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No working stove available                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not able to cook or eat because of health problems |

1b. [IF OPTION 2 SELECTED, ASK] Here are some reasons why people don't always have the quality or variety of food they want. For each one, please tell me if that is a reason why YOU don't always have the kinds of food you want to eat. [READ LIST. MARK ALL THAT APPLY.]

- | YES                      | NO                       | DK                       |   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not enough money for food               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Kinds of food (I/we) want not available |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Not enough time for shopping or cooking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Too hard to get to the store            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | On a special diet                       |

#### Stage 1: Question 2-6

[IF SINGLE ADLT IN HOUSEHOLD USE "I," "MY," AND "YOU" IN PARENTETICALS; OTHERWISE, USE "WE," "OUR," AND "YOUR HOUSEHOLD;"]

Now I'm going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months, that is, since last (name of current month).

2. "(I/We) worried whether (my/our) food would run out before (I/we) got money to buy more." Was that often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your



household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

3. "The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

4. "(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q5 – Q6; OTHERWISE SKILL TO 1<sup>st</sup> – Level Screen.]

5. "(I/we) relied on only a few kinds of low-cost food to feed (my/our) child/the children) because (I was/we were) running out of money to buy food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

6. "(I/We) couldn't feed (my/our) child/the children) a balanced meal, because (I/we) couldn't afford that." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or Refused

**1<sup>st</sup>-level Screen (screener for Stage 2): If AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE to ANY ONE of Questions 2-6 (i.e., "often true" or "sometimes true") OR response [3] or [4] to Question 1, then continue to Stage 2; otherwise, skip to end.**

### **Stage 2: Question 7-11**

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK Q7; OTHERWISE SKIP TO Q8]

7. "(My/Our child was/The children were) not eating enough because (I/we) just couldn't afford enough food." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?

- Often true
- Sometimes true
- Never true
- DK or R

8. In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No (SKIP 8a)
- DK or R (SKIP 8a)

8a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- Almost every month

- Some months but not every month
- Only 1 or 2 months
- DK or R

9. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?

- Yes
- No
- DK or R

10. In the last 12 months, were you every hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?

- Yes
- No
- DK or R

11. In the last 12 months, did you lose weight because you didn't have enough money for food?

- Yes
- No
- DK or R

**2<sup>nd</sup> -level Screen (screener for Stage 3): If AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSE to ANY ONE of Questions 7 through 11, then continue to Stage 3; otherwise, skip to end.**

**Stage 3: Questions 12-16**

12. In the last 12 months, did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No (SKIP 12a)
- DK or R (SKIP 12a)

12a. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- Almost every month
- Some months but not every month
- Only 1 or 2 months
- DK or R

[IF CHILDREN UNDER 18 IN HOUSEHOLD, ASK 13-16; OTHERWISE SKIP TO END.]

13. The next questions are about children living in the household who are under 18 years old. In the last 12 months, since (current month) of last year, did you ever cut the size of (your child's/any of the children's) meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No
- DK or R

14. In the last 12 months, did (CHILD'S NAME/any of the children) ever skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- Yes
- No (SKIP 14a)
- DK or R (SKIP 14a)

14a. [IF YES ABOVE ASK] How often did this happen---almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months?

- Almost every month
- Some months but not every month
- Only 1 or 2 months
- DK or R

15. In the last 12 months, (was your child/ were the children) ever hungry but you just couldn't afford more food?

Yes

No

DK or R

16. In the last 12 months, did (your child/any of the children) ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

Yes

No

DK or R

**END OF FOOD-SECURITY/HUNGER CORE MODULE**

## Appendix III

### **What is Household Food Security? Definitions from the Life Sciences Research Office (Anderson 1990)**

**Food Security:** Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum

- The ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods
- An assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways

**Food Insecurity:** Limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

**Hunger:** The uneasy or painful sensation caused by a lack of food. The recurrent and involuntary lack of access to food.

## Appendix IV

Each question asks whether the condition or behavior occurred at any time during the previous 12 months and specifies a lack of money and other resources to obtain food as the reason. Voluntary fasting or dieting to lose weight are thereby excluded from the measure. The series includes 10 questions about food conditions of the household as a whole and of adults in the household and, if there are children present in the household, an additional 8 questions about their food conditions (see box, “Questions Used to Assess the Food Security of Households in the CPS Food Security Survey,” Appendix III). Responses to the 18 food security questions are reported in tables S-6 to S-8 of the statistical supplement, <http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ap/ap057>). The food security status of each interviewed household is determined by the number of food-insecure conditions and behaviors the household reports. Households are classified as food secure if they report no food-insecure conditions or if they report only one or two food-insecure conditions. (Food-insecure conditions are indicated by responses of “often” or “sometimes” to questions 1-3 and 11-13, “almost every month” or “some months but not every month” to questions 5, 10, and 17, and “yes” to the other questions.) They are classified as food insecure if they report three or more food-insecure conditions (Coleman-Jensen et al., 2011).

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### *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security – 2000*

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#### Exhibit 3-1

#### CODING SURVEY RESPONSES FOR THE FOOD SECURITY SCALE

Question Number	Question	Negative Responses (Code = 0)	Affirmative Responses (Code = 1)	Missing Data (Code = .)
Q2	Worried food would run out	Never true ( <i>or screened out at prelim. screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know
Q3	Food bought just didn't last	Never true ( <i>or screened out at prelim. screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know
Q4	Couldn't afford to eat balanced meals	Never true ( <i>or screened out at preliminary screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know
Q5	Few kinds of low-cost food for children	Never true ( <i>or screened out at preliminary screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q6	Couldn't feed children a balanced meal	Never true ( <i>or screened out at preliminary screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q7	Children were not eating enough	Never true ( <i>or screened out at preliminary or 1st-level screen</i> )	Often true; Sometimes true	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q8	Adult(s) cut or skipped meals	No ( <i>or screened out at preliminary or 1st-level screen</i> )	Yes	Refused; Don't know

Q8a	Adult(s) cut or skipped meals, 3+ months	Only 1 or 2 months; Skipped (“no” on 8) <i>(or screened out at pre-lim. or 1st-level screen)</i>	Almost every month; Some months but not every month	Refused; Don't know
Q9	You ate less than felt you should	No <i>(or screened out at preliminary or 1st-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know
Q10	You were hungry but didn't eat	No <i>(or screened out at preliminary or 1st-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know
Q11	You lost weight because not enough food	No <i>(or screened out at preliminary or 1st-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know
Q12	Adult(s) not eat for whole day	No <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know
Q12a	Adult(s) not eat for whole day, 3+ months	Only 1 or 2 months; Skipped (“no” on 12); <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Almost every month; Some months but not every month	Refused; Don't know
Q13	Cut size of children's meals	No <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q14	Children ever skip meals	No <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q14a	Children skip meals, 3+ months	Only 1 or 2 months; Skipped (“no” on 14); <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Almost every month; Some months but not every month	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q15	Children ever hungry	No <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know (or No children)
Q16	Children not eat for whole day	No <i>(or Screened out at Preliminary, 1st-, or 2nd-level screen)</i>	Yes	Refused; Don't know (or No children)

**Exhibit 3-3**

**HOUSEHOLDS WITH COMPLETE RESPONSES:  
FOOD SECURITY SCALE VALUES AND STATUS LEVELS  
CORRESPONDING TO NUMBER OF AFFIRMATIVE RESPONSES**

Number of Affirmative Responses:		1998 Food Security Scale Values <sup>a</sup>	Food Security Status Level	
(Out of 18) Households With Children	(Out of 10) Households Without Children		Code	Category
0	0	0.0	0	Food Secure
1	1	1.0		
2	2	1.2		
		1.8		
		2.2		
3		2.4	1	Food Insecure Without Hunger
4	3	3.0		
5	4	3.0		
6	5	3.4		
7		3.7		
		3.9		
		4.3		
		4.4		
8	6	4.7	2	Food Insecure With Hunger, Moderate
9	7	5.0		
10	8	5.1		
11		5.5		
12		5.7		
		5.9		
		6.3		
		6.4		
13	9	6.6	3	Food Insecure With Hunger, Severe
14	10	7.0		
15		7.2		
16		7.4		
17		7.9		
18		8.0		
		8.7		
		9.3		

<sup>a</sup> See Appendix D, technical note 2, for comparison of 1995 and 1998 scale values.  
Source: Calculated by ERS from August 1998 Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.

## Appendix VI

Prior to 2006, households with low food security were described as “food insecure without hunger” and households with very low food security were described as “food insecure with hunger” (Household Food Security in the United States in 2010, 2011). Changes in these descriptions were made in 2006 at the recommendation of the Committee on National Statistics (National Research Council, 2006), in order to distinguish the physiological state of hunger from indicators of food availability.



## Works Cited

Bickel, G ., M. Nord, C. Price, W.L. Hamilton, and J.T. Cook. 2000. *Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000*. USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Coleman-Jensen, A., M. Nord, M. Price, and S. Carlson. 2011. *Household Food Security in the United States in 2010*. USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.

Anderson, S.A. (1990).The 1990 Life Sciences Research Office (LSRO) Report on Nutritional Assessment defined terms associated with food access. *Journal of Nutrition*, 102, 1559-1660.

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