

## 2.5 Food Security

The World Food Summit defined food security as existing “when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life”. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences. In many countries, health problems related to dietary excess are an ever increasing threat. In fact, malnutrition and foodborne diarrhea are becoming increasingly prevalent.<sup>1</sup>

In the United States food security for a household means access by all members at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security includes at a minimum “the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods” as well as an “assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies)”.<sup>2</sup> This is measured nationally in a national food security survey, and data is collected through a number of questions. Households are then categorized along a continuum ranging from least severe (in the past year, worried about food running out before having money for more) to most severe (in the past year, adults or children went for a whole day at a time without eating because they did not have money for food).

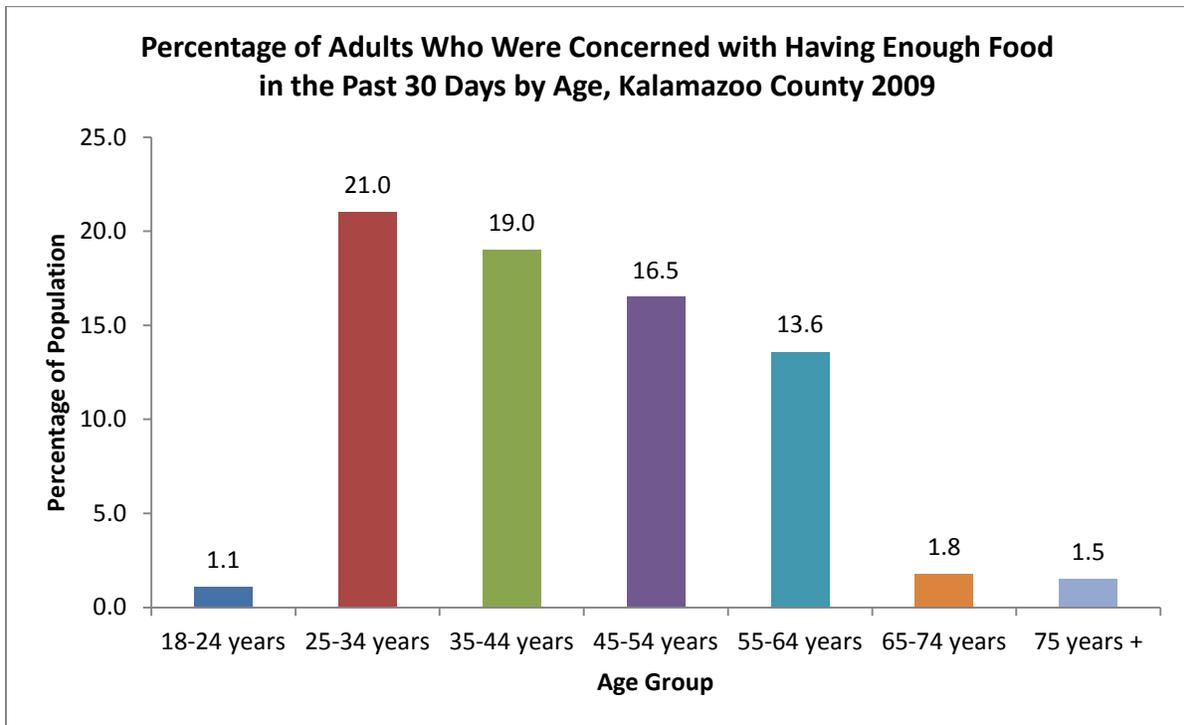
As a means to assess local food security, the 2009 Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey included a single question asking whether a person was concerned about having enough food for themselves or their family in the past 30 days. This estimate is not directly comparable to national estimates, but is an indicator of need in the community.

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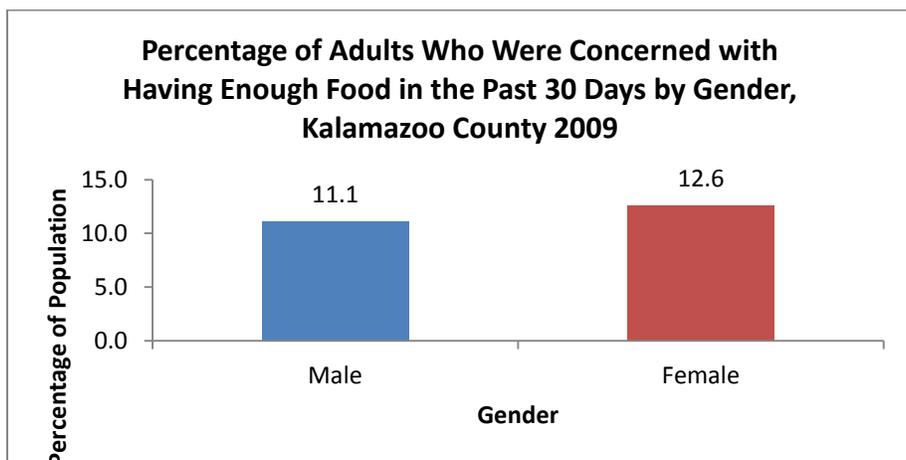
<sup>1</sup> Food Security, 2012, World Health Organization, accessed on the web at <http://www.who.int/trade/glossary/story028/en/>.

<sup>2</sup> United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, accessed on the web at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/measurement.aspx>.

Among adults in Kalamazoo County, 11.9% were concerned with having enough food for themselves or their family in the past 30 days in 2009. Adults aged 25-34 years old had the highest proportion of people reporting that they were concerned with having enough food in the past month (proportion continued to decrease as age increased after this age group). Among the 18-24 year age group and the 65+ year old population, less than 2% were concerned with having enough food. Females and males had similar proportions of people who were concerned with having enough food.

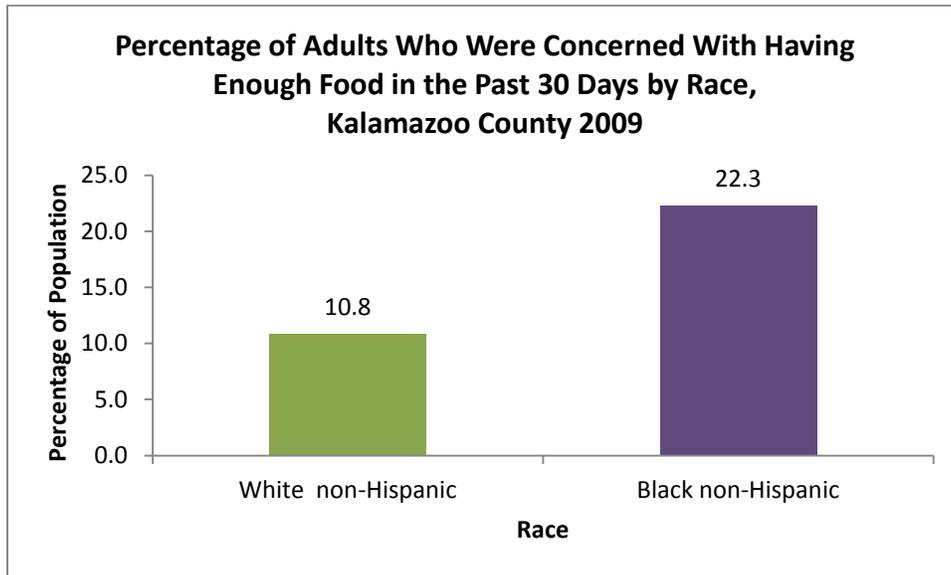


Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009

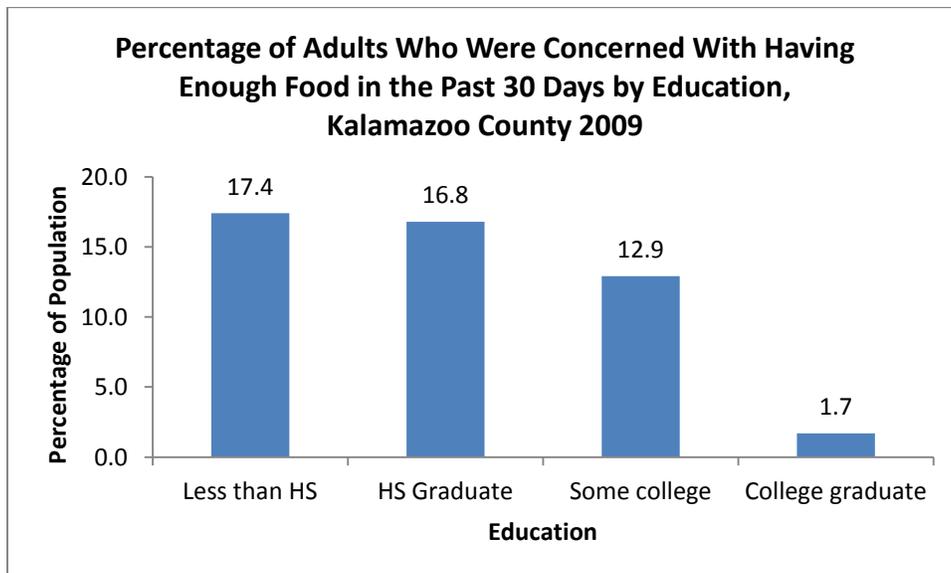


Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009

Black adults were over twice as likely as white adults to report being concerned with having enough food for themselves or their family in the past 30 days in Kalamazoo County, as surveyed in 2009. In addition, as education increased, the percentage of the population who were concerned with having enough food decreased, with the college graduate population having a less than 2% proportion concerned with having enough food.

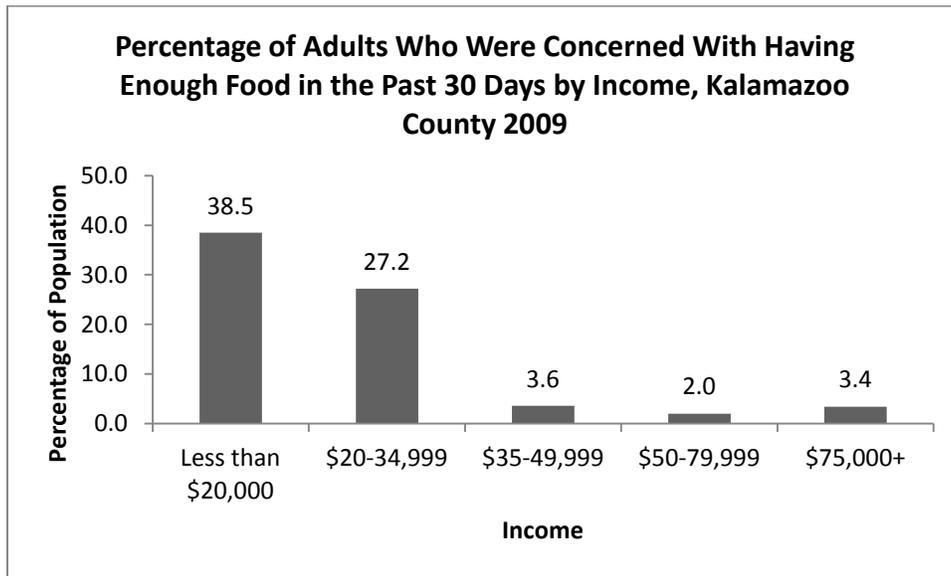


Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009



Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009

The percentage of adults who were concerned with having enough food in the past 30 days to feed themselves and their family decreased as income increased. In fact, those earning less than \$20,000 were over eleven times as likely to be concerned with having enough food as those earning \$75,000+.



Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009

### Food Security Among Adults, Kalamazoo County 2009

Demographic Characteristics	Concerned with Having Enough Food in the Past 30 Days <sup>a</sup>	
	%	95% C.I.
<b>Total</b>	11.9	(8.0 - 17.3)
<b>Age</b>		
18-24 years	1.1	(0.3 - 4.2)
25-34 years	21.0	(8.3 - 43.5)
35-44 years	19.0	(10.7 - 31.4)
45-54 years	16.5	(9.2 - 28.0)
55-64 years	13.6	(4.5 - 34.1)
65-74 years	1.8	(0.5 - 6.3)
75 years +	1.5	(0.4 - 5.7)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	11.1	(5.8 - 20.2)
Female	12.6	(7.6 - 20.2)
<b>Race</b>		
White non-Hispanic	10.8	(6.7 - 16.9)
Black non-Hispanic	22.3	(10.8 - 40.3)
<b>Education</b>		
Less than HS	17.4	(4.9 - 46.4)
HS Graduate	16.8	(9.0 - 29.3)
Some college	12.9	(7.0 - 22.7)
College graduate	1.7	(0.6 - 4.4)
<b>Income</b>		
Less than \$20,000	38.5	(23.4 - 56.2)
\$20-34,999	27.2	(15.0 - 44.1)
\$35-49,999	3.6	(0.8 - 15.5)
\$50-79,999	2.0	(0.3 - 13.1)
\$75,000+	3.4	(0.5 - 20.4)
<b>City/Out-County</b>		
City of Kalamazoo	19.2	(11.5 - 30.2)
Rest of County	8.6	(4.8 - 14.8)
<b>Within City of Kalamazoo</b>		
White in City	17.5	(8.2 - 33.3)
Black in City	20.7	(9.1 - 40.5)
<p><sup>a</sup> The proportion who reported that they have been concerned about having enough food for themselves or family in the past 30 days.</p>		

Source: Kalamazoo County Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2009