

Food Insecurity Profiles

Highlights:

- People who are food insecure may have enough money to meet basic needs, but just barely; many, however, also struggle affording other basic needs (such as rent and healthcare).
- Relatively very few respondents who are food insecure (marginal or low food security) currently receive assistance or utilize communal support (e.g., just 36% utilize food pantries). About half receive public food assistance such as SNAP or WIC.
- The most sought after form of support is debt relief support (e.g. in the form of interest-free loans), followed by therapy and financial counseling.
- Respondents who are food insecure are just as likely as those who are food secure to receive meals from a synagogue or a Jewish communal event/program.

		High food security (n=301)	Marginal food security (n=52)	Low and very low food security (n=49)
How would you describe your financial situation right now?	Living comfortably	54%	13%	8%
	Meeting your basic expenses with a little left over for extras	27%	31%	14%
	Just meeting your basic expenses	11%	50%	63%
	Do not have enough to meet your basic expenses	1%	6%	12%
	I prefer not to answer	7%	0%	2%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

What best describes your financial situation today compared to five years ago?		High food security (n=348)	Marginal food security (n=39)	Low and very low food security (n=10)
	Much better today	12%	5%	0%
	Somewhat better today	25%	21%	10%
	About the same today	46%	26%	30%
	Somewhat worse today	15%	26%	30%
	Much worse today	1%	23%	30%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

*About half of those experiencing marginal or low food security have also experienced a deterioration in their financial situation over the past year.

In the past year, have you ever had difficulty paying for... - Medical care for yourself or your family		High food security (n=71)	Marginal food security (n=24)	Low and very low food security (n=9)
	Yes, I had difficulty paying for this	19%	42%	78%
	No, I did not have difficulty paying for this	81%	58%	22%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

*Experiencing food insecurity is correlated with many other financial challenges, such as affording medical care, housing, and utility bills.

In the past year, have you ever had difficulty paying for... - Rent or mortgage	Yes, I had difficulty paying for this	30%	50%	67%
	No, I did not have difficulty paying for this	70%	50%	33%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

In the past year, have you ever had difficulty paying for... - Utility bills like water, gas, or electricity	Yes, I had difficulty paying for this	30%	65%	80%
	No, I did not have difficulty paying for this	70%	35%	20%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you receive or utilize any of the following food assistance?		High food security (n=301)	Marginal food security (n=52)	Low and very low food security (n=49)
	Food pantry	6%	33%	29%
	Grocery gift cards	3%	10%	10%
	Gifts from family or friends	5%	6%	16%
	Community or soup kitchen	0%	2%	2%
	Home-delivered prepared meal through Meals on Wheels or Jewish Family Services	3%	17%	12%
	Another type of private assistance (please describe):	1%	8%	2%
	None of the above	87%	62%	45%

* Multiple responses were possible; total is more than 100%

*Just over half of the respondents experiencing food insecurity do not utilize any of these supports.

*Even those with high food security find some of these services potentially helpful.

	Among those experiencing marginal or low food security (n=101)	Low/Marginal Food Insecurity: Hartford (n=67)	Low/Marginal Food Insecurity: New Haven (n=32)
Food pantry	31%	43%	3%
Grocery gift cards	10%	13%	3%
Gifts from family or friends	11%	6%	19%
Community or soup kitchen	2%	1%	3%
Home-delivered prepared meal through Meals on Wheels or Jewish Family Services	15%	21%	3%
Another type of private assistance (please describe):	5%	4%	6%

Employment counseling or job training		High food security (n=66)	Marginal food security (n=23)	Low and very low food security (n=33)
	Currently receiving	5%	0%	9%
	Would be helpful to receive	7%	17%	15%
	Not relevant/Not interested	88%	83%	76%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Support to complete an educational degree	Currently receiving	2%	0%	3%
	Would be helpful to receive	14%	22%	21%
	Not relevant/Not interested	83%	78%	76%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Affordable housing	Currently receiving	9%	33%	23%
	Would be helpful to receive	11%	19%	29%
	Not relevant/Not interested	80%	48%	49%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Reliable transportation	Currently receiving	11%	17%	6%
	Would be helpful to receive	7%	13%	29%
	Not relevant/Not interested	82%	70%	66%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Interest-free loans	Currently receiving	7%	0%	3%
	Would be helpful to receive	30%	30%	39%
	Not relevant/Not interested	63%	70%	58%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Accommodations for my or someone in my family's disability/ies	Currently receiving	5%	0%	0%
	Would be helpful to receive	8%	9%	18%
	Not relevant/Not interested	87%	91%	82%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Affordable day care for my children	Currently receiving	7%	8%	9%
	Would be helpful to receive	14%	25%	27%
	Not relevant/Not interested	79%	67%	64%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Financial counseling/tutoring	Currently receiving	14%	5%	6%
	Would be helpful to receive	23%	27%	35%
	Not relevant/Not interested	64%	68%	59%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Resolving outstanding debt	Currently receiving	2%	4%	8%
	Would be helpful to receive	26%	46%	44%
	Not relevant/Not interested	71%	50%	47%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Personal or family therapy or counseling	Currently receiving	14%	18%	12%
	Would be helpful to receive	14%	23%	36%
	Not relevant/Not interested	72%	59%	52%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Medical care for myself or someone whose well-being I am responsible for	Currently receiving	10%	14%	24%
	Would be helpful to receive	7%	5%	15%
	Not relevant/Not interested	83%	82%	62%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Respite care from my responsibilities as a primary caregiver to someone who cannot care for themselves	Currently receiving	0%	0%	3%
	Would be helpful to receive	0%	0%	15%
	Not relevant/Not interested	100%	100%	82%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Legal services	Currently receiving	0%	0%	3%
	Would be helpful to receive	18%	14%	19%
	Not relevant/Not interested	83%	86%	78%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

In the past 5 years, which of the following, if any, have you experienced?		High food security (n=269)	Marginal food security (n=46)	Low and very low food security (n=47)
	No traumatic events	60%	54%	32%
	One traumatic event	29%	33%	32%
	Two traumatic events	8%	9%	23%
	3 or more traumatic events	3%	4%	13%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

Do you or someone in your household receive any public food assistance, such as SNAP benefits or WIC benefits?		High food security (n=309)	Marginal food security (n=54)	Low and very low food security (n=49)
	Yes	9%	43%	59%
	No	90%	54%	37%
	I don't know or prefer not to answer	1%	4%	4%
	Total	100%	100%	100%

In the past 3 months, have you gotten your main meal or source of food for the day from any of the following? (n=409)		High food security (n=309)	Marginal food security (n=53)	Low and very low food security (n=47)
	A meal at someone's home (e.g., invited by a community member)	31%	42%	34%
	An event at a synagogue	30%	21%	30%
	A local Jewish community event or program	19%	28%	23%
	Another source (comments: family; restaurant)	3%	4%	9%
	None of the above	57%	45%	43%

* Multiple responses were possible; total is more than 100%

*Those who are food insecure are just as likely as those who are food secure to receive meals from a synagogue or a Jewish communal event/program.

		High food security (n=312)	Marginal food security (n=54)	Low and very low food security (n=51)
		%	%	%
Number of people in the household	1 person	17%	30%	31%
	2 people	43%	24%	20%
	3-5 people	29%	26%	29%
	6+ people	12%	20%	20%

		High food security (n=315)	Marginal food security (n=54)	Low and very low food security (n=51)
		%	%	%
Russian speaking JFS client	yes	7%	30%	25%
	no	93%	70%	75%