

# FOOD INSECURITY IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY

## Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic



In 2018, 26.8% or 516,000 Los Angeles County households with incomes less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) experienced food insecurity. Of these, 203,000 households experienced very low food security.

- Prevalence of food insecurity varied by Service Planning Area (SPA), with the highest prevalence in the South (35.1%) and the lowest prevalence in the West (18%). The prevalence of very low food security was highest in Metro (15.8%) and the South (14.4%), and lowest in San Gabriel (6.8%).
- Among those living in food insecure households, 67.3% self-identified as Latino, 13.9% as White, 11.9% as African American, and 6.2% as Asian. Nearly three quarters of a million, or 746,000 Latino adults, with household incomes less than 300% FPL were living in food insecure households.
- Prevalence of obesity (36.9%), diabetes (17%), hypertension (30.4%), high cholesterol (30.4%), and current depression (23.9%) were higher among adults living in food insecure households than among adults living in food secure households (29.6%, 11.8%, 24.2%, 25.6% and 8.4%, respectively).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Latinos experienced the highest prevalence of food insecurity (40%) from April 2020 to December 2020, followed by African Americans (39%), Asians (28%), and Whites (21%).
- In 2018, 48.1% African American, 38.6% White, and 31% Latino adults living in food insecure households with incomes less than 185% FPL were participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In California, this program is called CalFresh.
- Among adults living in food insecure households with household incomes less than 185% FPL, a third (33.6%) participated in SNAP/CalFresh.

# A CALL TO ACTION TO REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY AND IMPROVE FOOD EQUITY LOCALLY



Promote health equity by recognizing the relationship between food equity and racial equity



Shift the focus of government, healthcare, and policymakers from using the terminology "food security" (having access to sufficient calories or quantities of food) to "nutrition security" (having access to quality and nutritious food)



Expand nutrition incentive programs to help stretch CalFresh and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) dollars and increase access to quality food resources for low-income families



Invest in food recovery systems throughout Los Angeles County to increase food resources and assure food equity for all



This information is summarized from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's report, Food Insecurity in Los Angeles County Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic, November 2021. For additional information about the LA County Health Survey, visit: [www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha](http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha)