

# UNDERSTANDING FOOD SECURITY IN INDIAN COUNTRY:

Results From A Survey Of Native  
Communities' Food Access During Covid-19

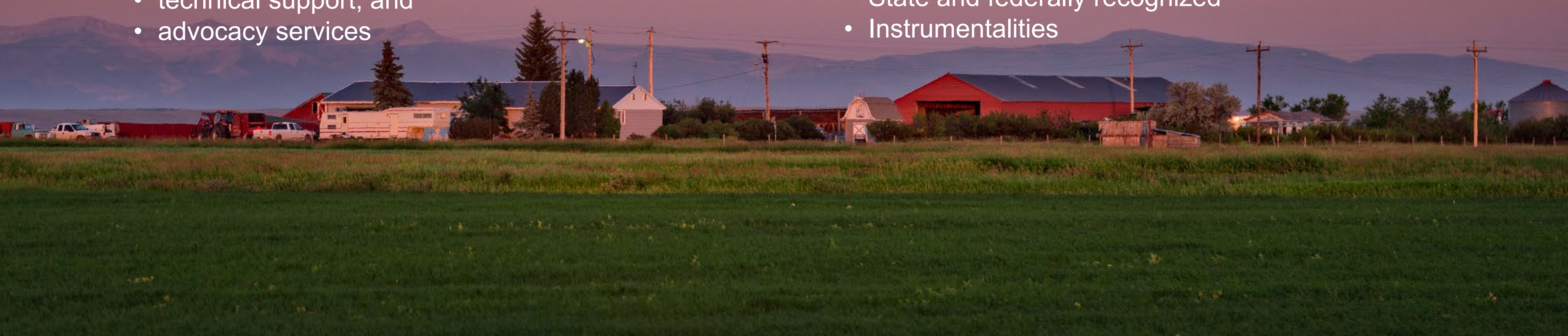
March 1, 2023



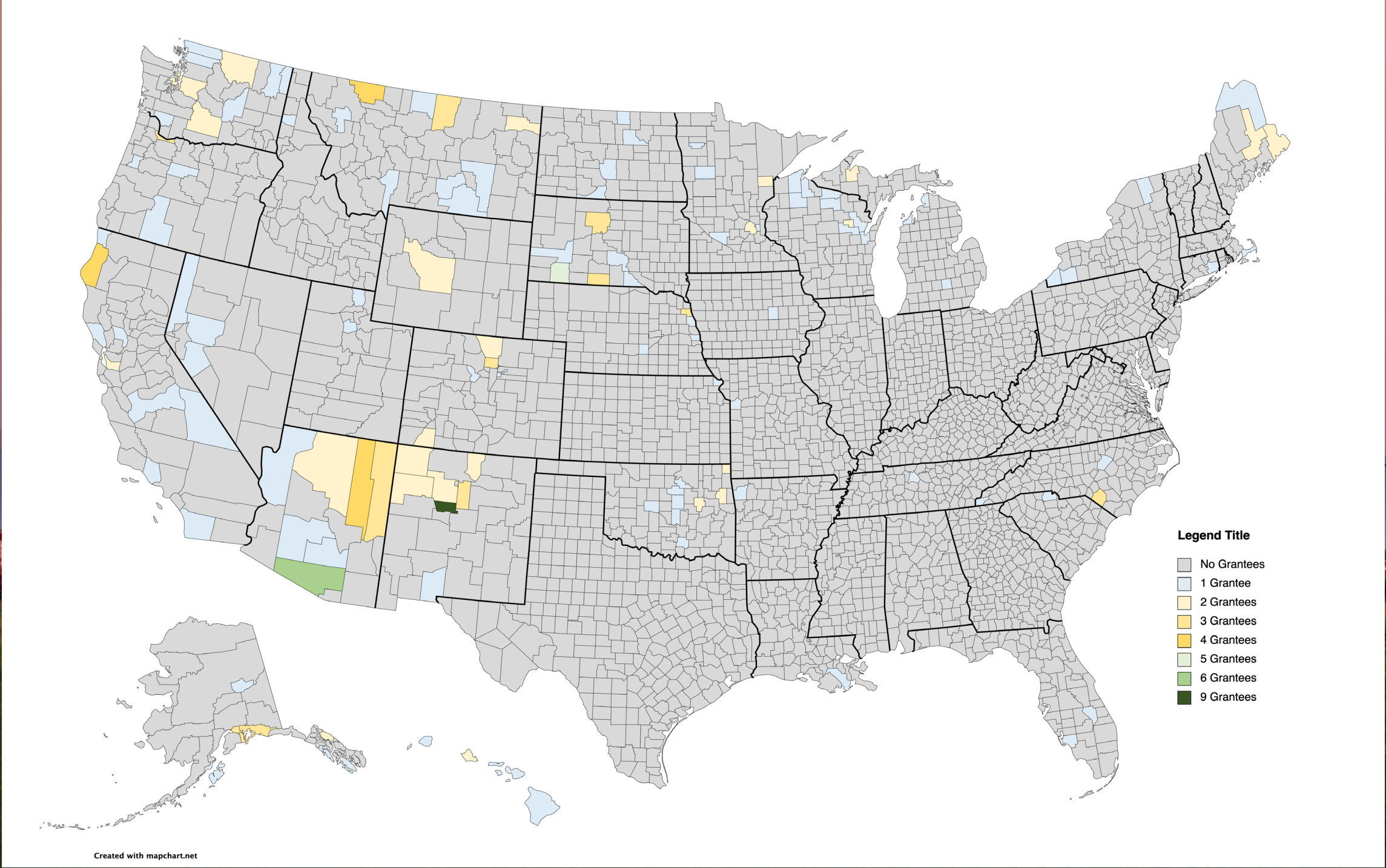
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# ABOUT THE NATIVE AMERICAN AGRICULTURE FUND

- Founded in 2018 as a private charitable trust created by the settlement of the Keepseagle v. Vilsack class-action lawsuit
- Supports Native farmers and ranchers in:
  - business assistance
  - agricultural education
  - technical support, and
  - advocacy services
- Eligible grant recipients are:
  - 501(c)(3) organizations
  - Educational organizations
    - Including K-12 schools and college-level institutions
  - Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs)
  - Tribes
    - State and federally recognized
    - Instrumentalities



# NAAF GRANTEES 2019-2022





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## FOOD INSECURITY RATE RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

### FOOD INSECURITY BY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION

Food insecurity rates are statistically significantly higher for respondents with children under age 18 in their household ( $p=0.001$ ), with 56 percent experiencing food insecurity and 31 percent experiencing very low food security during COVID-19. Similarly, 59 percent of respondents with children under age 5 in their household experienced food insecurity and 33 percent experienced very low food security (Figure 4).

Households with children experiencing greater levels of food insecurity is a pattern consistent across online surveys of food insecurity conducted during COVID-19 and with the latest 2020 USDA Economic Research Service's (ERS) annual food security estimates. A recent review of other online surveys during COVID-19<sup>45</sup> provides evidence that regardless of the data source, studies consistently find that food hardship has increased during COVID-19 and is higher among households with children. Congruent with this pattern, USDA ERS's annual report, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2020*, shows that the rate of food insecurity in 2020 (most of which was characterized by COVID-19) for households with children (14.8 percent) was higher than for those without children (8.8 percent).<sup>46</sup>

The rate of food insecurity for households with children under age 18 in their household was 14.8 percent.

One contributing factor to food insecurity is the loss of income when school children are not in school. School meals through the Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack Programs, and snacks strains families' food security, especially for children at risk of food insecurity.

The food insecurity rate for households without children is 8.8 percent. Households with children experience higher food insecurity rates (14.8 percent) than households without children (8.8 percent).

# REIMAGINING HUNGER RESPONSES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Insights from Case Examples and a Survey of  
Native Communities' Food Access During COVID-19

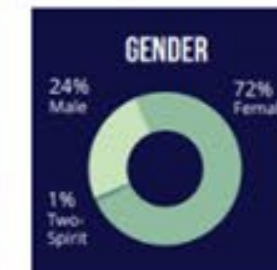
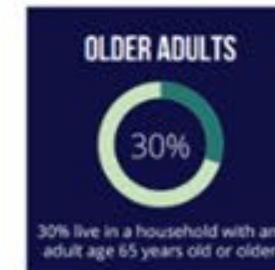


Photo by Juni Youth Enrichment Project



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Key Characteristics of NAAF Food Access Survey Respondents



Source: Native American Agriculture Fund Food Access Survey

# Who We Are

FRAC is the leading national nonprofit organization working to eradicate poverty-related hunger and undernutrition in the United States.



# What We Do

- Conduct research to document the extent of hunger and identify effective solutions
- Advocate for federal, state and local public policies that protect and strengthen the federal nutrition programs
- Provide coordination, training, technical assistance, and support on hunger-related issues

# FOOD INSECURITY AND ITS HEALTH IMPLICATIONS



# DEFINING FOOD INSECURITY



## FOOD SECURITY

- ✓ Access at all times to enough nutritious food for an active, healthy life
- ✓ Always enough of the kinds of food you want to eat (**food sufficiency**)



## FOOD INSECURITY

### Low food security

- ✓ Reduced quality / variety of foods
- ✓ Worry about food running out

### Very low food security

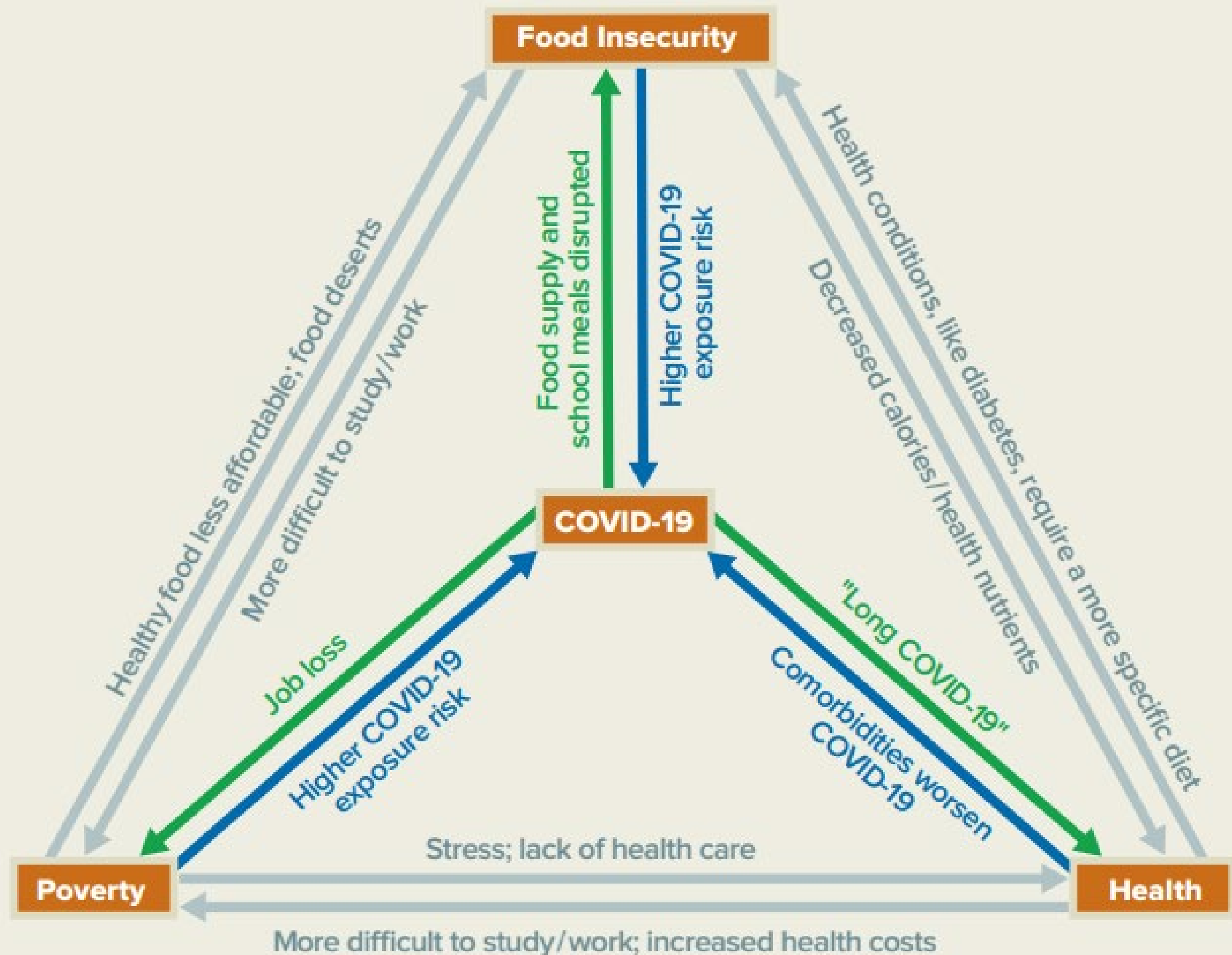
- ✓ Reduced quality / variety of foods
- ✓ Multiple signs of disrupted eating / reducing intake
- ✓ Sometimes or often not enough to eat (**food insufficiency**)

Source: Food Research & Action Center 2021 ©



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# HUNGER IS LINKED WITH POVERTY, HEALTH, AND COVID-19



**An equity lens:** These linkages are all influenced by systems of oppression, like structural racism, gender inequity, and classism, making adverse effects and feedback loops stronger among marginalized communities.

**Source:** Food Research & Action Center 2021 ©



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# FOOD INSECURITY COPING STRATEGIES

1. Forgoing the foods needed for special medical diets (e.g., eating pattern recommended for diabetes);
2. making trade-offs between food and other necessities (e.g., housing and medication)
3. postponing preventive or needed medical care;
4. purchasing a low-cost diet that relies on energy-dense but nutrient-poor foods; and
5. adults forging food so children can eat enough

- Exacerbates disease and compromise health
- Increases physician encounters
- Increases ER visits and hospitalizations
- Increases expenditures for prescription medications

Sources: FRAC's *Hunger & Health Series*, 2017;  
Gundersen et al., *Health Affairs*, 2015



# FOOD INSECURITY & HEALTH CONSEQUENCES

Diabetes

Heart Disease

Pregnancy  
Complications

Poor Sleep  
Outcomes

Depression and  
Mental Health  
Complications

Low Birth  
Weight

Iron Deficiency  
Anemia

Asthma

Poor Oral Health

Mental Health  
and Behavioral  
issues

Poor  
Educational  
Outcomes

Developmental  
Risks

Sources: FRAC's *Hunger & Health Series*, 2017;  
Gundersen et al., *Health Affairs*, 2015



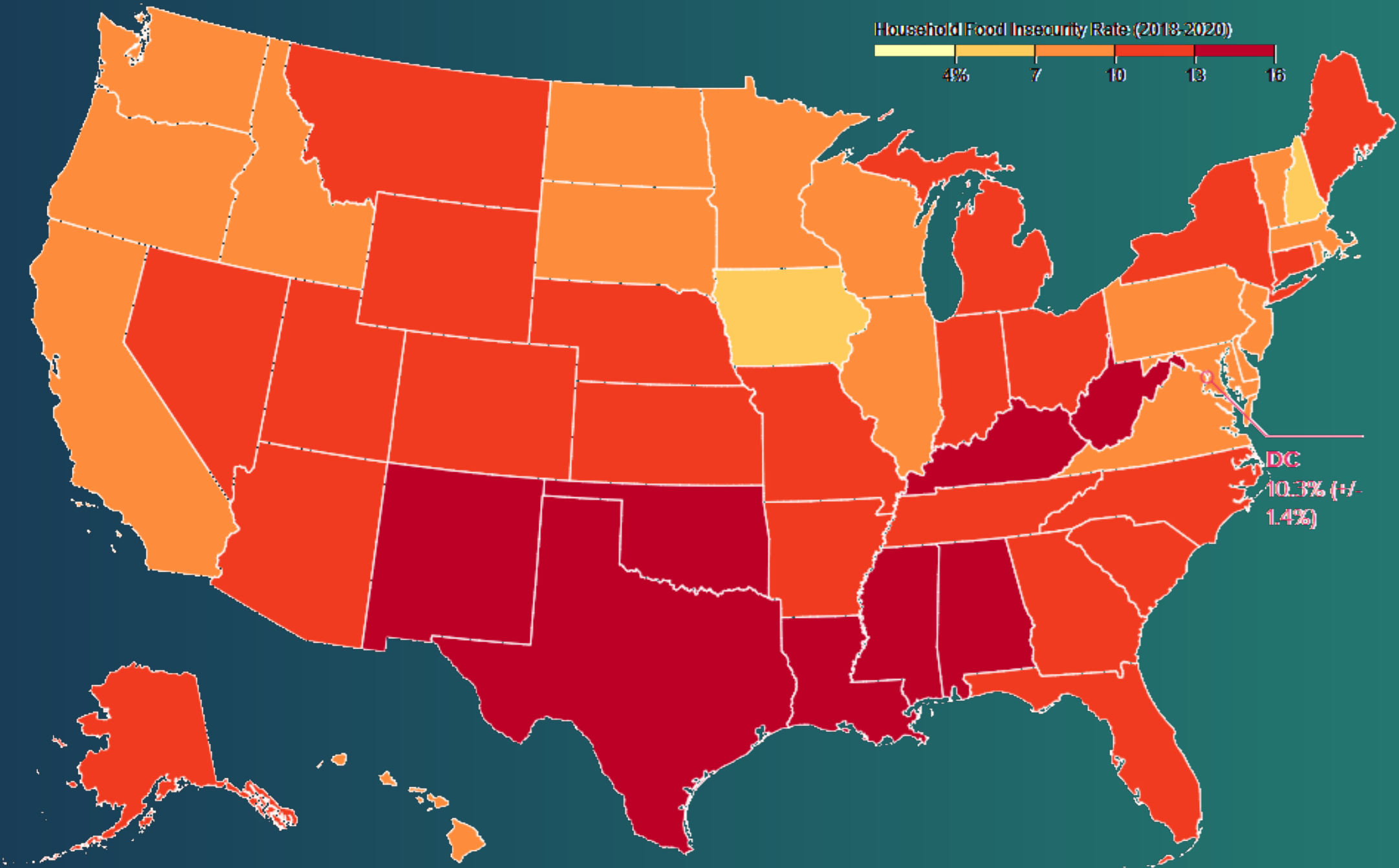
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# FOOD ACCESS AND FOOD SECURITY ACROSS INDIAN COUNTRY



# 2020 FOOD INSECURITY

Household Characteristics	Food Insecurity
All Households	10.5%
With Children <18 years	12.5%
With Income Below 185 percent of the poverty threshold	26.5%



Source: Alisha Coleman-Jensen, Matthew P. Rabbitt, Christian A. Gregory, and Anita Singh. 2021. Household Food Security in the United States in 2020, ERR-275, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service.





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## FOOD INSECURITY RATE RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

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Households with children experiencing greater levels of food insecurity is a pattern consistent across online surveys of food insecurity conducted during COVID-19 and with the latest 2020 USDA Economic Research Service's (ERS) annual food security estimates. A recent review of other online surveys during COVID-19<sup>45</sup> provides evidence that regardless of the data source, studies consistently find that food hardship has increased during COVID-19 and is higher among households with children. Congruent with this pattern, USDA ERS's annual report, *Household Food Security in the United States in 2020*, shows that the rate of food insecurity in 2020 (most of which was characterized by COVID-19) for households with children (14.8 percent) was higher than for those without children (8.8 percent).<sup>46</sup>

The rate of food insecurity for households with children under age 18 in their household was 14.8 percent.

One contributing factor to food insecurity is when school children are not able to access school meals through the Breakfast, Lunch, and Snack Programs, and snacks strains families' food security, especially for children at home.

The food insecurity rate for households without any children in the household was 8.8 percent, which is lower than the rate for households with an adult (42 percent) and a child (42 percent) reflective of income level.

# REIMAGINING HUNGER RESPONSES IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Insights from Case Examples and a Survey of  
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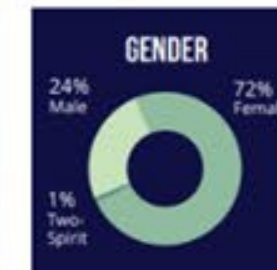
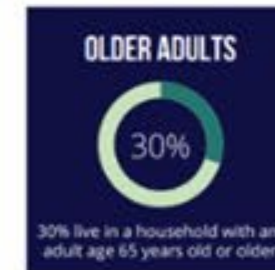


Photo by Juni Youth Enrichment Project



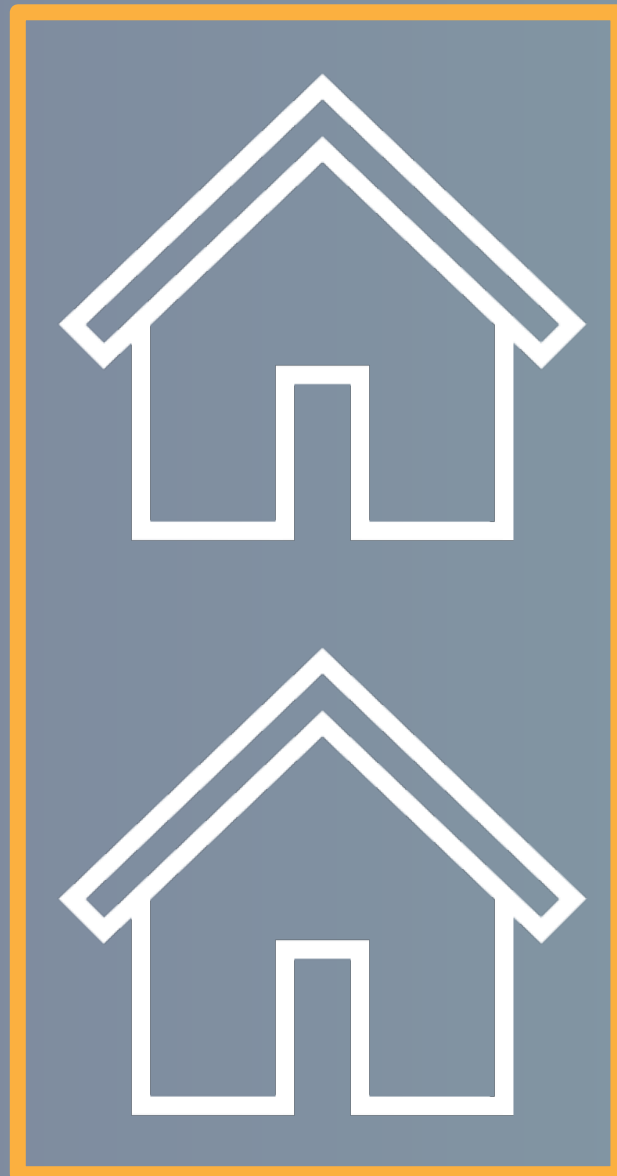
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Key Characteristics of NAAF Food Access Survey Respondents



Source: Native American Agriculture Fund Food Access Survey

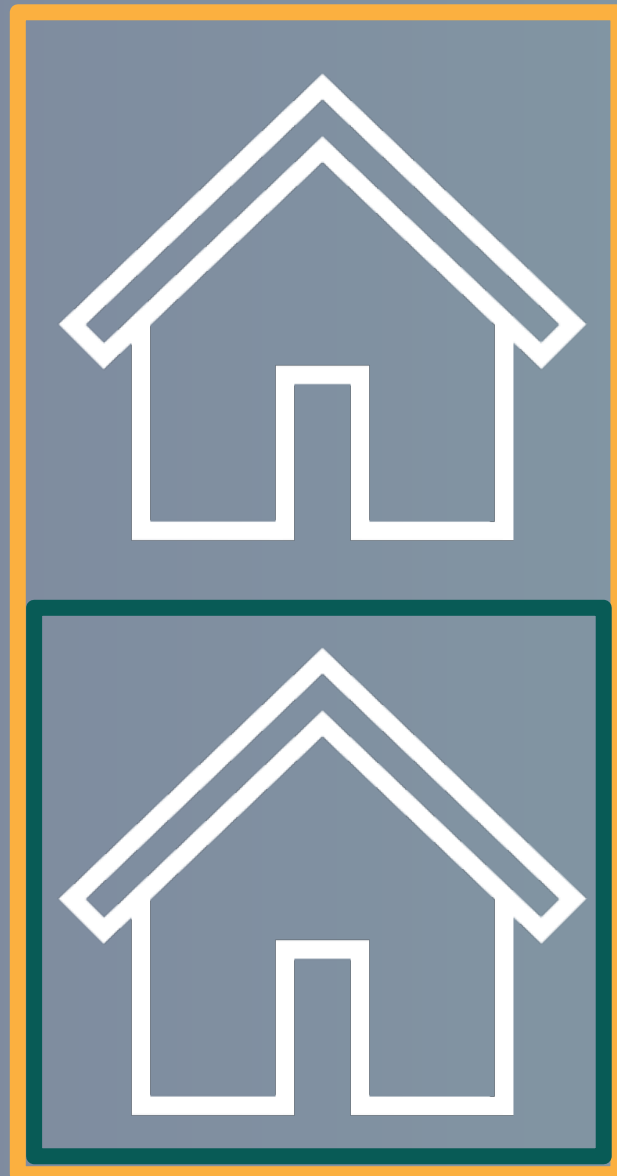
# FOOD INSECURITY IS TOO HIGH IN INDIAN COUNTRY



- Half (49%) of survey respondents experienced food insecurity



# FOOD INSECURITY IS TOO HIGH IN INDIAN COUNTRY



- Half (49%) of survey respondents experienced **food insecurity**
- 1 in 4 (26%) experienced **very low food security**



# FOOD INSECURITY IS TOO HIGH IN INDIAN COUNTRY

54%

Sometime or often during COVID-19 they couldn't afford to eat balanced meals.

48%

Sometime or often during COVID-19 the food their household bought just didn't last, and they didn't have money to get more.

37%

They cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food in at least 1 month during COVID-19.

34%

Ate less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money for food.



# HUNGER VARIES BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

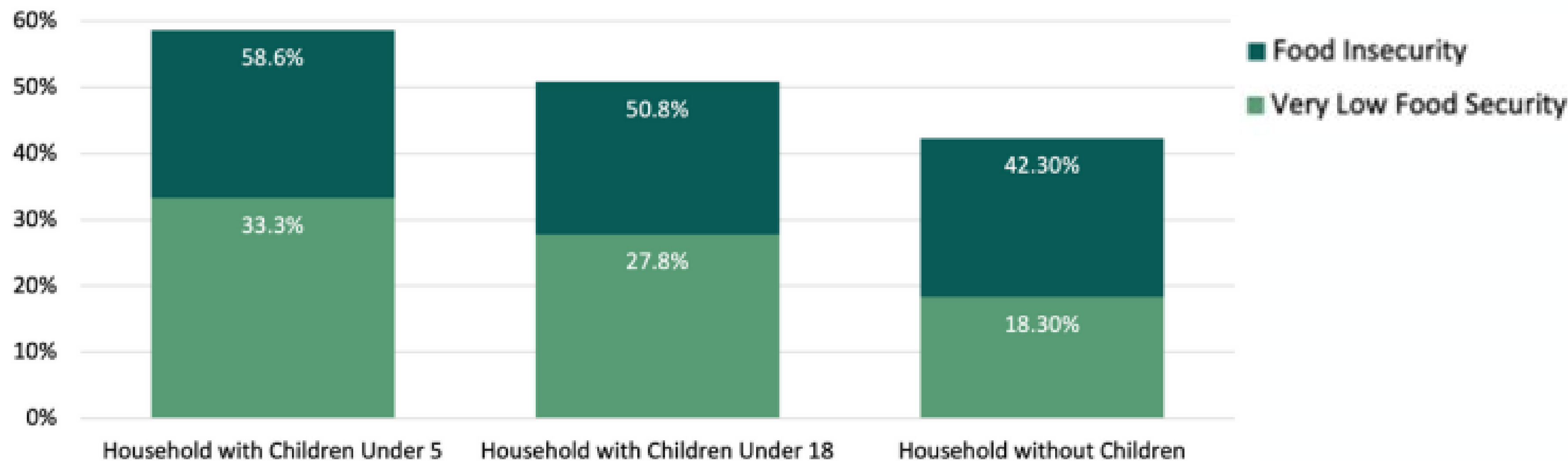
Food insecurity was higher among households with:

- Children
- An employment disruption during COVID-19
- Self-reported poor or fair health status



# HUNGER VARIES BY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

**Figure 4.** Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security Rates During COVID-19  
Among Households With and Without Children



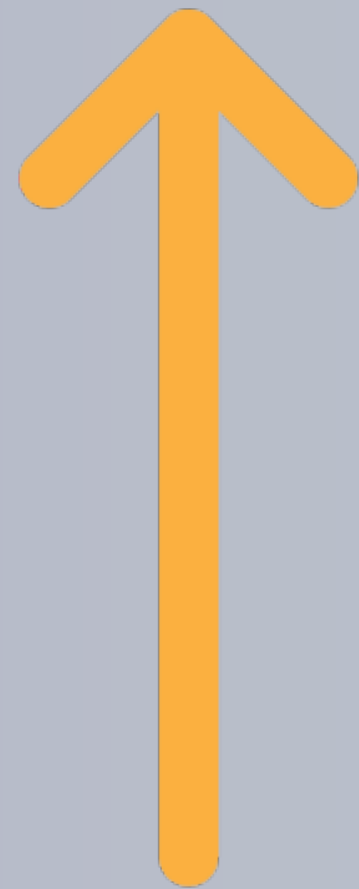
# FOOD ACCESS AMONG SURVEY RESPONDENTS

3% live within 1  
mile of a grocery  
store

At least 48% have  
low food access,  
living greater than  
10 miles from a  
grocery store



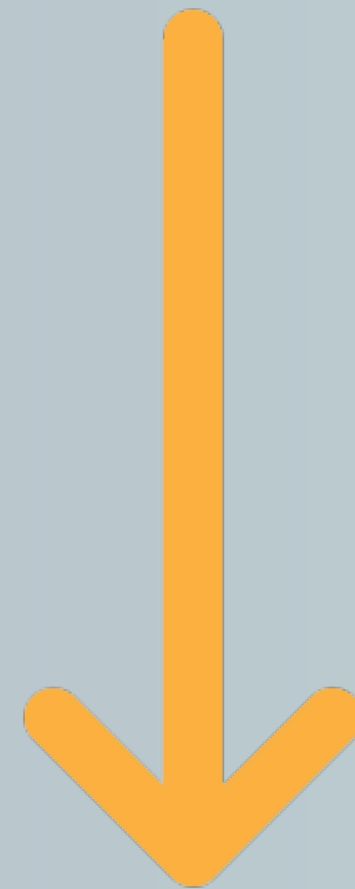
# FOOD PROCUREMENT PLACES USED DURING COVID-19



Grocery Delivery

Food Pantries,  
Food Banks

Soup Kitchens,  
Shelters



Grocery Stores

Markets and Farm  
Stands

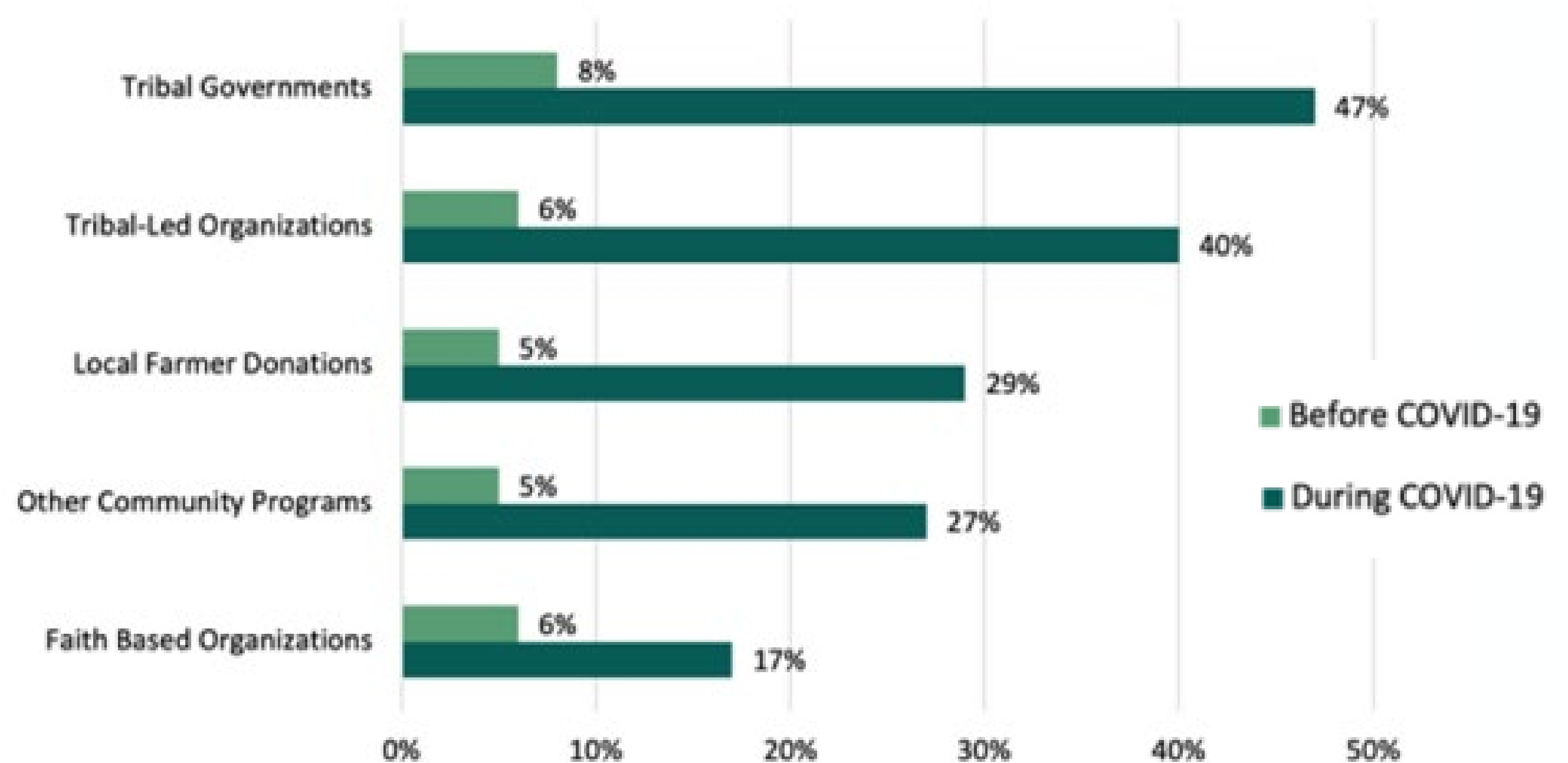
Eat-in Restaurants



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# TRIBAL ENTITIES LED IN DISTRIBUTING FOOD ASSISTANCE

Proportion of Respondents That Received Food Assistance Before and During COVID-19



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49%

OF AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA  
NATIVES EXPERIENCED FOOD  
INSECURITY DURING COVID-19



# INCREASING ACCESS TO CAPITAL TO SUPPORT HUNGER, NUTRITION AND HEALTH IN INDIAN COUNTRY

- NAAF investments in addressing food disparities in Tribal communities
- Regional food and agriculture infrastructure strengthen Native food systems to provide food security
- Reclaiming and revitalizing Tribal foodways leads to healthy lands, people and economies
  - Improving food access and affordability
  - Integrating Indigenous-led nutrition programming
  - Empowering Tribal consumers to have access to healthy choices
  - Enhancing nutrition and food security research



# TRIBAL ENTITIES ON THE GROUND

- NAAF has provided \$55 million in grants since 2019
- Examples of grant projects:
  - Utah Dine Bikeyah delivered 128,000 gallons of water to more than 400 Native farmers
  - Flower Hill Institute delivered seeds to more than 1,700 Native households from over 113 communities
  - Fruit and vegetable vouchers distributed to Tribal elementary students for use at Tribal marketplace for local farmers
  - 16,000 pounds of fresh produce distributed to Tribal member
  - Soil, seed, starters, and irrigation kits distributed to Tribal members

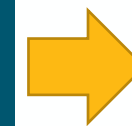


# STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY'S FOOD SECURITY



# Screen and Intervene: A Toolkit to Address Food Insecurity

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Connect Patients and Their Families to the Federal Nutrition Programs and Other Food and Community Resources

**STEP 1:** Educate the medical team on available federal nutrition programs and emergency food resources

**STEP 2:** Decide who in your practice can help connect patients and their families to nutrition programs and food assistance, and when you need to enlist the help of a partner

**STEP 3:** Post or distribute the most up-to-date information at your practice on federal nutrition programs to encourage program participation



# Make Referrals to the Federal Nutrition Programs



# FEDERAL NUTRITION PROGRAMS ARE KEY HEALTH SUPPORTS FOR FAMILIES EXPERIENCING FOOD INSECURITY

Food Distribution  
Program on  
Indian  
Reservations  
(FDPIR)

Supplemental  
Nutrition  
Assistance  
Program (SNAP)

Special Nutrition  
Program for  
Women, Infants,  
and Children  
(WIC)

Child Nutrition  
Programs



# FDPIR

FDPIR provides income eligible households living on Indian reservations with nutrition benefits in a food package.

FDPIR serves approximately 90,000 individuals across Indian Country each month.

For eligibility and to apply, contact your state or Tribal FDPIR Agency. Find the contact information [here](#).



# SNAP

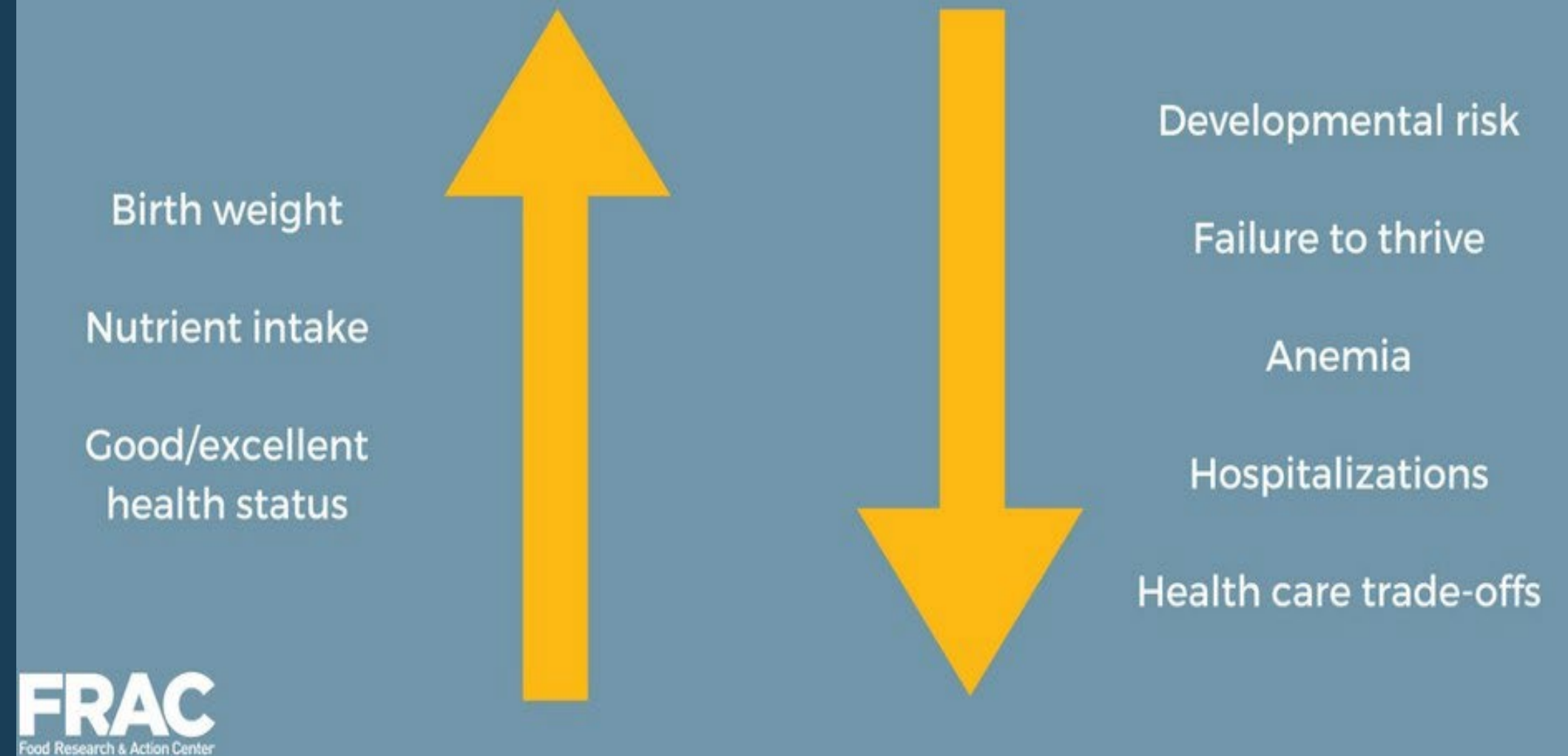
SNAP Provides low and medium-income families with nutrition benefits on an EBT card.

466,000 Native American individuals participated in SNAP in FY 2020

For eligibility and to apply, visit your state's SNAP website.

You can find your SNAP website at [fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory](https://fns.usda.gov/snap/state-directory)

## SNAP Improves the Health of Infants & Children



# WIC

WIC provides nutritious food, infant formula, and breastfeeding help to moderate- and low-income families including:

- Pregnant and postpartum individuals
- Infants and children 5 years and younger

For eligibility and to apply use your state or Tribal agency's:

- website or
- Toll-free number

In 2020:

476,000 American Indian and Alaska Native individuals participated in WIC

6.8% of all WIC participants identified as American Indian or Alaska Native



# CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

School Breakfast Program

National School Lunch Program

Summer Nutrition Programs

Child and Adult Care Food Program

Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT)

Find meals at: [fns.usda.gov/meals4kids](https://fns.usda.gov/meals4kids)

## FEDERAL CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS



Reduce food  
insecurity



Alleviate  
poverty



Improve  
nutrition &  
health  
outcomes



Protect  
against  
obesity

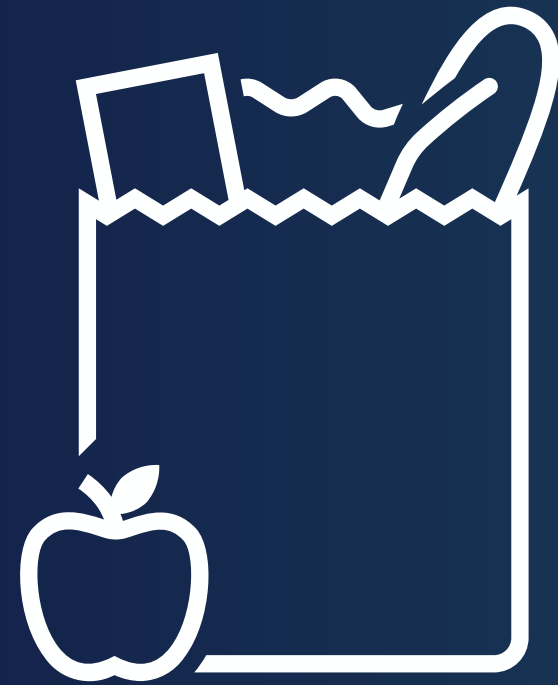


Boost learning  
and  
development



Support  
economic  
stability





# Make Referrals to Community Food Resources



# COMMUNITY FOOD RESOURCES

## USDA's Hunger Hotline

The Hunger Hotline connects callers with emergency food providers in their community, government assistance programs, and various social services. 1866-3-HUNGRY (1866-348-6479) or 1877-8-HAMBRE (for Spanish) Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET.

### 2.1.1.

211 connects callers to expert, caring help with a variety of services including finding food and mental health. Call 211 or text your zip code to TXT-211 (898211).



# UPCOMING EVENTS AND RESOURCES



# EVENTS

## The State of Native Agriculture

- This first annual virtual broadcast will focus on the current state of Tribal agricultural economies and highlight the leadership of the Native American producers and Tribes revitalizing our economies, feeding our people, and building our future for generations to come.
- March 9<sup>th</sup>, 12pm Central
- [Register Here](#)

## National Anti-Hunger Policy Conference

- Save the Date – May 7-9, 2023
- Washington, DC and Virtual
- [Look for Updates including Registration Here](#)



# RESOURCES

## Food Security and Food Access in Indian Country

- Reimagining Hunger in Times of Crisis: Insights from Case Examples and a Survey of Native Communities' Food Access During COVID-19
  - Livestream Webinar – Reimagining Hunger Responses in Times of Crisis Report Findings Presentation
- Hunger, Poverty, and Health During COVID-19 SPOTLIGHT: American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) Communities

## Connections Between Hunger and Health

- Hunger, Poverty, and Health Disparities During COVID-19 and the Federal Nutrition Programs' Role in an Equitable Recovery
- Linkages Between Food Insecurity, Poverty, and Health During COVID-19
- Hunger and Health – The Impact of Poverty, Food Insecurity, and Poor Nutrition on Health and Well-Being



# RESOURCES

## Resources for Health Care Providers to Make Referrals to Food Access and Food Security Supports

- [Screen and Intervene: A Toolkit for Pediatricians to Address Food Insecurity](#)
- [WIC Guide for Health Care Providers](#)
  - Blog - [From Research to Action: Screen and Intervene With WIC](#)
  - Webinar – [Pediatricians' Role in Maximizing WIC's Support for Health and Food Security](#)
- Webinar Course - [Screen & Intervene: Addressing Food Insecurity Among Older Adults](#)
  - Receive 1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit of Continuing Medical Education (CME) for MDs and DOs as well as other professional groups.
- Federal Nutrition Programs' Role in Improving Health and Well-Being
  - [The Role of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\) in Improving Health and Well-Being](#)
  - [The Role of the Federal Child Nutrition Programs in Improving Health and Well-Being](#)
  - [WIC is a Critical Economic, Nutrition, and Health Support for Children and Families](#)



# QUESTIONS



# CONTACT US

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