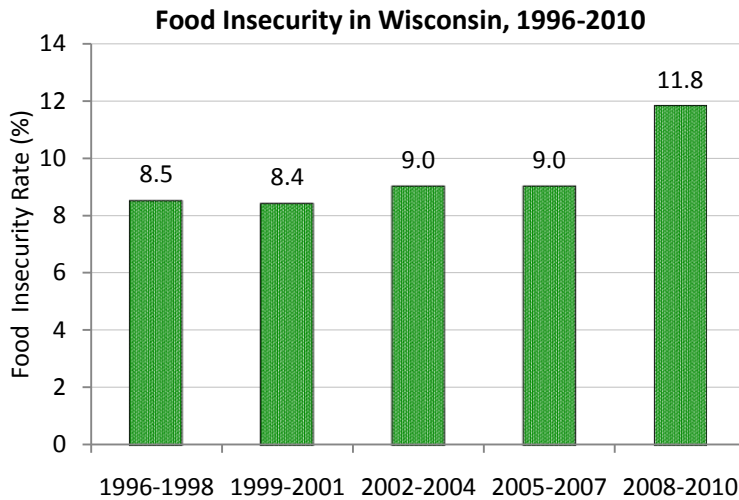
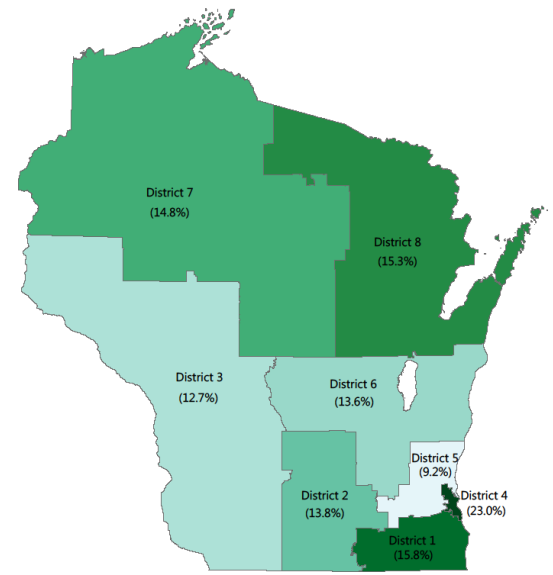


## Food Security Facts for Wisconsin



- During 2008-2010, 11.8% of households in Wisconsin were food insecure.
- Wisconsin households have become more food insecure in the past 15 years, with almost all of this change in the most recent three-year period.
- The increase in food insecurity is closely tied to increases in poverty and unemployment over the same period.

### Food Hardship Rate by Congressional District, 2009-2010



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- In 2010, 14.9% of households experienced food hardships; this varies greatly around the state.
- In Congressional District 4 (Milwaukee), 23% of households—and 29.6% of households with children—experienced food hardships. The food hardship rate is in the highest 20% of all Congressional districts nationwide.
- In contrast, the food hardship rate in Congressional District 5 is 9.2%—among the lowest nationwide. However, even well-off counties and districts have pockets of hardship.

#### **What is food security?**

*Food security means assured access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life. Conversely, food insecurity is the lack of assured access to sufficient food for a healthy and active life. Researchers measure food security using a standard set of questions that reflect the kinds of coping strategies families use when access to food is uncertain. For instance, questions ask whether families worried that food would run out before they had money to buy more; whether they had to cut back the size of meals due to lack of money for food; and whether household members went without eating due to lack of money for food. Official estimates of food insecurity are released annually by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Because there are not enough households interviewed each year to provide accurate annual estimates for individual states, state food insecurity rates are provided for three-year periods.*

#### **What is food hardship?**

*Households have experienced food hardships if, during the past year, they didn't have enough money to buy the food they needed. Data on food hardships are available from an ongoing national survey conducted by Gallup and reported by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC). The food hardship measure provides a straightforward and intuitive indicator of the extent to which households are struggling to meet their food needs. Because of larger sample sizes, data are available annually at the state level, as well as at the substate level.*

## Who's at risk for food insecurity?

**Households** at greater risk include the poor and low income; households with children; racial and ethnic minorities; single-parent households; those whose members include people with disabilities; immigrants.

**Resource management skills**, including budgeting, food purchasing, and food preparation, can reduce the risk of food insecurity.

**The local context** is important: 4 key components include...

- An economic context that supports economic wellbeing: Access to well-paying jobs, affordable housing and health care, and an adequate safety net all reduce the risk of food insecurity;
- A retail food system that provides access to affordable and healthy food for all households;
- Access to federal nutrition assistance programs: Programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (FoodShare in Wisconsin), School Breakfast, and Summer Nutrition Programs all reduce the risk of food insecurity;
- A strong emergency food system.

### Food Assistance Programs in Wisconsin

- Food assistance programs play a critical and growing role in meeting food needs in the state.
- Over the past decade, the number of FoodShare recipients has grown tremendously. In 2010, 17% of households in Wisconsin participated in FoodShare.
- Between 2005-2009, the average number of kids getting free or reduced price school lunch per day in Wisconsin increased by 22%.
- Between 2005-2009, the average number of kids getting free or reduced price breakfast at school in Wisconsin increased by 67%.
- Between 2005-2010, average participation in summer nutrition programs for school-age kids in Wisconsin increased by 37%.

**Foodshare Recipients in Wisconsin, 2000-2010**

