Measuring Household Food Security in the United States

A Toolkit for Practitioners Serving Newcomer Communities

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts

Why Measure Household Food Security?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food security as:

> "Access by all people at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum: (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (e.g., without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)." (*USDA, Guide to Measuring Household Food Security, Revised 2000, p.6*)

Households may experience food insecurity when access to food is limited, inadequate, or unsafe. Food insecurity affects many families across the United States, including immigrant and refugee households. Collecting reliable data helps community organizations:

- Understand the needs of the families they serve
- Design better programs and services
- Strengthen funding applications
- Advance advocacy efforts
- Compare their community's situation to state or national data

This toolkit provides practical, step-by-step guidance for practitioners (or service providers) to measure household food security within the communities they serve. Service providers can use this toolkit to help identify and monitor risks to household food security by collecting high-quality data that reflects client experiences. Measuring household food security can be helpful in individual case assessments to systematically identify households and families in need of support. Broader findings from community-level surveys can also be shared with partners, funders, policymakers, and local client communities to highlight opportunities to strengthen programs and policy. Steps toward measuring household food security outlined in this toolkit include the following:

1. Selecting a household food security measure
2. Designing a short digital survey to measure household food security
3. Selecting survey participants and collecting data
4. Cleaning, scoring, and preparing data (using Excel)
5. Basic data analysis, presentation, and visualization of findings (using Excel)

Each of these steps is discussed in more detail below.

Step 1: Selecting a Household Food Security Measure

A *measure* is a set of standardized questions designed to capture a concept, such as food security. Measures may be validated by systematically testing and demonstrating that they measure concepts accurately and reliably. Validated measures also help ensure that data is comparable to other studies. For community-based organizations, the key is to choose a measure that balances accuracy, cultural relevance, and practicality (time and resources to implement, staff capacity, and a low respondent burden).

Each question within a measure (sometimes referred to as an "item") contributes a piece of information that helps estimate a household's overall level of food access and stability. Respondents' answers are usually converted into scores, based on instructions outlined by the measure. Scores may then be grouped into categories that reflect severity or intensity (such as "high," "moderate," and "low"). This helps to interpret scores in ways that can be acted upon. Because they are based on years of testing and research, *validated measures* enable organizations to collect data that is comparable across studies, regions, and time, while ensuring results are credible and relevant to policy. It is usually considered best practice to use validated measures, when available and appropriate.

Validated measures enable the collection of high-quality data that accurately measures food security in ways that can be compared directly to other populations and findings from other studies.

The table below summarizes the characteristics, strengths, and limitations of five household food security measures that have been used across U.S. contexts. Three are versions of a measure developed by the **USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS)** in the 1990s, called the Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM). The versions included here are all well-validated for U.S. populations and differ mainly in length, focus, and detail. The Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) has been used internationally and has also been adapted by refugee agencies including the **International Rescue Committee (IRC) to examine food insecurity in U.S. refugee resettlement contexts.** This offers an example of a survey that is adapted to work better for a highly varied population to address specific questions of interest. Finally, the Hunger Vital Sign (HVS) is included as an example of a very brief, two-item measure that is used mostly as a screener in clinical settings. Table 1, below, summarizes the major characteristics of these five household food security measures:

Table 1: Five Household Food Security Measures, Highlighting Main Advantages and Limitations

Measure	Items	Population & Context	Validated For	Advantages	Limitations	Comparable with U.S. National Data
USDA 18-Item Household Food Security Survey Module (HFSSM-18)	18	U.S. households	General U.S. population	Most comprehensive measure; allows full comparison with national USDA data; captures adult and child food security separately	Time-consuming; not always practical for small community surveys; may burden respondents	Yes (standard reference measure)
USDA 10-Item Adult Food Security Module (HFSSM-10)	10	U.S. households without children	Adult-only households in the U.S.	Shorter version of HFSSM-18 measure for adult-only households	Cannot assess child food security; still somewhat long for field use	Yes (comparable to national adult data)
Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS)	9	International and refugee emergency contexts	International populations; adapted by the IRC and others for U.S. refugee populations	Captures experiential aspects of food insecurity (anxiety, quality, quantity); shorter recall period compared to other measures; culturally adapted to U.S. refugee populations	Scoring and cutoffs differ from USDA measures; not validated for U.S. populations	No (different conceptual framework)

USDA 6-Item Short Form (HFSSM-6)	6	U.S. households	General U.S. population; validated for refugee and immigrant populations in the U.S.	Brief measure; reliable classification of household food security; easy to score	Does not identify child-specific food insecurity	Yes (strong correlation with USDA 18-item measure)
Hunger Vital Sign 2-item screener (HVS-2)	2	Clinical and community settings	Validated for low-income adults, families, and immigrant populations	Extremely quick; ideal for screenings or adding to multi-topic surveys where time is limited	Cannot estimate food insecurity severity, just prevalence; less precise than USDA or HFIAS modules	Partial (correlates with HFSSM)

The measures summarized above differ by number of items, level of detail, and intended application. In general, the longer measures (the 10- or 18-item versions of the USDA Household Food Security Survey Module, and the 9-item HFIAS scale) capture more details, while the shorter measures (the 6-item HFSSM or the 2-item Hunger Vital Sign) are quicker and easier to administer and more practical for community-based surveys.

We will use the HFSSM-6 to illustrate how household food security can be measured. This measure is appropriate for illustration purposes, as it is relatively short, validated, and widely used. Other measures may be more appropriate, depending on context and objective.

Basic Features of the HFSSM-6 Measure

The HFSSM-6 may be a good option because it correlates highly with the more expansive HFSSM-18 measure but is more practical and quicker to implement. To start, what does the HFSSM-6 look like? In essence, it is comprised of introductory text, followed by six questions. Each question is answered by selecting the single response that most closely approximates the respondent's experience. Each response is assigned a score, which is either "0" or "1" for this particular measure. The full measure, including the scoring rubric, is summarized in Table 2, below:

Table 2: Summary of the HFSSM-6 Measure

Introductory Text I'm going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months—that is, since last (name of current month).		
Question	**Survey Response Options**	**Score**
1. The first statement is, "The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?	Often true	1
	Sometimes true	1
	Never true	0
	Don't know / Refused	0
2. "(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 12 months?	Often true	1
	Sometimes true	1

	Never true	0
	Don't know / Refused	0
3. In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	Yes	1
	No	0
	Don't know / Refused	0
4. [IF YES ABOVE, ASK] How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2 months? [IF NO TO QUESTION ABOVE, SCORE AS ZERO]	Almost every month	1
	Some months but not every month	1
	Only 1 or 2 months	0
	Don't know / Refused	0
5. In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?	Yes	1
	No	0
	Don't know / Refused	0
6. In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?	Yes	1
	No	0
	Don't know / Refused	0

Scoring is usually done after all the data is collected. The total score for each household is calculated by simply adding the scores assigned to the response to each of the six questions. Scores for each household can range between 0 and 6 and are interpreted as follows:

- ⇒ 0–1 = High or marginal food security
- ⇒ 2–4 = Low food security
- ⇒ 5–6 = Very low food security

As noted above, households that score higher are more likely to be experiencing food insecurity. Service organizations could, for example, prioritize households scoring within the 5–6 range for urgent support or emergency assistance.

Note on Adapting Measures

Adapting an existing food security measure may be necessary to help it better resonate with the language, culture, or lived experiences of specific communities, such as refugee or recently arrived immigrant populations. Adaptations may involve translating items, modifying food examples, or simplifying wording. However, changes should be made sparingly, as altering validated measures can affect how they function and reduce comparability with national U.S. data. Adaptation is most appropriate when direct translation would cause confusion or when standard wording does not reflect local realities. In these cases, pilot testing and documenting all modifications help maintain data quality and transparency.

Step 2: Building a Short Digital Survey to Measure Household Food Security

After identifying a suitable household food security measure and confirming that it is appropriate for the population being assessed, the next step is to build a survey to administer it. In this toolkit, we will use digital survey tools. Digital surveys are generally easier to administer and less prone to errors compared to paper-based surveys. They are also often more cost effective and efficient.

Selecting a Digital Survey Platform

Many excellent digital platforms are available to collect high-quality household food security data. While some products require a paid subscription to be fully functional, many include free versions that may be sufficient for smaller and simpler surveys. The key is to select a tool that matches your organization's needs and resources while also protecting potentially sensitive information, including personally identifiable information (PII). The table below summarizes the main features of four digital survey platforms that are commonly used by researchers and community organizations.

Table 3: Major Characteristics of Selected Digital Survey Platforms

	Google Forms	Airtable	Survey Monkey	Qualtrics
Cost	Free	Free (for survey functionality)	Paid (free for small and basic surveys)	Paid (free for small and basic surveys)
Ease of Use	High	Medium	Medium	Low
Data Security	Low	Low	High	High
Best for	Organizations needing a simple, free option, where no PII will be collected	Organizations that want survey data integrated with broader program tracking, where no PII will be collected	Organizations that need more polished surveys and basic reporting or are collecting PII	Organizations that want to build data workflows or are collecting PII

Note: Switchboard does not endorse any individual product or for-profit corporation but has provided an overview of some common options for your own consideration.

Selecting the best platform for building and disseminating a survey requires careful consideration of several factors and will depend on context, budget, and type of data being collected. While free options can be used for certain surveys, paid options may offer greater security and data protection for surveys that include personally identifiable or other sensitive information.

Designing a Survey Questionnaire

Once you have selected your survey platform, the next step involves designing a short survey questionnaire. This will include questions from your selected household food security measure—such as the HFSSM-6, in our example—as well as other information that may be necessary to understand the dynamics of household food security among your specific community of interest. A well-designed short survey might include the following five elements:

Sample Outline of a Household Food Security Survey

1. **An introduction and informed consent statement:**
   The introduction explains the purpose of the survey, assures participants of confidentiality, and obtains consent before proceeding. Informed consent ensures that respondents understand the risks and benefits of their participation. It also provides space to answer any questions they may have about the survey, including how their data will be used. It is important to make sure participants understand that their services will not be impacted by their choice about whether to complete the survey, or by their responses.

2. **Select questions on participant demographics (or other characteristics of interest):**
   Demographic and background information, such as age, sex, ethnic and/or racial background, household size, language(s) spoken, and years in the U.S., can be useful for better understanding which sub-groups are more vulnerable to food insecurity.

3. **Household food security measure:**
   The selected food security measure (the HFSSM-6, in our case) is the primary outcome of interest. At a minimum, it allows organizations to identify vulnerable respondents and tailor their programs or outreach accordingly. Food security scores can also be combined with other data to identify patterns of association related to risk.

4. **Optional program-specific questions:**
   Adding program-specific questions that might be important, such as which services participants have accessed or any barriers to their participation in programs, can help inform your analysis and subsequent data-driven decision-making.

5. **Closing section:**
   A short closing or thank-you message reinforces respect and appreciation for participants' time.

The design and length of your survey should reflect its overall purpose. As much as possible, the order of questions should follow a conversational flow that feels natural for the population being surveyed. Surveys should include the level of detail needed to address key research questions, while remaining as brief as possible to reduce respondent burden. A helpful strategy is to assess how each variable will contribute to answering the survey's core objectives and include only those questions that add value. An example of a brief household survey questionnaire that includes the HFSSM-6 measure is presented as Appendix 1.

Ethical Considerations

It is important to collect information on household food security in ways that respect participants and protect their privacy and confidentiality. Community-based organizations often work with individuals and families who have experienced hardship, displacement, or trauma. Because questions about food access can be sensitive, conduct surveys with empathy, transparency, and care. Switchboard's Trauma-Informed Survey Toolkit offers helpful guidance for designing trauma-informed surveys.

Participation must always be voluntary. Respondents should understand why the survey is being conducted, how their information will be stored and used, and that their responses will remain confidential. Surveys should avoid collecting names or other personally identifying information unless absolutely necessary, and only when participants fully understand and consent to sharing it.

Survey instruments and procedures should be respectful and culturally appropriate. Enumerators (those conducting the surveys) and staff should be trained to carry out surveys ethically by avoiding judgmental language, being attentive to linguistic and cultural differences, and allowing respondents to skip questions or withdraw their participation at any time. If a participant expresses distress or urgent need, whether during an interview or through survey responses, it is good ethical practice to provide information about available assistance or community support services.

Organizations must also make sure that data is stored securely, shared only with authorized team members, and used exclusively for the purposes communicated to participants. By combining strong ethical practices with careful data management, community-based organizations can generate reliable information while upholding dignity and compassion—helping programs genuinely meet the needs of the communities they serve.

Step 3: Selecting Survey Participants and Collecting Data

Once the survey questionnaire is complete, participants will need to be selected—a process known as *sampling*. Sampling is important because it influences how well the results will represent the community being assessed. While sampling can be very technical in academic research, community-based organizations often use simple, practical strategies to make sure the voices of different groups in the community are represented. We advise keeping the process manageable, but it is equally important to consider how closely your sample mirrors the characteristics and perspectives of the broader population of interest. Table 4, below, summarizes some advantages and limitations of different sampling approaches:

Table 4: Advantages and Limitations of Different Sampling Approaches

Sampling Method	What it is	Advantages	Limitations	Best for
Randomized Sampling	Every household has a known, equal chance of being selected (using random numbers, lists, or systematic methods).	• Most scientifically reliable. • Reduces selection bias. • Results are generalizable. • Preferred by funders/researchers.	• Requires accurate lists or maps. • Logistically complex and time-consuming.	Surveys where representative-ness is essential and resources allow for careful planning.
Convenience Sampling	Surveys people easiest to reach (e.g., clients, event attendees).	• Simple. • Low-cost. • Quick to implement.	• Not representative of the broader community. • Over-represents people already engaged with services.	Quick surveys to gauge needs when resources are limited.
Snowball Sampling	Starts with one or more participants who recruit others in their network.	• Reaches hard-to-reach populations. • Builds on trust networks.	• Over-represents certain networks. • Less representative overall.	Immigrant or refugee communities with strong social ties.
Purposive Sampling	Participants are intentionally selected for specific characteristics (e.g., new arrivals, families with young children).	• Ensures inclusion of priority groups.	• Not representative of the full community.	Program-focused data collection targeting specific groups.

A sampling approach should always be intentional and based on a clear assessment of available time, budget, and technical capacity. Sampling is important to determine the limits of a survey enquiry and, ultimately, the strength of knowledge-claims that can be made about the community being assessed.

Administering Your Household Food Security Measure

Once you've designed and built your survey and identified a suitable sampling strategy, the survey is ready to be deployed. Digital surveys are generally administered in one of two ways: self-administered, where respondents complete the survey independently using a link sent by phone SMS or email; or staff-administered, where agency personnel ask the questions directly, either in-person or virtually.

Self-administered surveys are generally lower cost, easier to disseminate at scale, and less demanding of staff time. They may also increase reach among participants who prefer flexible, remote participation. However, this approach can inadvertently exclude individuals with limited literacy, survey language proficiency, or digital skills. Depending on the context, self-administered surveys may be inappropriate when focusing on populations that face multiple, complex challenges, such as those associated with household food insecurity. The impersonal nature of self-administered surveys also limits opportunities to recognize households in crisis or distress who may need immediate support. Service agencies generally recognize such support as an ethical imperative.

Staff-administered data collection can deliver real-time support, reduce language or literacy burdens, and strengthen community trust—often resulting in higher response rates and better-quality data. This approach, however, generally requires additional staff training, higher budgets, and more dedicated staff time. Training for staff-administered surveys usually covers the following topics:

- The purpose of the survey and why the questions matter.
- Ethical principles: voluntary participation, confidentiality, and respectful engagement.
- How to ask questions neutrally and avoid leading or biasing statements and behaviors.
- Handling sensitive topics with empathy.
- Responding to recognitions of acute needs for additional services or support.

Survey enumerators can easily and conveniently collect data using digital platforms on mobile devices. It is generally best to use mobile devices for data collection whenever possible, although factors such as population access, budget, staff capacity, and time will shape your approach. Surveys can be designed to be "mobile friendly" and can be embedded as a home screen icon on a smartphone or tablet. This allows program staff (or survey enumerators) to access the survey with a single tap, improving ease of use, response rates, and data collection continuity over time. The icon functions like an app shortcut, eliminating the need to locate or re-enter a survey URL. The call-out box below summarizes this process for iOS and Android, respectively.

Embedding a Survey on the Home Screen of a Smartphone

iOS (iPhone/iPad)	**Android (Chrome)**
1. Open Safari and navigate to the survey form website address. 2. Tap the Share icon (square with an arrow pointing up). 3. Select Add to Home Screen. 4. Edit the name if desired (this is the text below the icon). 5. Tap Add. 6. The website will now appear as an icon on your home screen, just like an app. *Note: Only Safari can create these shortcuts on iOS. Chrome shortcuts don't appear on the home screen in the same way.*	1. Open Chrome and navigate to the survey form website address. 2. Tap the menu (three dots) in the top-right corner. 3. Select Add to Home Screen. 4. Edit the name if needed. 5. Tap Add, then either automatically place it on the home screen or manually drag the icon where you want. 6. The website now appears as an icon/shortcut on your home screen, just like an app.

Step 4: Cleaning, Scoring, and Preparing Data (Using Excel)

Note: Switchboard does not endorse any individual product or for-profit corporation but has provided this information for your own consideration.

After all survey data has been collected, the next step is to "clean" and prepare a database for analysis. Cleaning data involves checking, correcting, and standardizing data to minimize errors, inconsistencies, and missing or invalid values. This is essential for producing accurate and reliable analyses.

Microsoft Excel is a widely available and practical tool for this process, and many service providers are highly skilled in using it. Digital data-collection platforms allow data to be exported into a standard spreadsheet format, typically a .csv or .xls file.

In Excel, a database is normally organized in the following way:

1. The first row is the header row, listing the name of each variable in the survey—for example, "age," "household size," and the six items of the HFSSM-6 (e.g., "HFSSM6_1," "HFSSM6_2," etc.).
2. Each subsequent row represents a unique survey response, or "case."
3. Each column contains all responses for a single variable, matching the variable name in the header row.

In preparing (or "cleaning") the data, you should do the following:

- Save a copy of the raw data that remains unedited, which can be used for reference.
- Document all changes made to the data, so that the cleaning can be replicated by others. Changes may include:

- Identifying and removing any duplicate data.
- Identifying missing answers (blank cells) and deciding on a consistent approach for dealing with these. Documenting reasons why responses may be excluded, based on missing data.
- Standardizing all responses (e.g., changing "yes" to "Yes", so these are not recognized as different values).

- Convert text-based responses to scores, based on the specific scoring instructions of the measure. This can be done using the "=IF" function in Excel, to generate additional columns in the datasheet. The overall score for a measure like the HFSSM-6 can be calculated similarly using the "=SUM" function in Excel, by adding the numeric values for each of the 6 items.

Step 5: Basic Analysis and Visualization of Findings (Using Excel)

Once the data is cleaned and measures are scored correctly in an Excel spreadsheet, the data can be combined, analyzed, reported, and visualized in many different ways with Excel. Some options for analysis and visualization are outlined below:

Table 5: Basic Options for Analysis of HFSSM-6 Household Food Security Data

Analytical Methods	Uses
Summary statistics	• Item-level responses: Show the proportion of households responding affirmatively ("Often" or "Sometimes true") for each of the six HFSSM items. • Total scores: Summarize the mean, median, and range of total food security scores. • Category prevalence: For example, report the percentage of households categorized as high/marginal, low, or very low food security.
Subgroup comparisons	• Compare food security across key demographics (e.g., age, household size, income, immigrant status) • Methods may include cross-tabulations, t-tests, chi-square tests, or mean comparisons. • Data can be visualized through bar charts, clustered column charts, or box-and-whisker plots.
Patterns and associations	• Explore associations between food security and program participation, income, or other household characteristics. • Data can be visualized through heatmaps, stacked bar charts, or boxplots, by subgroup.
Trends over time	• Examine changes in item-level responses, total scores, or category prevalence across multiple survey waves (requires using the same measures for each survey wave). • Use line charts to visualize score or prevalence changes over time.
Spatial or community-level insights	• Map food insecurity prevalence across neighborhoods or service areas if geocoded or location-based data is available. • Use heat maps, for example, to highlight areas of higher need.
Benchmarking	• Compare local results with state or national data (HFSSM data, in our example) to contextualize findings. • Visualize comparative data using side-by-side bar charts.

The summaries, analyses, and visualizations described above can all be created directly in Excel using tools such as pivot tables, calculated percentages, and Excel's "Charts" function. Although Excel can perform some basic statistical procedures, more advanced analyses are often easier to conduct using dedicated statistical software programs, which are beyond the scope of this toolkit.

Conclusion: From Data to Action

High-quality measurement of household food security provides a strong foundation and motivation for action. When food insecurity is measured accurately, ethically, and consistently, the resulting data can inform decisions about where resources should be directed, which households are most at risk, and how programs can be adapted to respond to changing conditions. For newcomer communities, whose circumstances are often shaped by displacement, policy constraints, and economic precarity, reliable measurement helps ensure assistance is effective. By using validated tools and intentional sampling approaches, organizations can generate evidence that strengthens program design, supports accountability to funders and communities, and amplifies the voices of newcomer communities. Importantly, careful measurement also helps avoid unintended harm by ensuring that data collection is respectful, confidential, and grounded in local realities. Ultimately, investing in high-quality household food security measurement enables service providers to move from assumptions to evidence, enhancing the impact of efforts to address food insecurity.

Additional Resources

Planning Effective Surveys with Newcomers: A Switchboard information guide offering tips for planning and administering surveys with newcomer clients.

Introduction to Data Collection Approaches and Methods: A Switchboard self-paced eLearning course introducing common data collection methods used in resettlement contexts.

What works to increase food security in newcomer populations?: A Switchboard research product summarizing the best available evidence about effective approaches to improving food security.

Find Food Resources for Newcomers in Your City, in Your State, and at the Federal Level: A Switchboard resource collection of food resources newcomers can access to meet nutrition needs.

About Switchboard

Switchboard is a training and technical assistance project working to build capacity across the refugee resettlement community in the United States. Our mission is to train and support service providers, newcomers, states, and local communities working to facilitate newcomers' successful integration in the U.S. Switchboard offers an online resource library, learning opportunities, research, and personalized technical assistance covering a range of resettlement topics. In addition, we provide on-demand support for newcomers through Settle In and for community members through the Switchboard Community Support Line**.** Switchboard is implemented by the International Rescue Committee (IRC).

The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts

Appendix 1: Example – Household Food Security Survey (Using HFSSM-6)

- Respondent: Adult (verify 18 or older)
- Length of time: Approx. 2 minutes
- Survey type: Enumerator-administered
- Rationale: Monitoring household food security
- Risk: Less than minimal

Reminds enumerators of eligibility criteria

Does the client agree to provide some background on their current household and answer 6 questions about household food security?

Records and confirms consent before proceeding

○ Yes

Date: _____

Enumerator initials: _____

Keeps track of enumerator to strengthen data quality

Anonymous identifier of respondent (e.g., client registration number): _____

Respondent state of residence

Drop-down menus enable quicker and more accurate data capture

▼ Alabama ... I do not reside in the United States

Respondent year of arrival in the United States: _____

Respondent country of origin

▼ Afghanistan ... Zimbabwe

How many people live in respondent's home?: _____

How many are adults (age 18 and up)?: _____

How many are children under the age of 5?: _____

How many are children between the ages of 5 and 17?: _____

Introductory text reflects language stipulated by the measure

These next few questions are about the food eaten in your household in the last month and whether you were able to afford the food you need. I'm going to read you several statements that people have made about their food situation. For these statements, please tell me whether the statement was often true, sometimes true, or never true for (you/your household) in the last month.

The first statement is, "The food that (I/we) bought just didn't last, and (I/we) didn't have money to get more." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for

(you/your household) in the last 30 days?

- ○ Often true (1)
- ○ Sometimes true (1)
- ○ Never true (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

Scores shown here in parentheses for illustration only. Not on survey.

"(I/we) couldn't afford to eat balanced meals." Was that often, sometimes, or never true for (you/your household) in the last 30 days?

- ○ Often true (1)
- ○ Sometimes true (1)
- ○ Never true (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

In the last 12 months, since last (name of current month), did (you/you or other adults in your household) ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

The question below will only be displayed if the response to the question above is Yes.

How often did this happen—almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only 1 or 2

months?

- ○ Almost every month (1)
- ○ Some months but not every month (1)
- ○ Only 1 or 2 months (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because there wasn't enough money for food?

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (0)
- ○ Don't know, or refused (0)

[Upon completion] Thank you for taking this brief survey! If you have any questions about this project, please contact [name and work email/work phone number].

Considered good practice for a self-enumerated survey