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**Chapter 15.2 – Changes in Client and Agency
Characteristics: Food Insecurity**

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15.2 FOOD INSECURITY

In this section, we examine changes in household food security and changes in the relationship between household food security and household structure, SNAP participation and eligibility status, and trade-offs between food and other necessities. Table 15.2.1 begins by presenting the proportion of households that are food insecure for clients at pantries, kitchens, and shelters.

TABLE 15.2.1
CHANGES IN FOOD SECURITY

	Pantry Client Households		Kitchen Client Households		Shelter Client Households		All Client Households	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Food secure	29.8%	24.0%	30.7%	27.5%	26.1%	24.5%	29.7%	24.5%
Food insecure with low food security	39.1%	41.0%	29.9%	31.6%	30.2%	31.1%	36.9%	39.2%
Food insecure with very low food security	31.1%	35.0%	39.4%	40.8%	43.7%	44.5%	33.3%	36.3%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	37,986	42,441	10,667	13,552	4,225	5,092	52,878	61,085

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 42, 43, 44, 44a, 45, and 46 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Table 6.1.1.1.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. The sample sizes (N) also include missing data.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of client households that had low food security increased from 36.9% to 39.2%.
- The percentage of client households that had very low food security increased from 33.3% to 36.3%.

Changes in food security levels between 2005 and 2009 may differ according to household composition. Table 15.2.2 presents these estimates.

TABLE 15.2.2
CHANGES IN FOOD SECURITY, BY PRESENCE OF ELDERLY OR CHILDREN

	All Households		Households with Seniors		Households with Children		One-Person Households with Neither Children Nor Seniors		Households with Two or More People but with Neither Children Nor Seniors	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Food secure	29.7%	24.5%	48.0%	41.3%	26.9%	21.5%	23.2%	21.4%	24.7%	20.4%
Food insecure with low food security	36.9%	39.2%	35.8%	39.9%	41.8%	44.3%	32.5%	34.2%	38.2%	36.8%
Food insecure with very low food security	33.4%	36.3%	16.2%	18.8%	31.3%	34.2%	44.2%	44.4%	37.1%	42.8%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	52,041	60,085	11,536	11,946	15,987	20,934	16,598	19,820	7,920	9,805

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to questions 2, 3, 4, 42, 43, 44, 44a, 45, and 46 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Table 6.1.1.1 and 6.1.1.4.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. In calculating percentages and sample sizes, we excluded item nonresponses to all variables involved.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of client households with seniors that had low food security increased from 35.8% to 39.9%. The corresponding increase for those with very low food security was from 16.2% to 18.8%.
- The percentage of client households with children that had low food security increased from 41.8% to 44.3%. The corresponding increase for those with very low food security was from 31.3% to 34.2%.

Between 2005 and 2009, there was a sizable national increase in the number of SNAP participants. Although we examine in the next section the extent to which the magnitude of this increase was mirrored by the population of emergency food clients, in Table 15.2.3 we describe food security levels for client households that are currently participating in SNAP, that appear eligible but are not currently participating, and that are ineligible.

TABLE 15.2.3

CHANGES IN FOOD SECURITY, BY SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM PARTICIPATION AND ELIGIBILITY STATUS

	SNAP Benefit Receipt Status of Households							
	All Client Households		Receiving SNAP Benefits		Eligible, Not Receiving ^a		Ineligible Because of Income, Not Receiving ^a	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Food secure	28.7%	23.6%	25.3%	21.1%	27.6%	21.4%	47.6%	46.3%
Food insecure with low food security	37.0%	39.3%	38.4%	40.4%	37.3%	39.3%	30.0%	34.6%
Food insecure with very low food security	34.3%	37.0%	36.3%	38.5%	35.1%	39.3%	22.4%	19.1%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	48,852	56,960	19,107	25,354	24,975	26,177	4,770	5,429

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Questions 42, 43, 44, 44a, 45, and 46 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Table 6.1.5.

NOTES: All usable responses were weighted as described in Chapter 3 and in the Technical Appendix volume to represent all emergency food clients of the FA National Network. In calculating percentages and sample sizes, we excluded item nonresponses to all variables involved.

^aEligibility was estimated based on the previous month's income alone.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of client households participating in SNAP that had low food security increased from 38.4% to 40.4%. The corresponding increase for eligible nonparticipants was from 37.3% to 39.3%.

- The percentage of client households participating in SNAP that had very low food security increased from 36.3% to 38.5%. The corresponding increase for eligible nonparticipants was from 35.1% to 39.3%.

Deteriorating economic conditions between 2005 and 2009 may have encouraged trade-offs among food and other household necessities. Table 15.2.4 examines changes in the proportions of client households making these trade-offs and tabulates these results by food security status.

TABLE 15.2.4
CHANGES IN HOUSEHOLD TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN FOOD AND NECESSITIES,
BY FOOD SECURITY

	Food Security Status of Client Households									
	All Client Households		Food Secure		Food Insecure		Food Insecure with Low Food Security		Food Insecure with Very Low Food Security	
	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009	2005	2009
Choose between food and medical care										
Yes	31.7%	34.1%	10.5%	9.8%	40.7%	42.2%	31.4%	32.2%	51.0%	52.5%
No	68.3%	65.9%	89.5%	90.2%	59.3%	57.8%	68.6%	67.8%	49.0%	47.5%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	51,402	59,333	15,206	15,473	36,196	43,860	19,103	22,278	17,093	21,582
Choose between food and utilities or heating fuel										
Yes	41.5%	46.1%	13.8%	16.6%	53.2%	55.9%	44.3%	45.7%	63.1%	66.5%
No	58.5%	53.9%	86.2%	83.4%	46.8%	44.1%	55.7%	54.3%	36.9%	33.5%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	51,390	59,281	15,200	15,459	36,190	43,822	19,084	22,262	17,106	21,560
Choose between food and rent or mortgage										
Yes	35.0%	39.5%	9.8%	12.7%	45.6%	48.4%	35.0%	36.7%	57.4%	60.5%
No	65.0%	60.5%	90.2%	87.3%	54.4%	51.6%	65.0%	63.3%	42.6%	39.5%
SAMPLE SIZE (N)	51,356	59,154	15,184	15,420	36,172	43,734	19,083	22,220	17,089	21,514

TABLE 15.2.4 (continued)

SOURCE: This table was constructed based on usable responses to Questions 44, 44a, 45, 46, 52 of the client survey. The 2009 estimates in this table can be found in Table 6.5.2.

NOTES: Item nonresponses to all variables involved were excluded in calculating percentages and sample sizes.

Between 2005 and 2009, the following changes took place:

- The percentage of client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for medical care increased from 31.7% to 34.1%. The percentage of client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities increased from 41.5% to 46.1%. The percentage of client households that had to choose between paying for food and paying for rent or a mortgage increased from 35.0% to 39.5%.
- The percentage of client households with very low food security that had to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities increased from 63.1% to 66.5%. For food secure households, the increase was from 13.8% to 16.6%.
- The percentage of client households with very low food security that had to choose between paying for food and paying for a rent or mortgage increased from 57.4% to 60.5%. For food secure households, the increase was from 9.8% to 12.7%.