

THE
HAMILTON
PROJECT

**POLICIES TO ALLEVIATE FOOD INSECURITY:
A CONVERSATION WITH
U.S. AGRICULTURE SECRETARY TOM VILSACK**

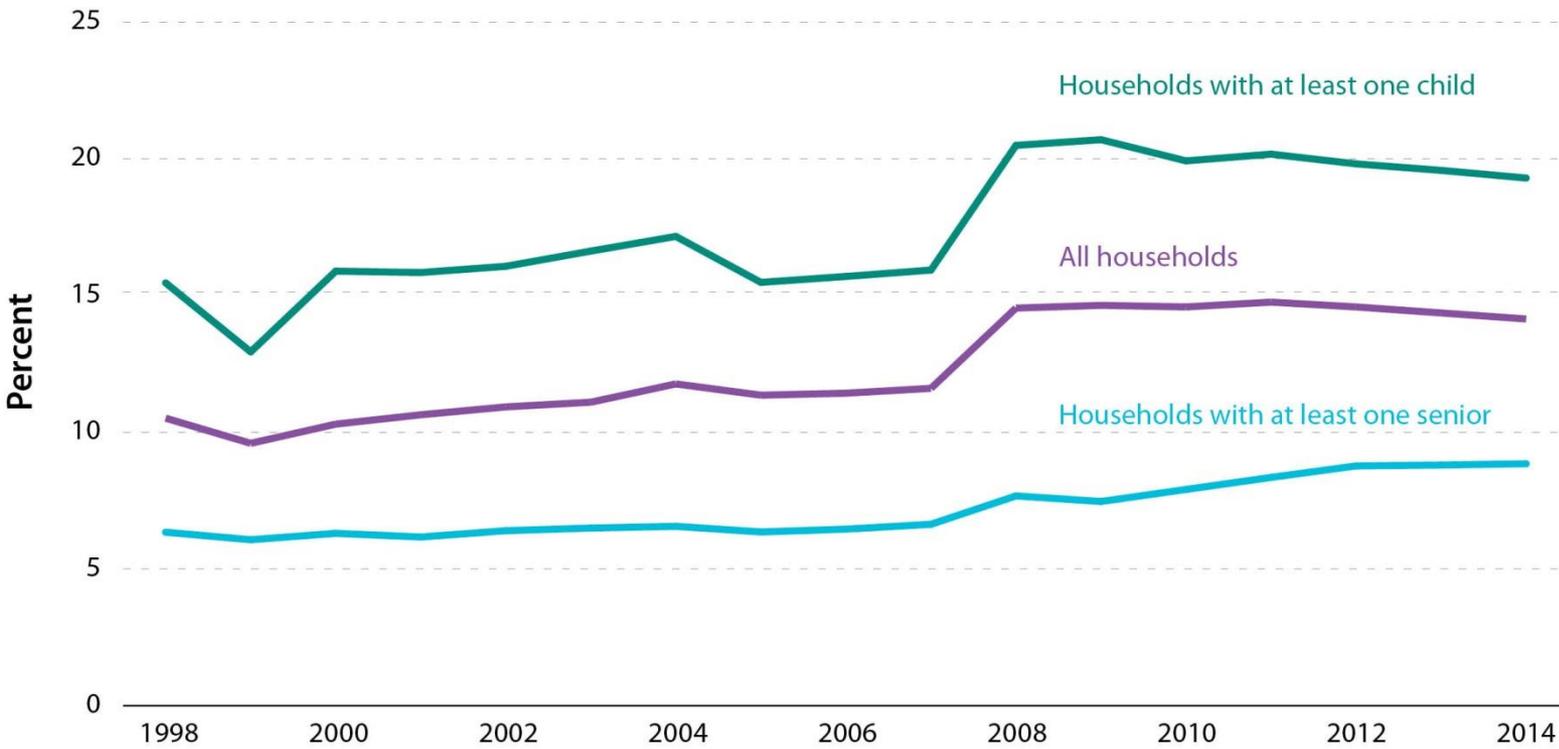
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FIGURE 1.

Percent of all households and households with children or seniors that were food insecure, 1998–2014

The share of households experiencing food insecurity spiked during the Great Recession, and has not returned to its prerecession level.



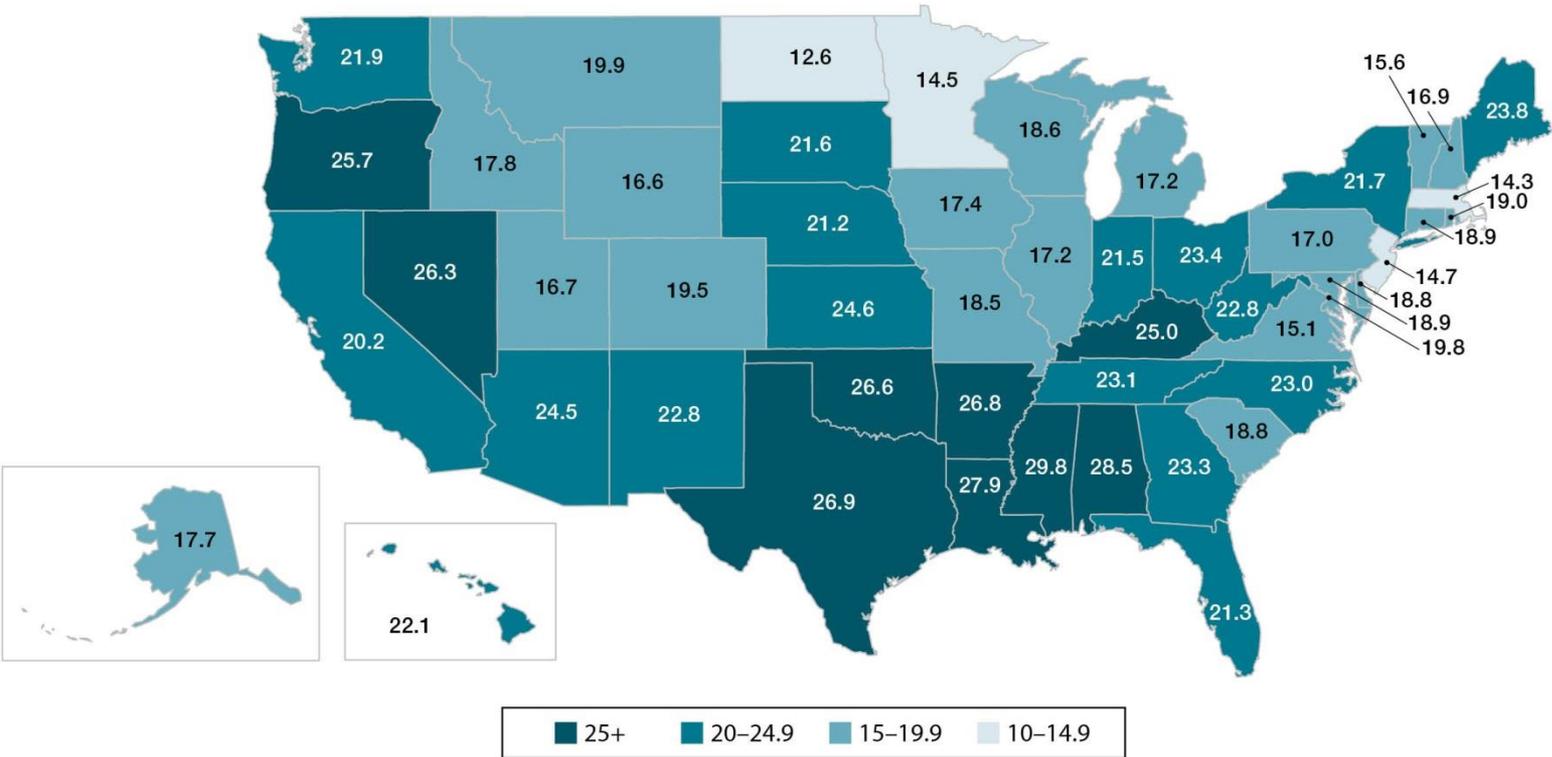
Sources: CPS-FSS 1998–2014.

Note: Households with children report having at least one child between the ages of 0 and 18 present and households with seniors report having at least one adult age 65 or older present. Statistics were calculated using the CPS-FSS weight so that the reported results are nationally representative.

FIGURE 2.

Percentage of children living in food-insecure households by state, 2012–14 average

Louisiana, Alabama, and Mississippi have the highest rates of food insecurity, with almost 30 percent of children living in a food-insecure household.



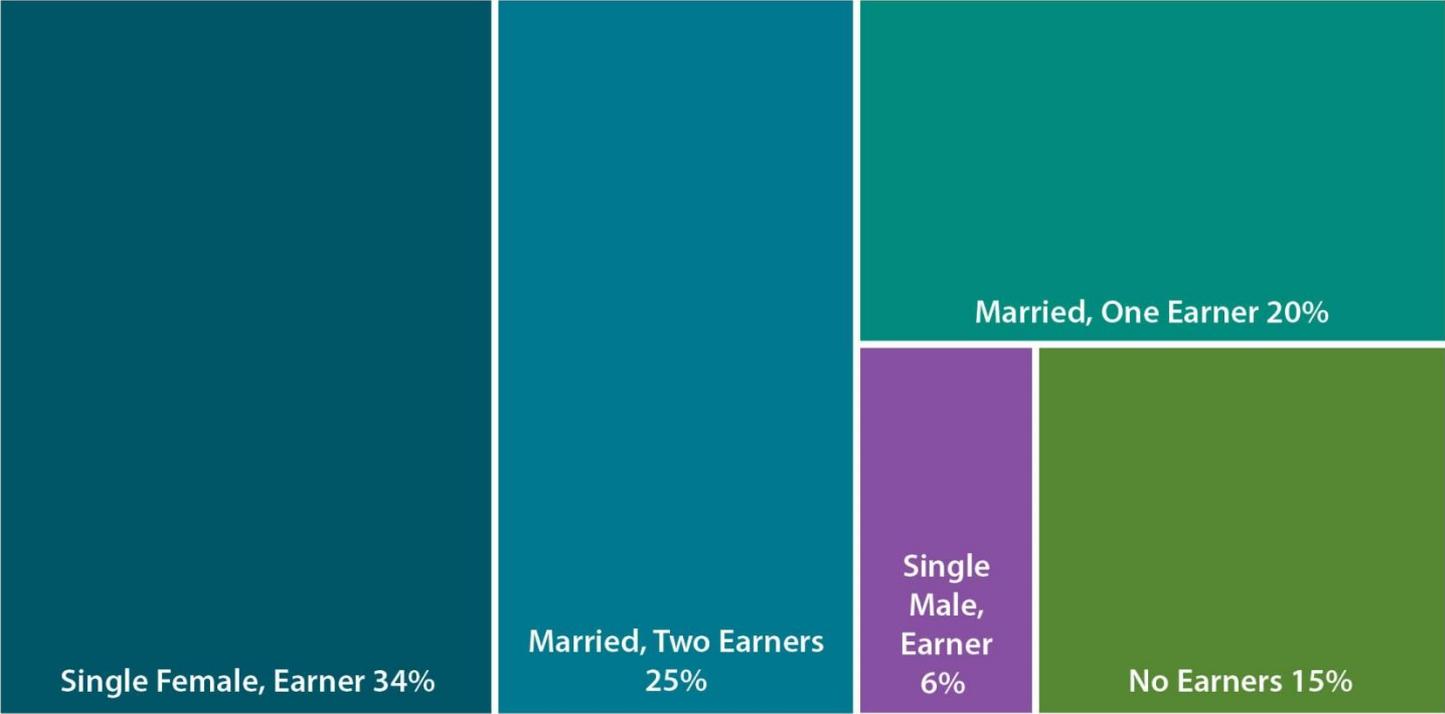
Source: Sources: CPS December-FSS 2012–14.

Note: Because of data variability due to the relatively small sample sizes available in a single year in each state, we take average food insecurity rates across a three-year period, 2012–14.

FIGURE 3.

Family characteristics of food-insecure households with children, 2014

Married couples head 45 percent of food-insecure households.

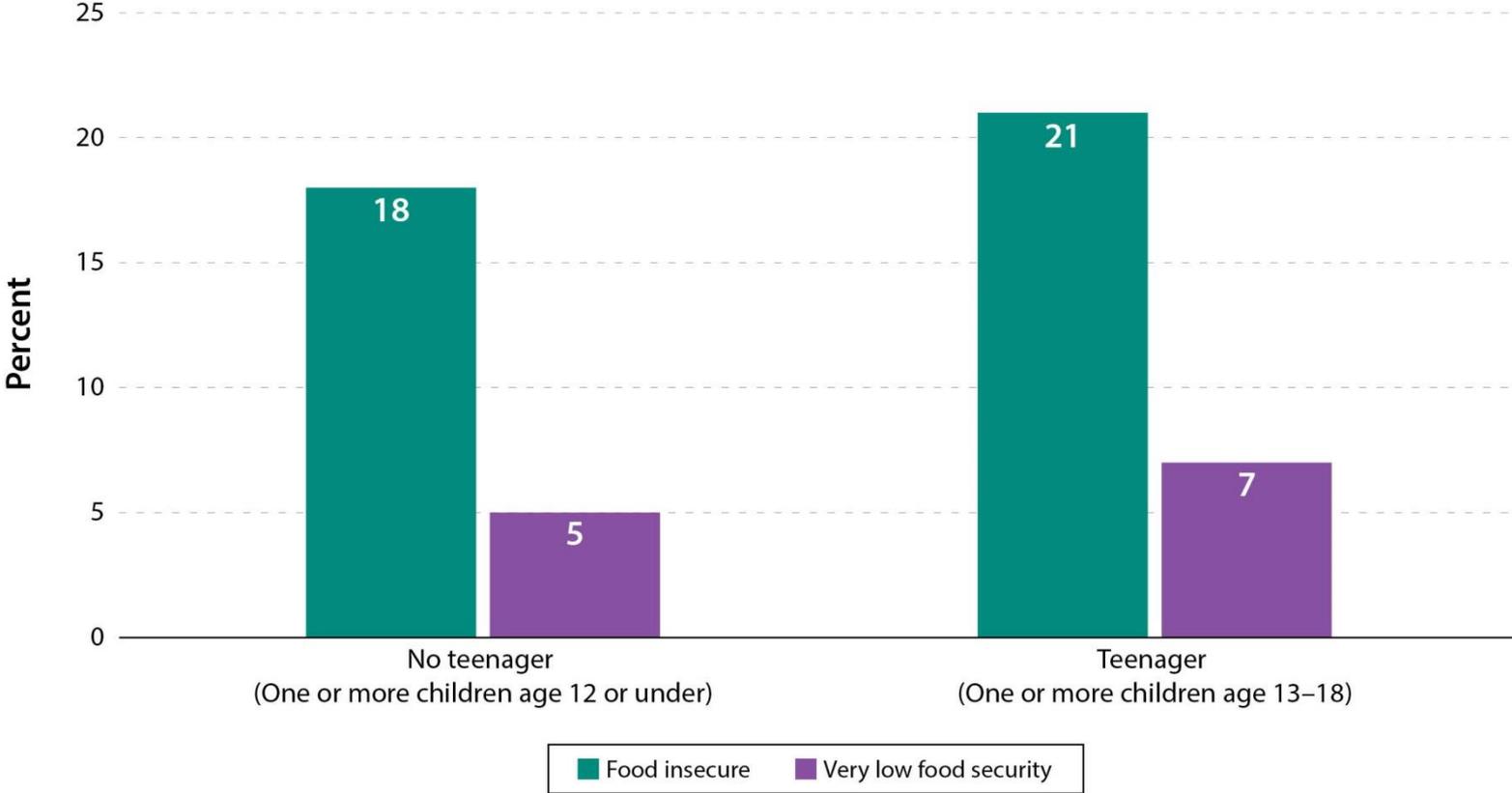


Source: CPS Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) March 2015; CPS-FSS 2014.

Note: A household with a child is defined as having at least one child between the ages of 0 and 18 and a potential earner under age 65. An earner is an individual who reported earnings greater than \$0 on the CPS ASEC March 2015 for the 2014 calendar year.

FIGURE 4.
Food insecurity status of households with teenagers and younger children

Food needs are higher for teenagers, but food support benefits are not higher for families with teens.



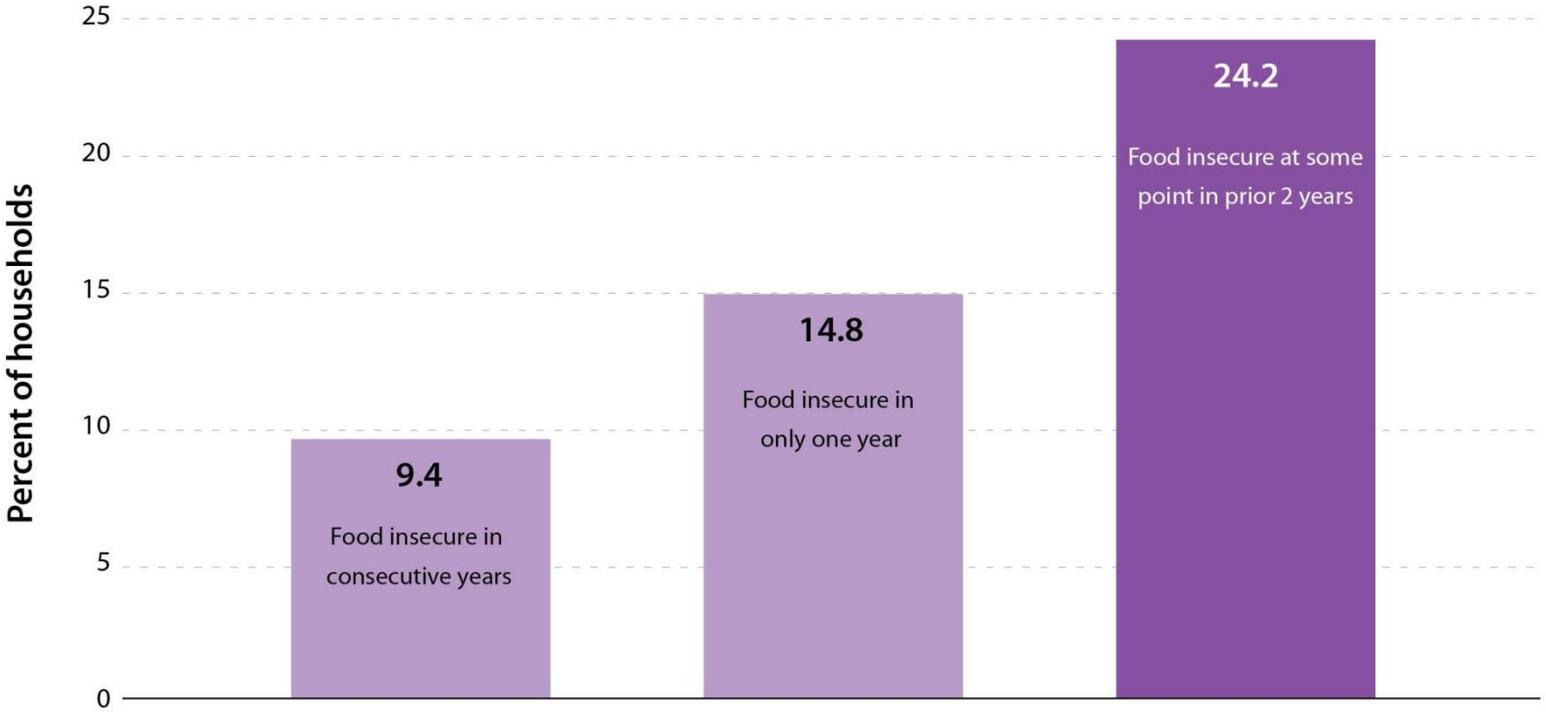
Source: CPS-FSS 2014.

Note: A household has younger children if there is at least one child in the house and no children over the age of 12. A household with a teenager has a least one child between the ages of 13 and 18, and may also include younger children. Statistics were calculated using the CPS-FSS weight so that the reported results are nationally representative for households with children under the age of 13 and households with teenagers.

FIGURE 5.

Food security status in consecutive years for households with children, 2008–14

Among households with children that experience food insecurity in one year, about half had not been food insecure in the prior year.



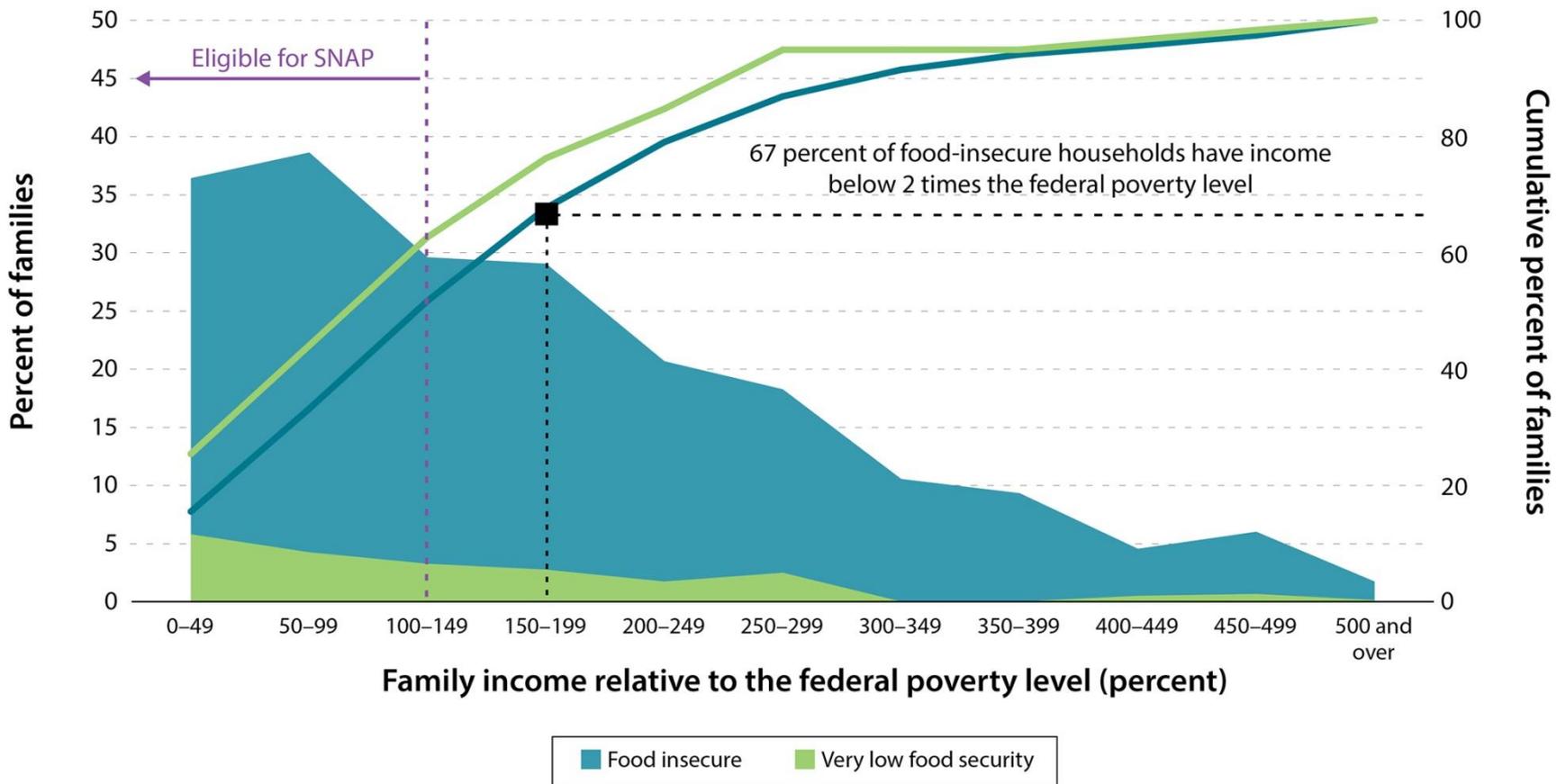
Sources: CPS-FSS 2008–14.

Note: The population comprises CPS-FSS respondents observed and matched in consecutive years, and is restricted to households with children.

FIGURE 6.

Percent of households, by income-to-poverty ratio, reporting food insecurity and very low food security

Food insecurity reaches much higher in the income distribution than SNAP eligibility.



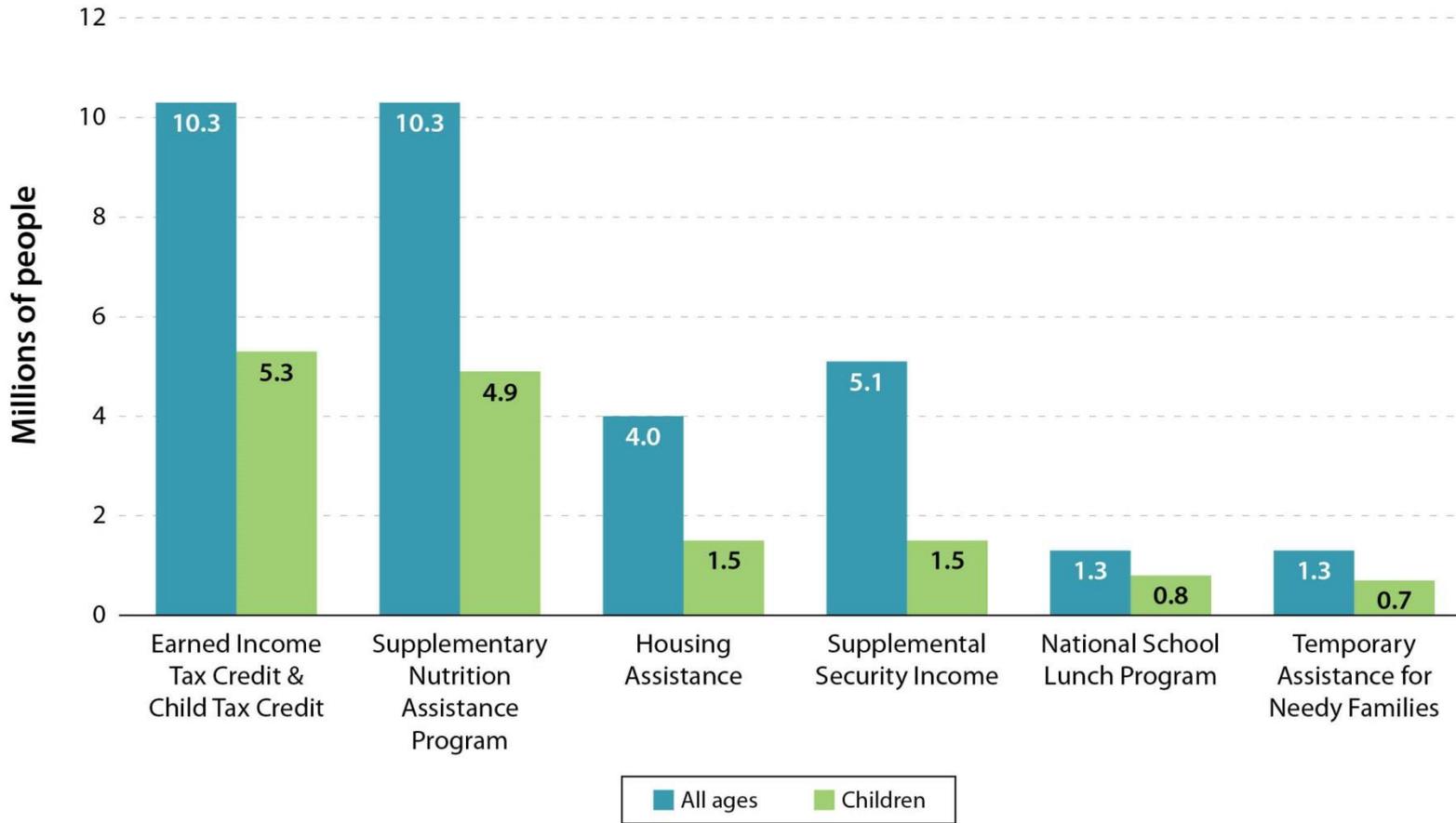
Sources: Census Bureau 2016; CPS ASEC March 2015; CPS-FSS 2014.

Note: The figure displays income measured before taxes and transfers; the thresholds for poverty vary by the size and composition of families but not by geography. A household with two adults and two children had a poverty threshold of \$24,008 in 2014. Households with more adults and children have a higher poverty threshold than households with fewer adults and children.

FIGURE 7.

Number of people lifted out of poverty by safety net programs in 2012

In 2012 SNAP lifted 10 million people out of poverty, an impact equivalent to the combined EITC and child tax credit.



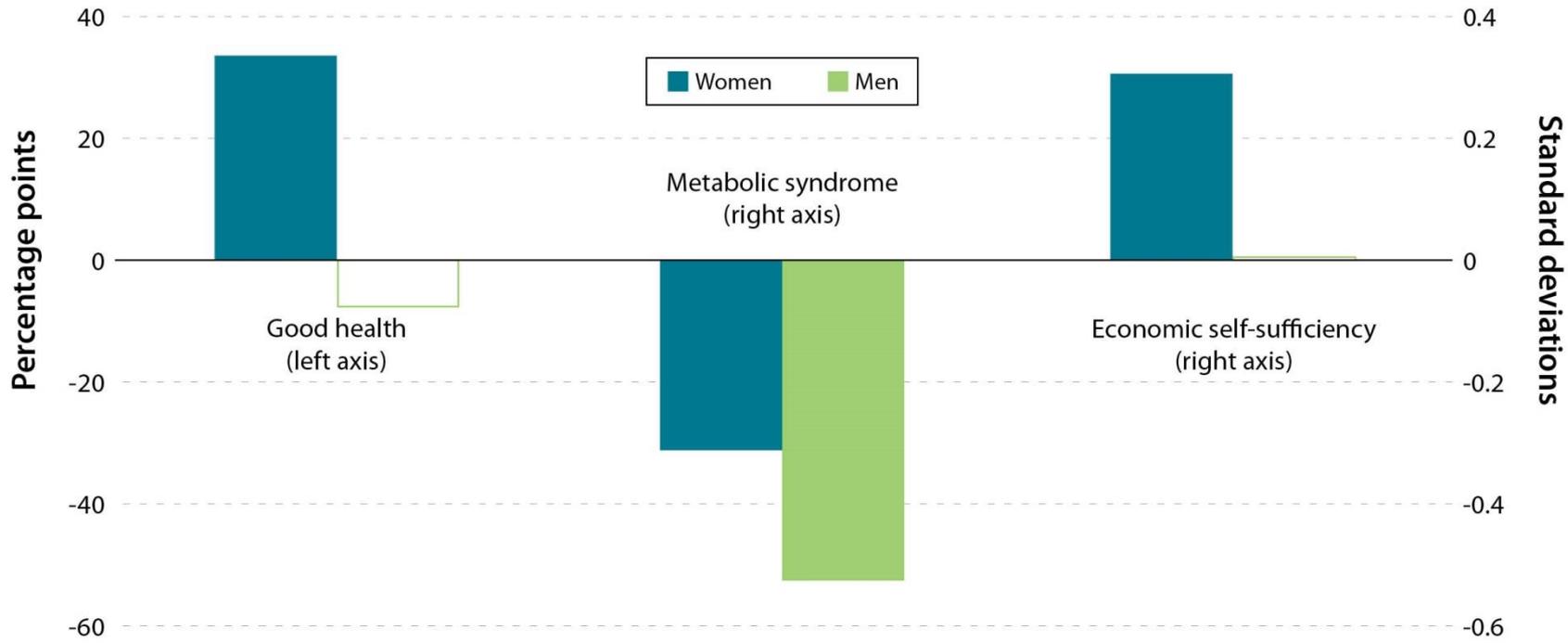
Source: Sherman and Trisi 2015; CBPP n.d.

Note: The figure shows Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) calculations using the Transfer Income Model, version 3 (TRIM3) microsimulation model that corrects for underreporting of benefit receipt in the CPS ASEC March. TRIM3 is maintained and developed by the Urban Institute, under primary funding from DHHS, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation. Calculations for the tax credits, SNAP, housing, SSI, and TANF are from Sherman and Trisi (2015). The calculation for the National School Lunch Program is unpublished from CBPP (n.d.).

FIGURE 8.

Impact of access to food stamps during early life on adult health and economic outcomes

Access to food stamps in early life improves health outcomes in men and women and economic self-sufficiency in women later in life.



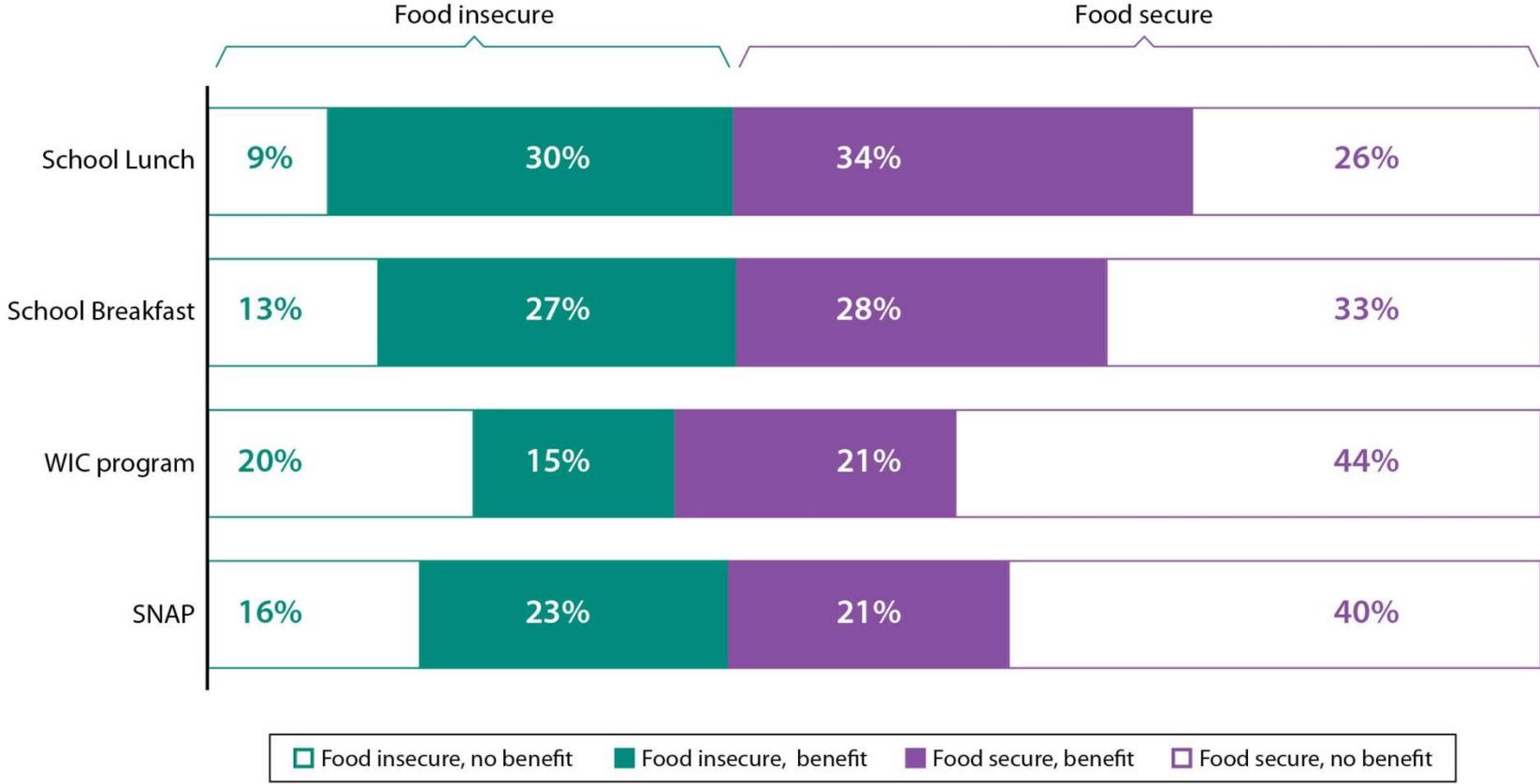
Sources: Hoynes, Schanzenbach, and Almond 2016.

Note: Hollowed bars are not statistically significant.

FIGURE 9.

Reported program participation and food security status of low-income households

Among low-income households, 16 percent are food insecure but report receiving no SNAP benefits.



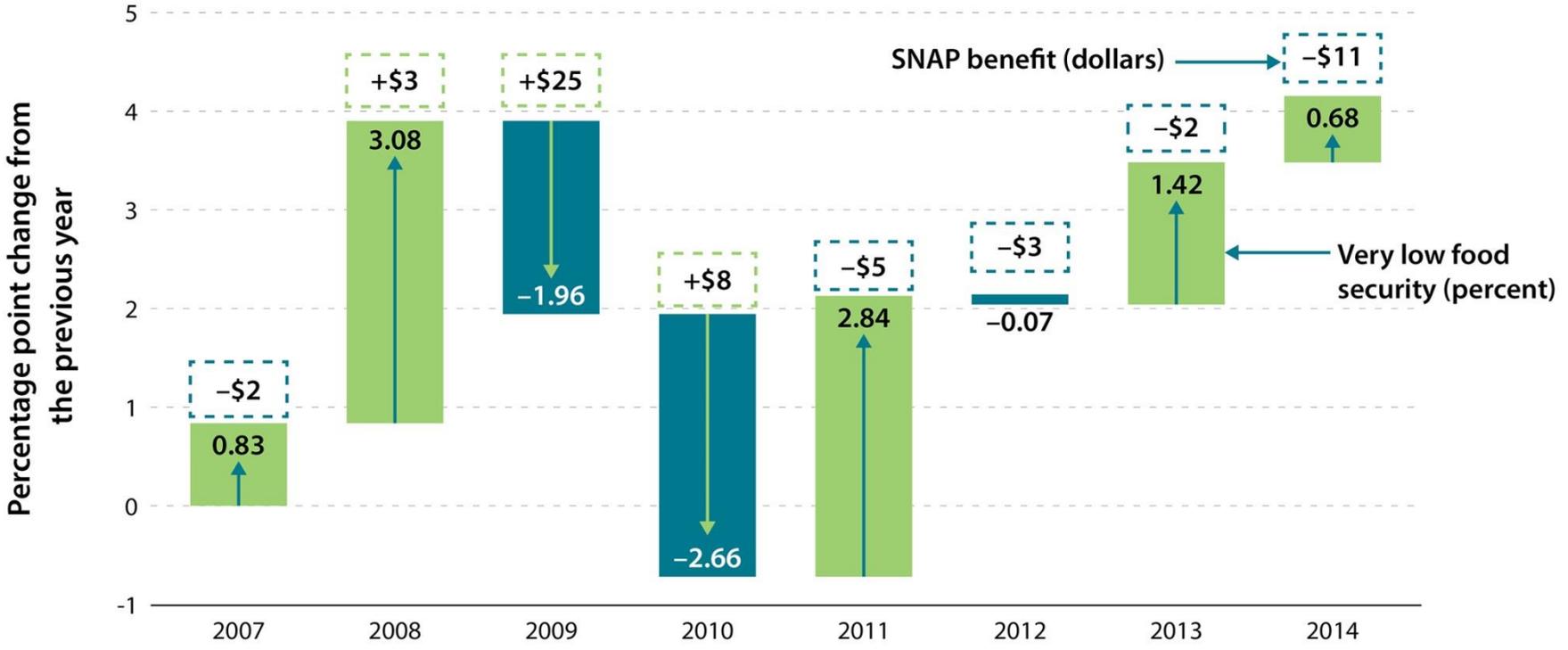
Source: CPS-FSS 2014.

Note: The population includes households with children that reported income at or below 185 percent of the FPL for 2014 and that are categorically eligible for the included nutrition programs. Households that did not report participating in NSLP were deemed not to have participated in the SBP by survey design. Participation in NSLP, SBP, and WIC were reported for the past 30 days and participation in SNAP as well as food insecurity were reported for the past 12 months. Statistics were calculated using the CPS-FSS weight so that the reported results are nationally representative. Categories may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

FIGURE 10.

Change in the rate of very low food security and SNAP benefits year to year, 2006–14

The proportion of SNAP-receiving households with children that reported very low food security fell at the same time that the stimulus program increased monthly SNAP benefits.



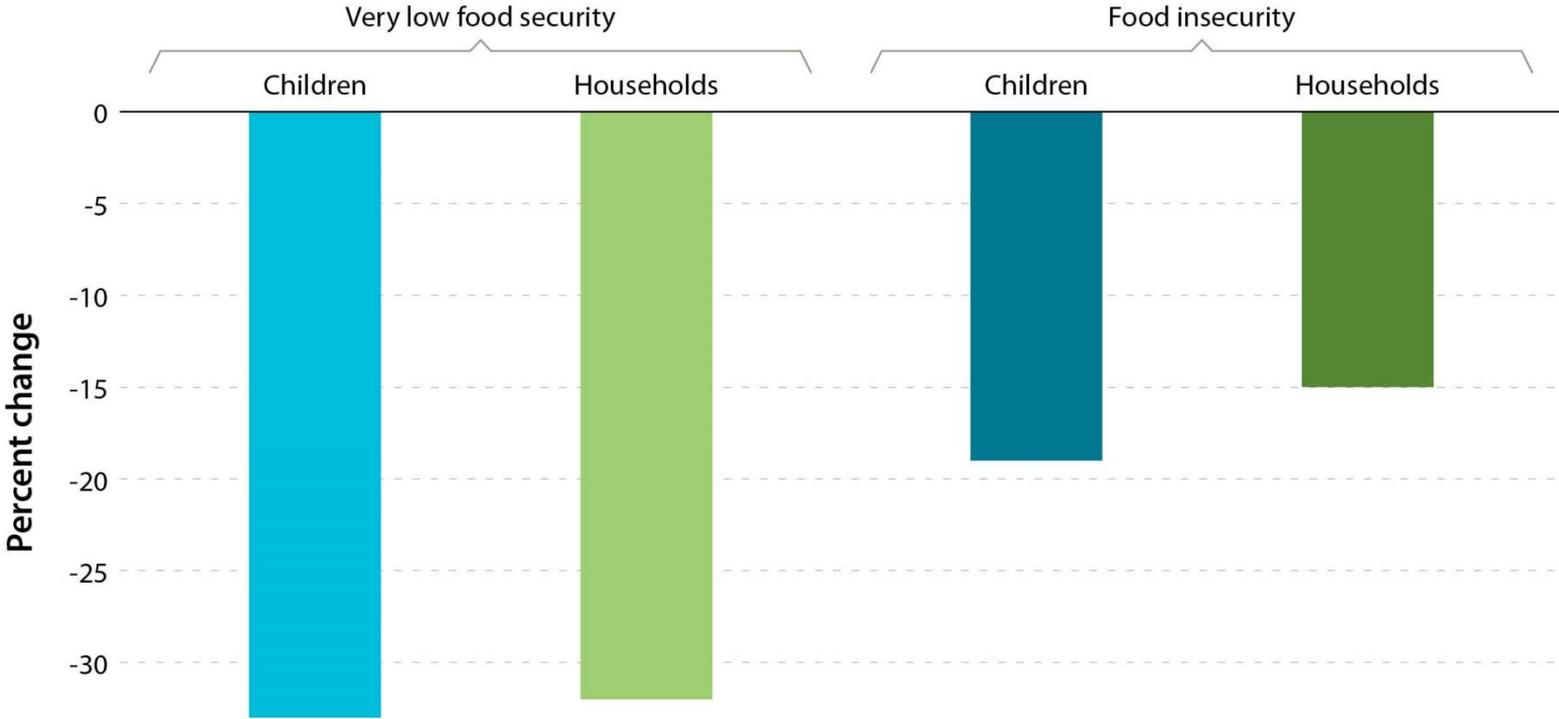
Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics n.d.; CPS-FSS 2006–14; USDA 2016c.

Note: Dollar values in dashed boxes represent changes in average monthly SNAP benefits per person from the previous year, in constant 2016 dollars. Very low food security is calculated for households with children that reported receiving SNAP benefits. Statistics were calculated using the CPS-FSS weight so that the reported results are nationally representative.

FIGURE 11.

Impact of \$60/Month Summer EBT Benefit on Food Security Measures

Summer food benefits (Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer for Children; Summer EBT) of \$60 per capita caused a more than 30 percent reduction in very low food security among households with children.

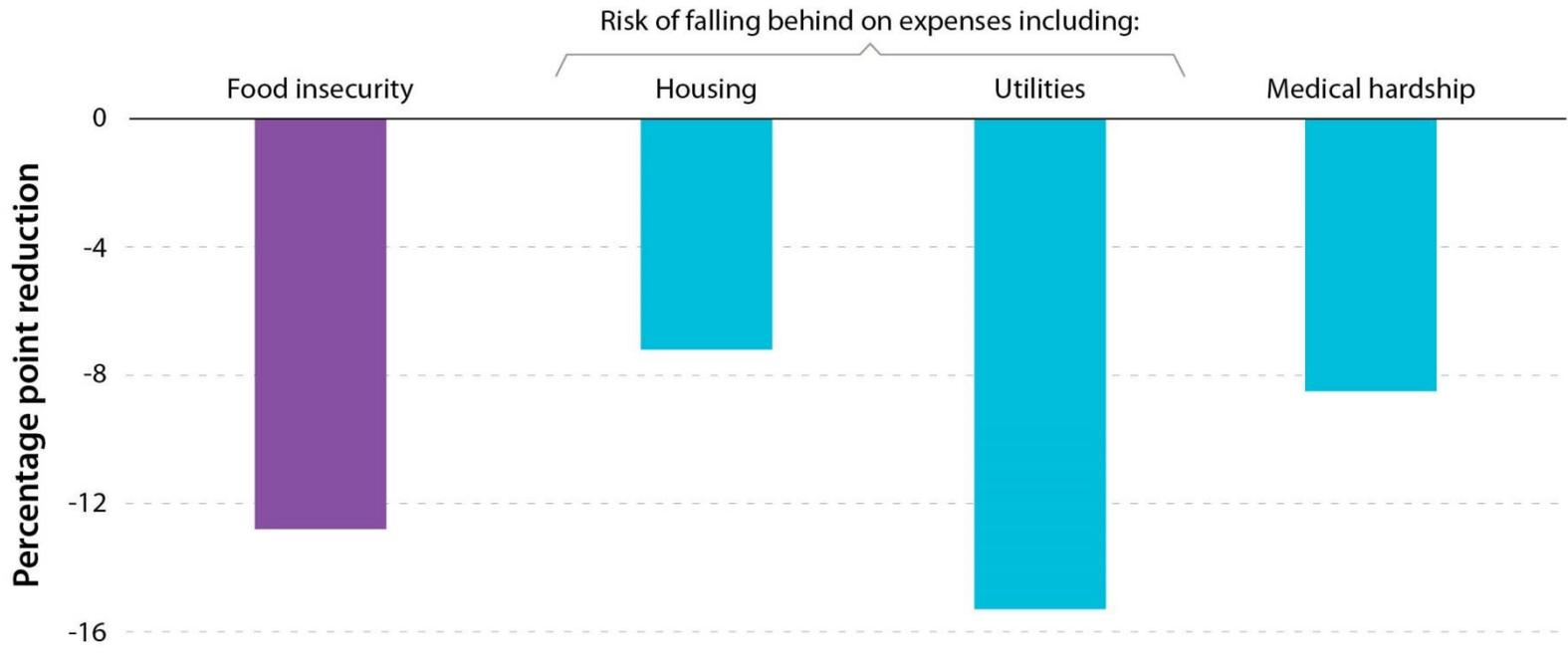


Source: Collins et al. 2013.

FIGURE 12.

Impact of SNAP participation on food insecurity and other financial hardships

SNAP reduces food insecurity and diminishes other financial hardships.



Source: Shaefer and Gutierrez 2013.

Note: Sample includes low-income households with children. Medical hardship is measured as whether the interviewee reported that in the past 12 months someone in the household chose not to see a doctor or go to the hospital when needed because of cost.

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