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## Michigan Food Insecurity, Food Access, and Food Worries During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## Michigan Food Insecurity, Food Access, and Food Worries During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) has had profound impacts on virtually all aspects of daily life, including employment, food purchasing, and food insecurity. Food insecurity exists when households cannot afford enough food or cannot afford a balanced diet. It is estimated that food insecurity in the U.S. has doubled since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, largely due to the increase in unemployment. To examine the impacts of COVID-19 on food security, food access, and food-related worries among Michigan adults (age 18+) we conducted an online survey between June 17 to June 29 using paid Facebook advertisements. Data presented here is from 484 responses.

### Key Findings

1. Food insecurity for respondents with employment disruption was 43%, double that of respondents with no employment disruption (21%).
2. Food insecurity for respondents with children in the household was 46%, compared with 28% for households without children.
3. Food insecure respondents had higher food-related worries and more challenges accessing food.

*"With limited money while waiting for unemployment, we were eating whatever was left in the pantry and freezer. Fruits and vegetables were just not a high priority"*

- Survey respondent

### Food Insecurity Rate is Double for Those with Employment Disruption

58% of respondents indicated they had disruption to employment (job loss, furlough, and/or reduced work hours) since the COVID-19 pandemic. Their rate of food insecurity was double: 43% of respondents who had employment disruption were food insecure compared with 21% for those who did not experience employment disruption.

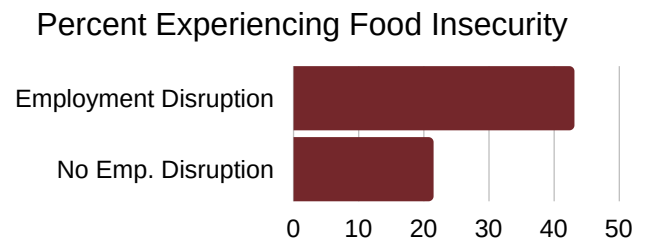


Figure 1. Percent of respondents with and without employment disruption who experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days

*"I worry that the P-EBT assistance is going to come to an end when I need it the most."*

- Survey respondent

### Higher Food Insecurity for Respondents with Children in Household

Food insecurity was substantially higher for respondents with children in the household (46% reporting food insecurity) compared to households without children (28% reporting food insecurity).

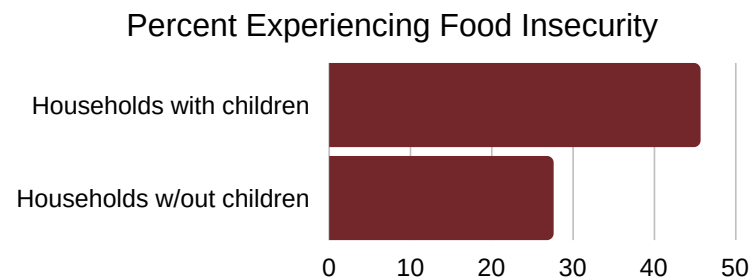


Figure 2. Percent of respondents with and without children in the household who experienced food insecurity in the last 30 days

## Food Insecure Respondents Are More Worried about Food

Respondents experiencing food insecurity were more worried about food (Figure 3). This included concerns about the country's food supply, being able to afford food, and food becoming contaminated.

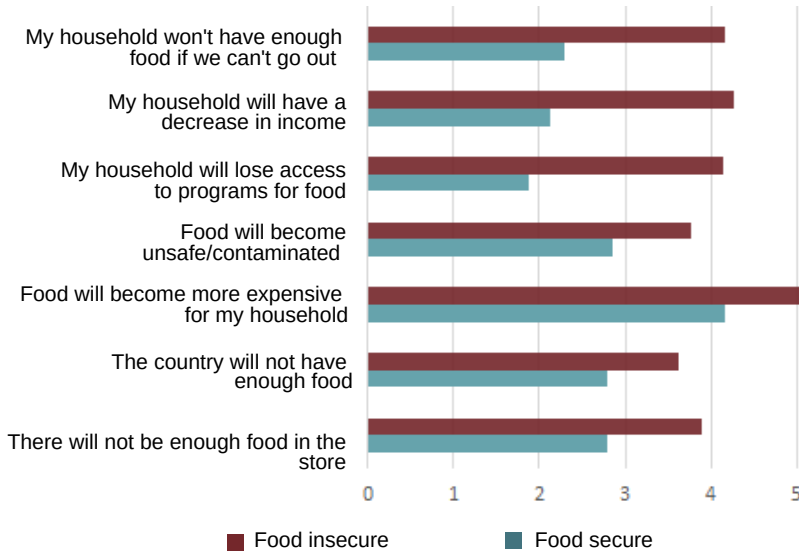


Figure 3. Average score for food-related worries on a scale of 1=not at all worried to 6=very worried, by food security status

## Food Insecure Respondents Use a Variety of Strategies to Afford Food

Respondents experiencing food insecurity used an average of 3.7 strategies to afford food, compared with an average of 1.5 for respondents without food insecurity. These strategies are found in Figure 5.

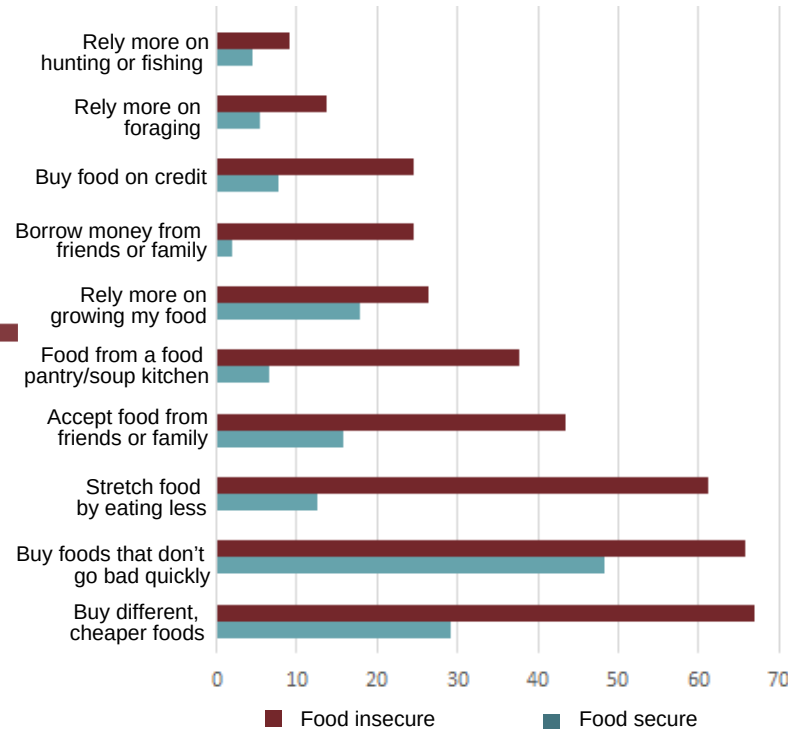


Figure 5. Percent of respondents who indicated they use strategies to afford food, by food security status

*"I chose to garden this year. Food is definitely more expensive and going to the grocery store is a stressful experience."*

- Survey respondent

## Food Insecure Respondents Have More Challenges Accessing Food

Food insecure respondents also had more challenges accessing food (Figure 4). This included not being able to find enough food or the types of food their family wanted, and having to stand too close to other people while food shopping.

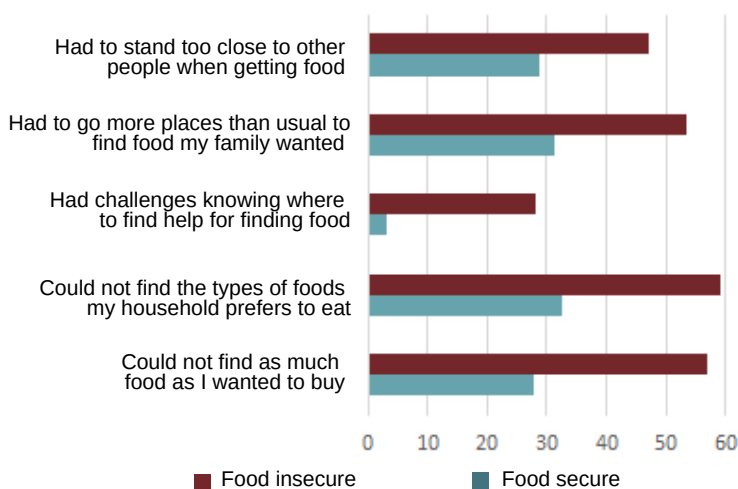


Figure 4. Percent of respondents who indicated they "usually" or "every time" experienced challenges accessing food, by food security status

## Respondent Demographics

Compared to the state of Michigan, survey respondents were somewhat lower income (52% had household income <\$50,000, compared with 44% for Michigan), less racially diverse (90% of respondents were white, compared with 78% for Michigan), and mostly female (96%, compared with 51% for Michigan).

## About NFACT

The National Food Access and COVID Research Team (NFACT) is a national collaboration of researchers committed to rigorous, comparative, and timely food access research during the time of COVID. We do this through collaborative, open access research that prioritizes communication to key decision-makers while building our scientific understanding of food system behaviors and policies. To learn more visit [nfactresearch.org](http://nfactresearch.org).