

# New Study Examines Disproportionately High Food Insufficiency Rates Among LGBTQ+ New Englanders

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## Definitions:

**Food insecurity:** A lack of consistent access to enough food for every person in a household to live an active, healthy life. ([USDA definition](#))

**Food insufficiency:** A more severe condition than food insecurity that measures whether a household generally has enough to eat. ([USDA definition](#))

**LGBTQ+:** An abbreviation for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and more.

**LGBTQIA+:** An expanded abbreviation that adds the terms of intersex, asexual, and more.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth.

**Transgender+:** Includes transgender, genderqueer, gender non-binary and other non-cisgender people.

**Cisgender:** A person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex they were assigned at birth.

## Healthy Food for All

How does food and nutrition insecurity affect physical, mental and social well-being? How does it vary by race, ethnicity, gender and sexuality?

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## Making a Living Producing Food?

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## Gender non-binary, non-cisgender and genderqueer:

Umbrella terms for gender identities that are not solely male or female—identities that are outside the gender binary of masculine or feminine.

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There is continued evidence that lesbian, gay, bisexual and other non-heterosexual (LGB+) people, and transgender, genderqueer, gender non-binary and other non-cisgender people (TQ+), generally experience higher rates of discrimination and persecution in the United States and in many other countries when compared with non-LGBTQ+ people. However, symptoms of systemic oppression can also impact members of the LGBTQ+ community in less visible ways, such as in job and housing discrimination. New research from a team of scientists, including [New Hampshire Agricultural Experiment Station](#) scientist [Analena Bruce](#), finds that while cisgender New

Englanders experience lower rates of food insufficiency when compared with their peers in other parts of the country, the region's LGBTQ+ residents experience rates of food insufficiency that are two to three times higher than those found among cisgender New Englanders. Their findings are helping to highlight the ways that existing policies and programs to address food insecurity continue to underserve New Englanders, and especially LGBTQ+ people.

Bruce, assistant professor in the department of agriculture, nutrition and food systems at the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture, along with her co-authors [Jess Carson](#), a research assistant professor at the [UNH Carsey School of Public Policy](#) who oversaw the surveying, and [Isaac \(Ike\) Sohn Leslie '16G](#), an extension assistant professor of community development at the University of Vermont who led the research, [published their findings in the journal \*Agriculture and Human Values\*](#). The researchers used data from the [U.S. Census Bureau's Household Pulse Survey](#), which in 2021, became one of the first large, nationally representative surveys to include measures of gender identity and sexuality.

“Our analysis shines a light on this reality that who you are – the color of your skin, your gender identity, your sexuality – is playing a significant role in whether or not you have enough food to eat.”

“Our analysis shines a light on this reality that who you are – the color of your skin, your gender identity, your sexuality – is playing a significant role in whether or not you have enough food to eat,” said Bruce. “Even in a politically progressive region – New England has lower rates of food insufficiency than the country as a whole – we have these very stark disparities in our

food system that reflect systemic discrimination and marginalization.”

The team’s primary findings were that within an average period of seven days, 13 percent of New England’s LGB+ population experienced food insufficiency (nearly twice the rate of heterosexual New Englanders) and 19.8 percent of transgender+ New Englanders experienced food insufficiency (a rate two to three times that of cisgender men and women living in New England). The researchers also found that transgender+ New Englanders experience roughly the same rates of food insufficiency compared with their counterparts in other areas of the country, even though their cisgender counterparts enjoy a “New England advantage”. LGBTQ+ New Englanders of color experience significantly higher rates of food insufficiency. For example, about one in three Black transgender+ New Englanders reported not having enough food to eat in the past week.

Truly addressing food insecurity requires paying close attention to the intersections of structural racism, cissexism and heterosexism in the food system, added Leslie.

According to Carson, this research really underscores the importance of what occurs after policies are enacted, particularly as it relates to implementing new supports and reaching members of the LGBTQ+ population. For instance, LGBTQ+ people might be eligible for SNAP benefits but feel uncomfortable or unsafe providing the detailed paperwork and documents necessary to enroll. Or a food pantry might be housed in a church where LGBTQ+ people do not feel welcomed.

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supplementary policy supports are unevenly accessible to LGBTQ+ folks, our food security policy will remain inadequate and incomplete.”

“Without intentionally considering the ways that both primary economic structures and supplementary policy supports are unevenly accessible to LGBTQ+ folks, our food security policy will remain inadequate and incomplete,” said Carson.

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You can read the published article, [LGBTQ+ food insufficiency in New England](#), in *Agriculture and Human Values*.

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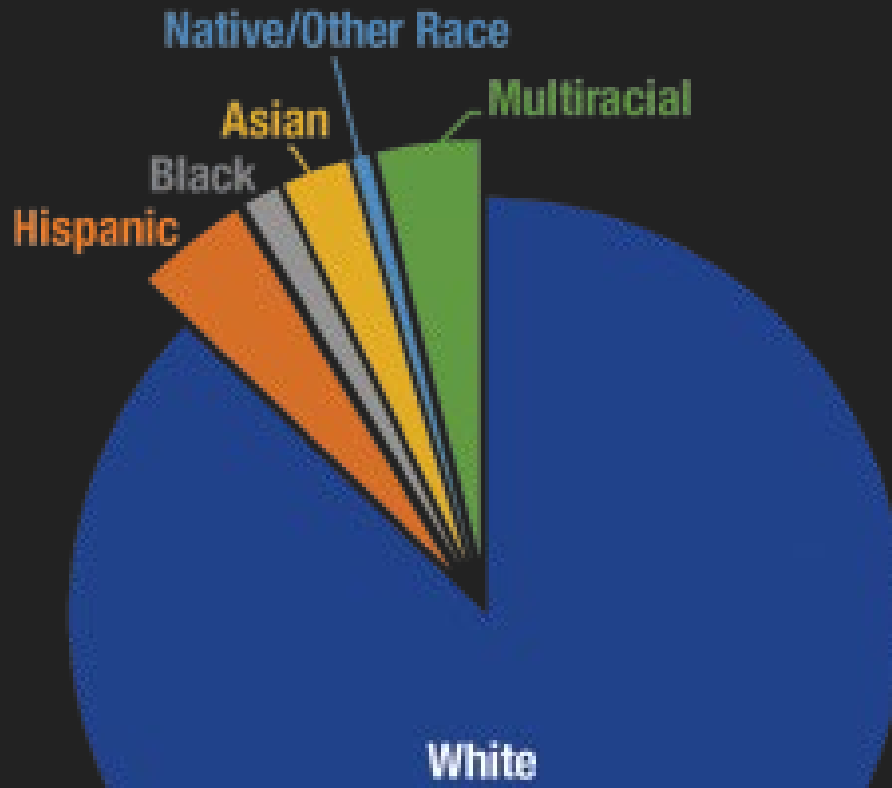


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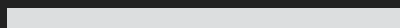
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# FIGURE 1. NEW HAMPSHIRE POPULATION BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, 2020



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