



June 16, 2022

# Food insecurity and rising food prices

Elaine Waxman, PhD

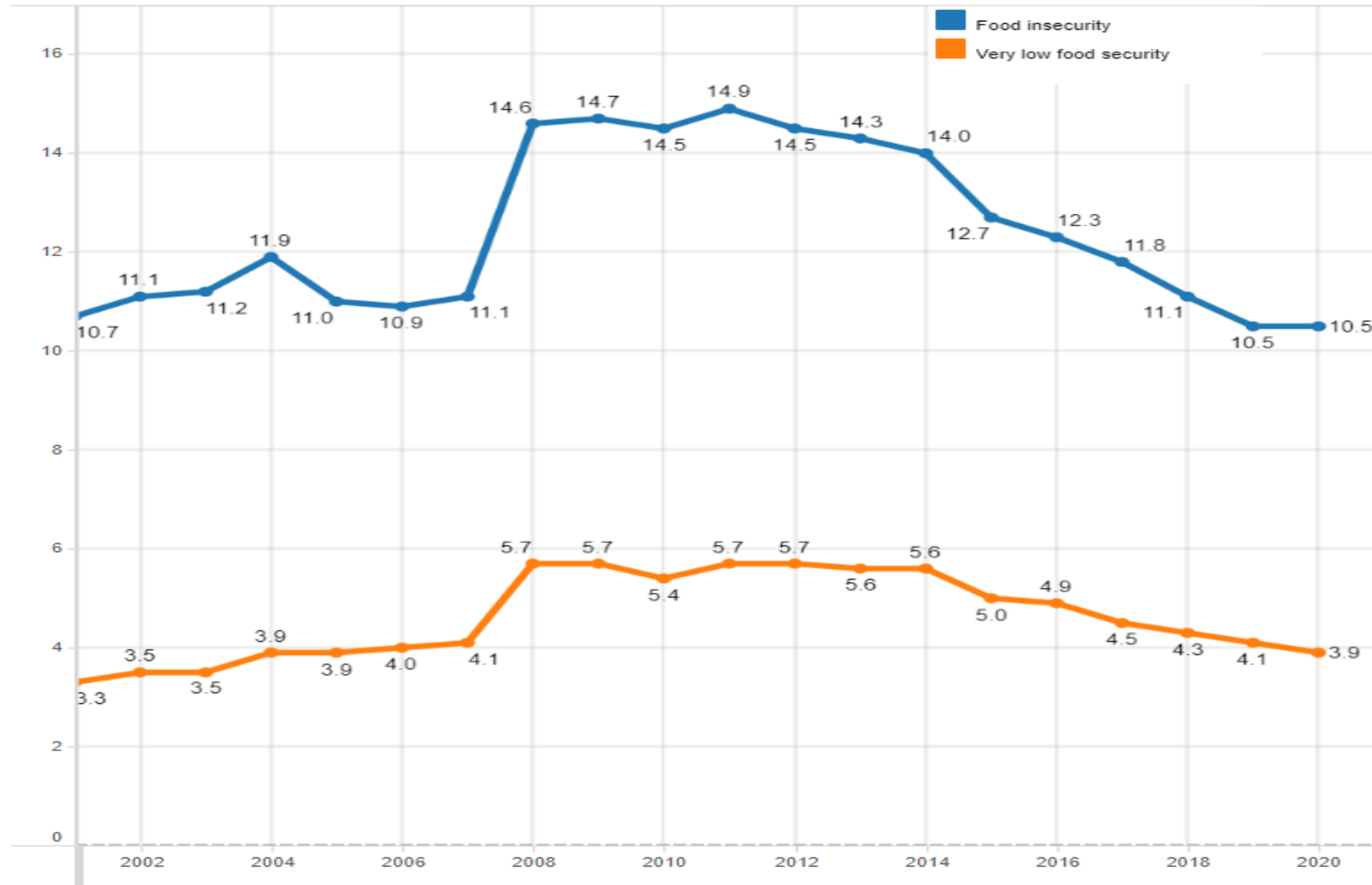
Senior Fellow, Income and Benefits Policy Center



Overall, food insecurity was roughly the same in 2019 and 2020, likely because of the robust pandemic response

## Trends in the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security in U.S. households, 2001-20

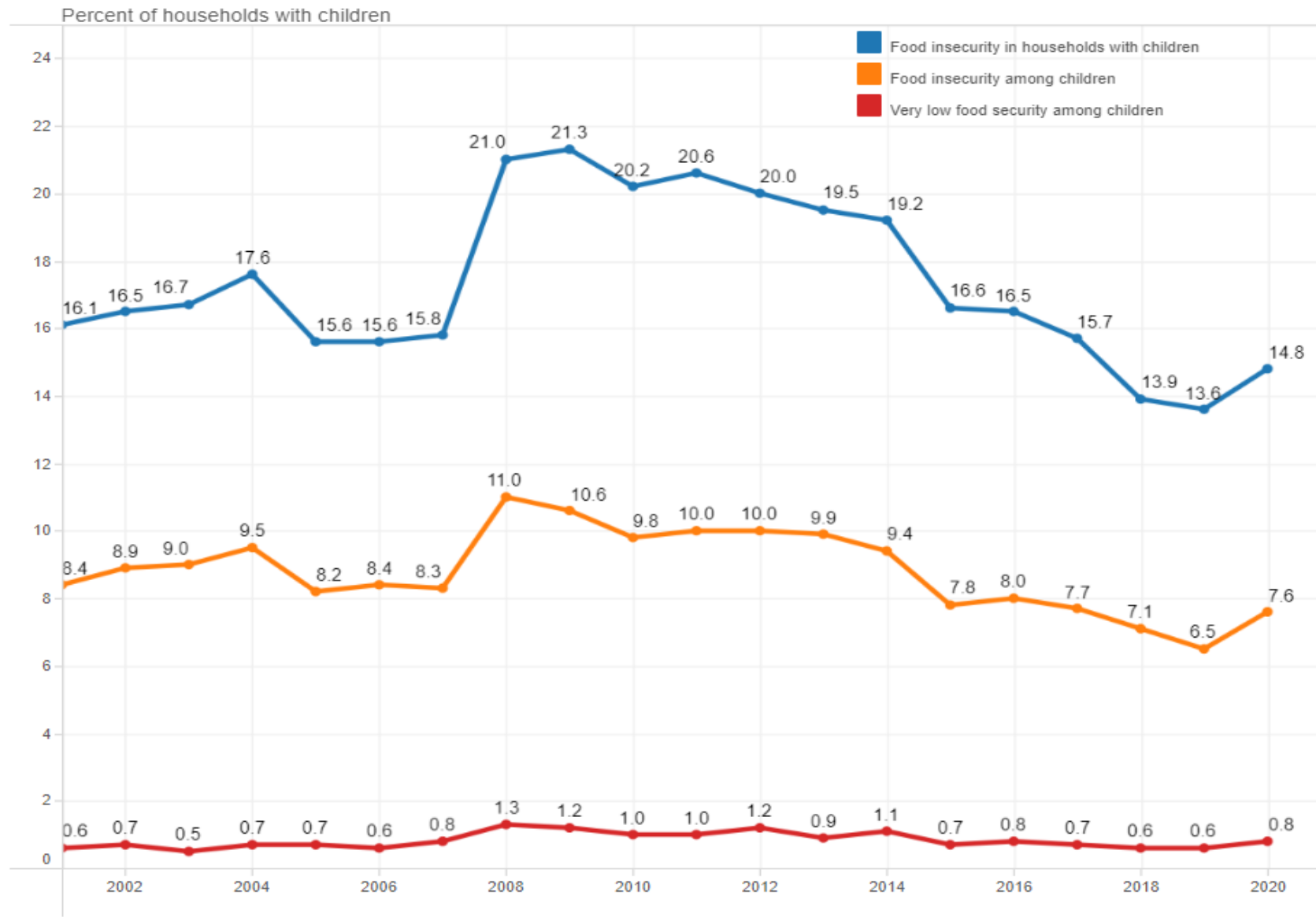
Percent of households



Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service, using Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data.  
<https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/>

However, some households and communities  
did not fare as well

## Trends in food insecurity in U.S. households with children, 2001-20



Source: Calculated by USDA, Economic Research Service, using Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement data. <https://www.ers.usda.gov/topics/food-nutrition-assistance/food-security-in-the-us/>

# Community members at higher risk for food insecurity

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**Families with children**, especially following the expiration of the monthly child tax credit payments

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Individuals with **limited incomes**, including **seniors** and **persons living with disabilities**

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**People of color** (in particular, the gap in food insecurity rates between white and Black/Latinx households widened during the pandemic)

The environment has shifted recently with fewer benefits available and rising prices for food and other basic needs

## Pandemic benefits that have been phased out

- Enhanced unemployment benefits
- Stimulus payments
- Monthly child tax credit payments
- SNAP emergency allotments have ended in some states, will end for all when public health emergency ends
- Universal school meal waivers slated to end June 30<sup>th</sup>
- Pandemic EBT has been inconsistent across states and time periods



# Community voices on rising food prices

“Things are a lot more expensive. I have been cutting down on the kinds of food I buy and sometimes the amount. Things are much better now, but I've had a few months where I just didn't have money to go shopping.”

*—Arlington County, VA resident living alone, winter 2021*

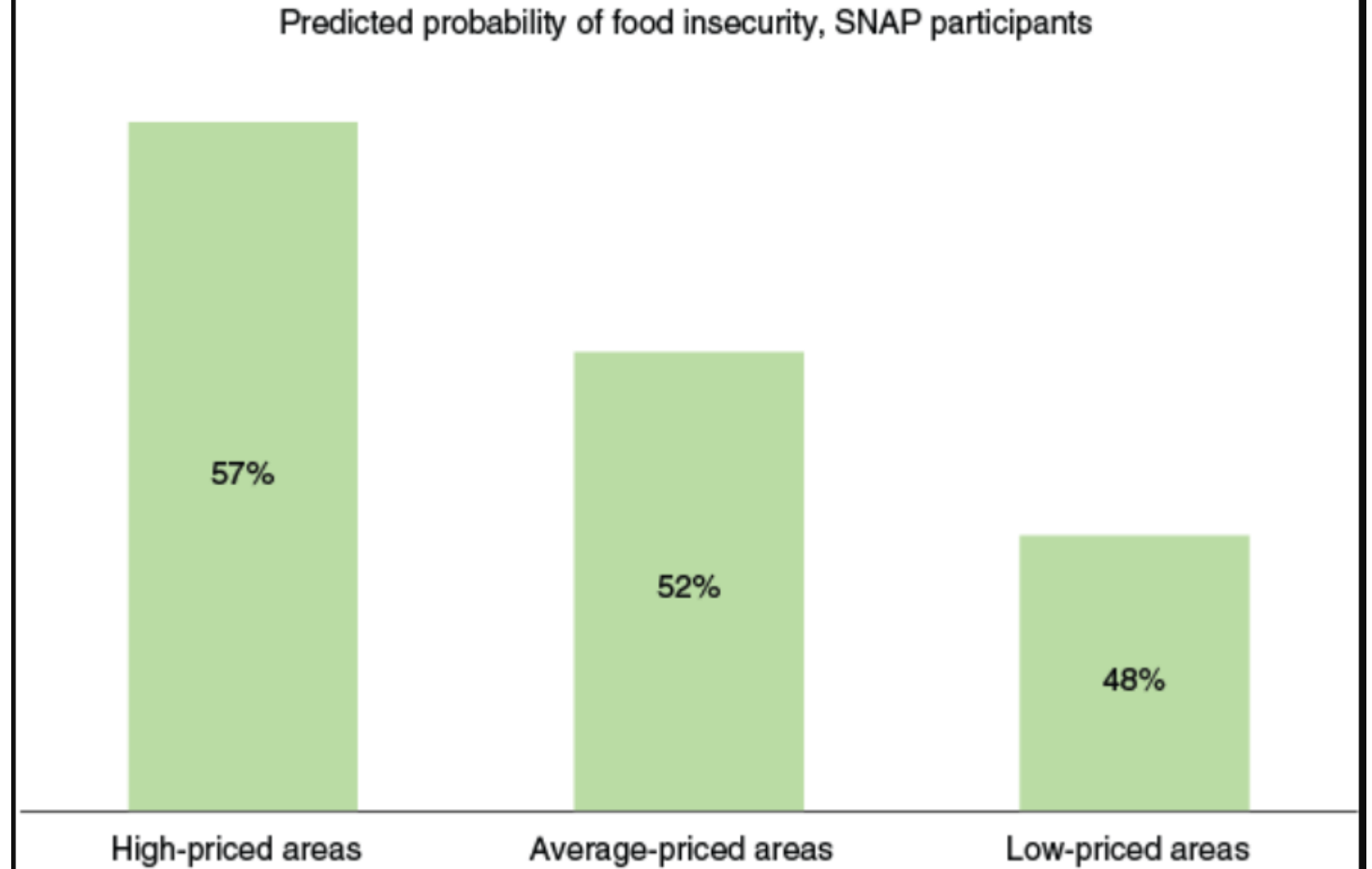
“Sometimes, there is not much money. Like meat—you know today how much it has gone up in price. That's why sometimes we don't buy meat, [instead] we make vegetable soup.”

*- Arlington County mother of 2, winter 2021*

“Just honestly what has impacted us quite a bit is the cost of food and having to feed the kids all the time, if not three, four meals a day, so that's been a real big financial impact.” *—Mother in New Mexico utilizing USDA meals program, fall 2021*

Research on  
food price  
impact on food  
insecurity rates

Food insecurity among SNAP participants more prevalent in areas with higher food prices

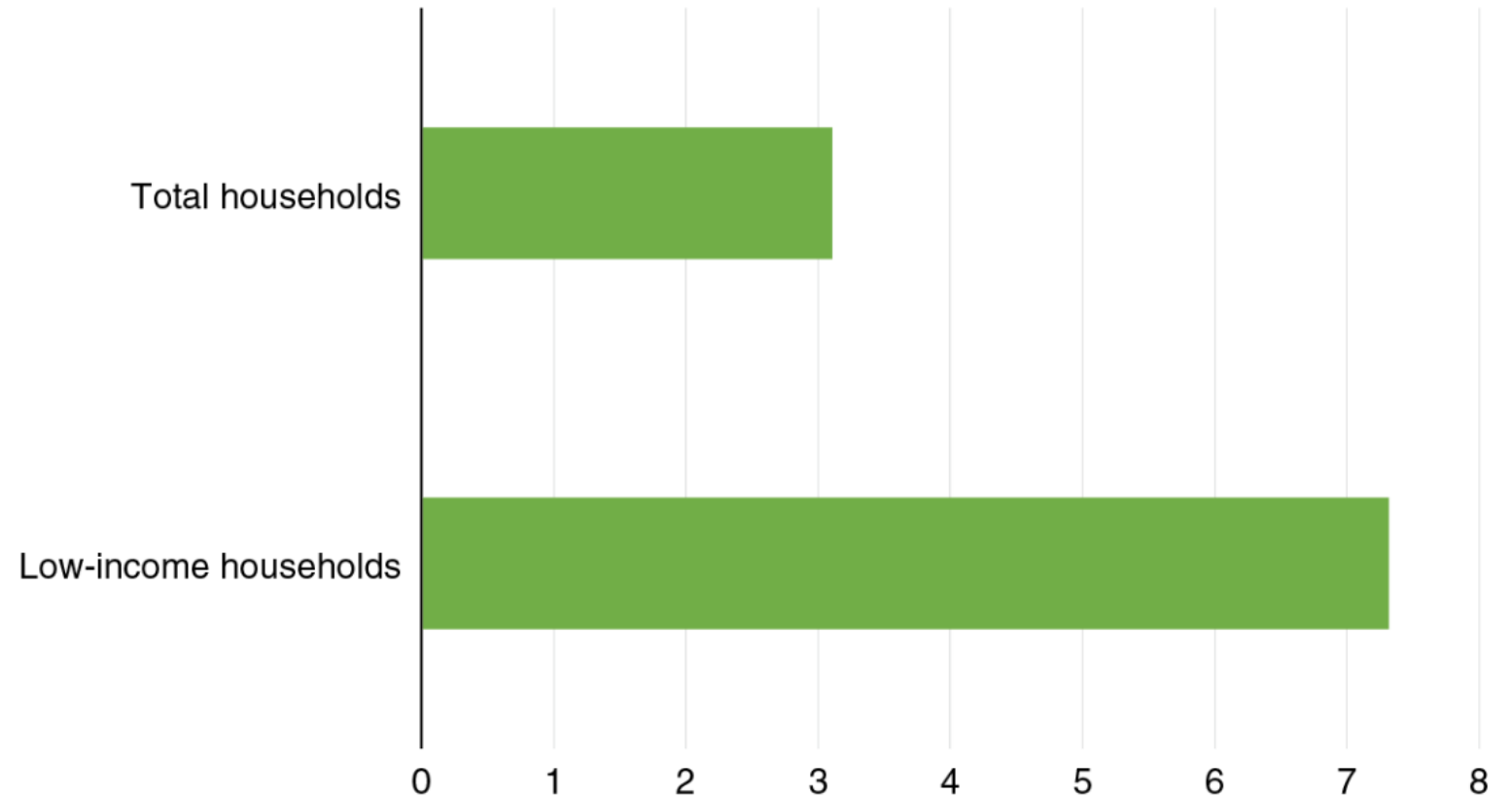


Source: USDA, Economic Research Service.

## Research on impact of gas price shocks on food budgets

### The probability of needing more money for food increased with gasoline price shocks

Change in likelihood of needing more money for food, percentage points



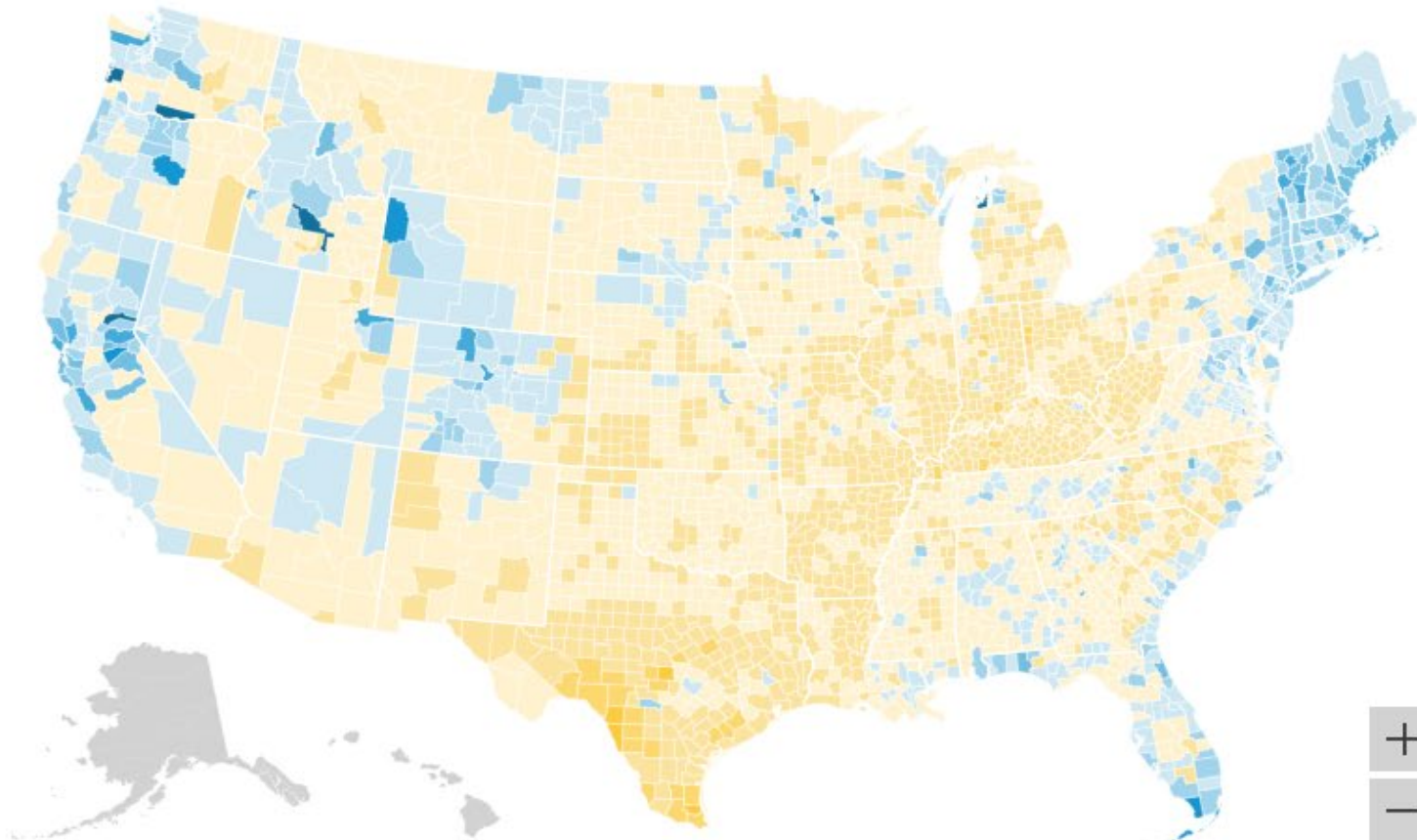
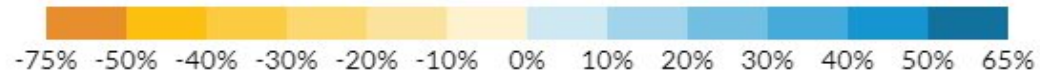
Source: USDA, Economic Research Service using 2001-14 data from the Current Population Survey Food Security Supplements and the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

# SNAP benefits are not adjusted for food price variation in most states, reducing responsiveness of benefits

- Despite evidence that there are significant food price differences across counties, **SNAP benefits are the same across the lower 48 states** and adjusted only once a year for inflation (implemented in October, based on June data);
- **Before the 2021 increase in the Thrifty Food Plan**, the maximum SNAP benefit per meal did not cover the cost of a moderately priced meal in **96 percent of US counties**.
- The TFP increase significantly improved the adequacy of SNAP benefits – **reducing the percent of counties with a remaining gap to 21 percent**, based on 2020 price data.

# Gap between SNAP benefit and meal cost in 2020

21% increase (as of Oct. 2021) ▼



## National average

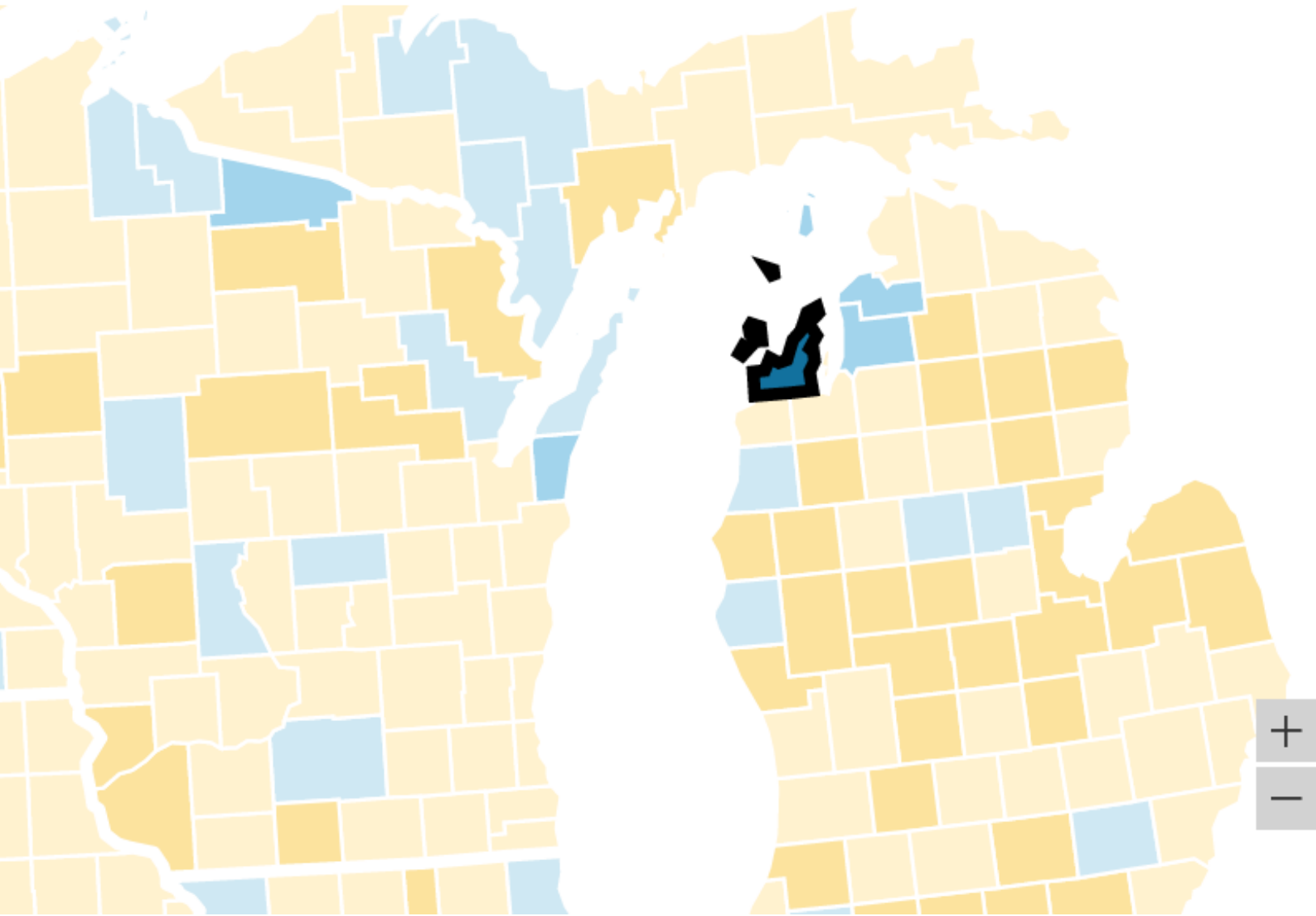
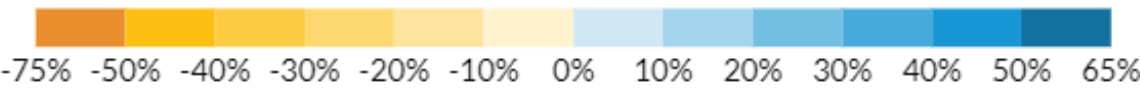
SNAP benefit per meal  \$2.38

Average meal cost  \$2.41

A modestly priced meal costs \$2.41, **1% more** than the SNAP benefit.

## Gaps in SNAP benefit adequacy

- 1 in 5 counties still experienced a gap between moderately priced meal and maximum SNAP benefit
- Higher food prices are not just an urban phenomenon – we also observe them in some rural areas
- The gaps have likely widened with the recent escalation in food prices



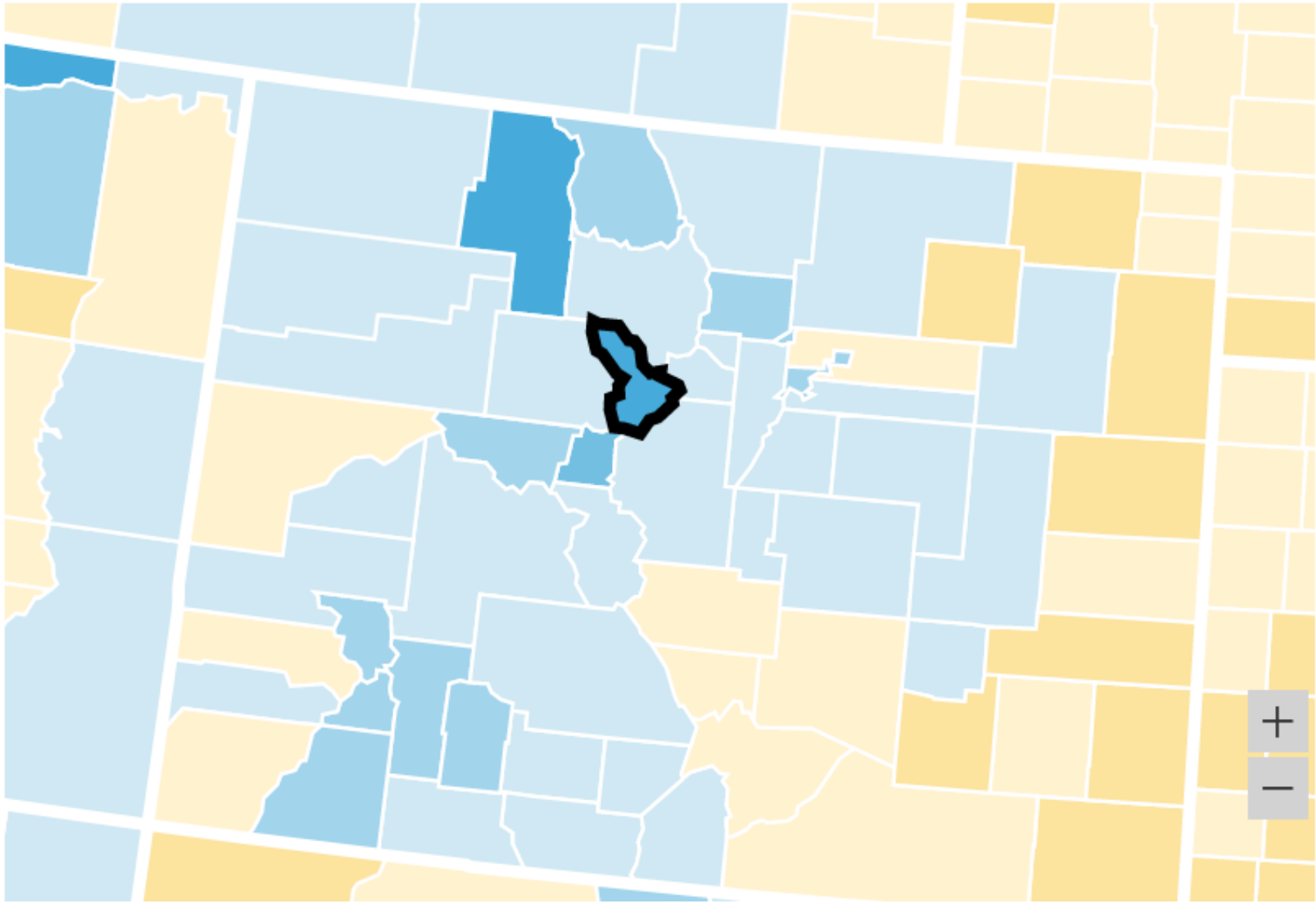
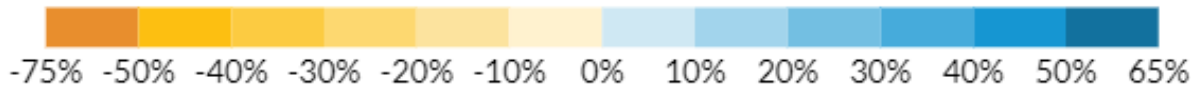
## Leelanau County, Michigan

RUCC code 9



A modestly priced meal costs \$6.16, **159% more** than the SNAP benefit.





# Summit County, Colorado

RUCC code 5

SNAP benefit per meal  \$2.38

Average meal cost  \$3.29

A modestly priced meal costs \$3.29, **38% more** than the SNAP benefit.





# Where to find local food insecurity information

- **Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap Release July 20<sup>th</sup>**
- *What existing data will be updated for 2020?*
  - Local food insecurity and related estimates by age (overall, child) for every county and district (and state)
  - On-demand subcounty food insecurity for overall population (through 2020)
- *What new data will be released?*
  - Local overall food insecurity estimates by race/ethnicity (Black; Hispanic; white, non-Hispanic) for available counties (and service areas) and districts (and states) (2019-20)
  - Local overall nationwide food insecurity for available census tracts and ZCTAs (2019-20)
  - Note that estimates by race/ethnicity available for many but not all geographies – District (and state) estimates for 2020 based on 5-year (not 1-year) ACS data

# Questions?

- Please feel free to reach out:

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*The views here should be attributed to Elaine Waxman, not the Urban Institute, its trustees or funders*



# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO



Franklin County  
Board of Commissioners

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
& PLANNING**



THE CITY OF  
**COLUMBUS**  
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

COLUMBUS  
PUBLIC HEALTH

# Why a Local Food Action Plan?

Before 2014, **Columbus City Council** and the **Franklin County Board of Commissioners** had a history of strong support for local food initiatives.

- Urban Garden Grants
- Food Business Incubation
- Food Access and Emergency Food Programs
- Modifying regulations as needed
- Working with Franklin County Local Food Council

# Creation of Local Food Action Plan

Led by Councilmember Tyson (Columbus) and Commissioner O'Grady (Franklin County), the **City and County launched the Local Food Action Plan planning process in 2014** in partnership with a key local nonprofit.

- Unique partnership ensured that economic development, public health, the environment, and equity were intentionally considered in all project phases
- More than 1200 community members were engaged



# Adoption of Local Food Action Plan

After a 24 month planning process, the **Local Food Action Plan was adopted in November 2016** as a policy platform by both Columbus City Council and the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

- Franklin County Board of Commissioners created the **City-County Local Food Board**
- Both City and County created and coordinated *FTE staff positions* to support the LFAP implementation
- Objective was to combine grasstops networks and resources with grassroots leadership and energy





# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

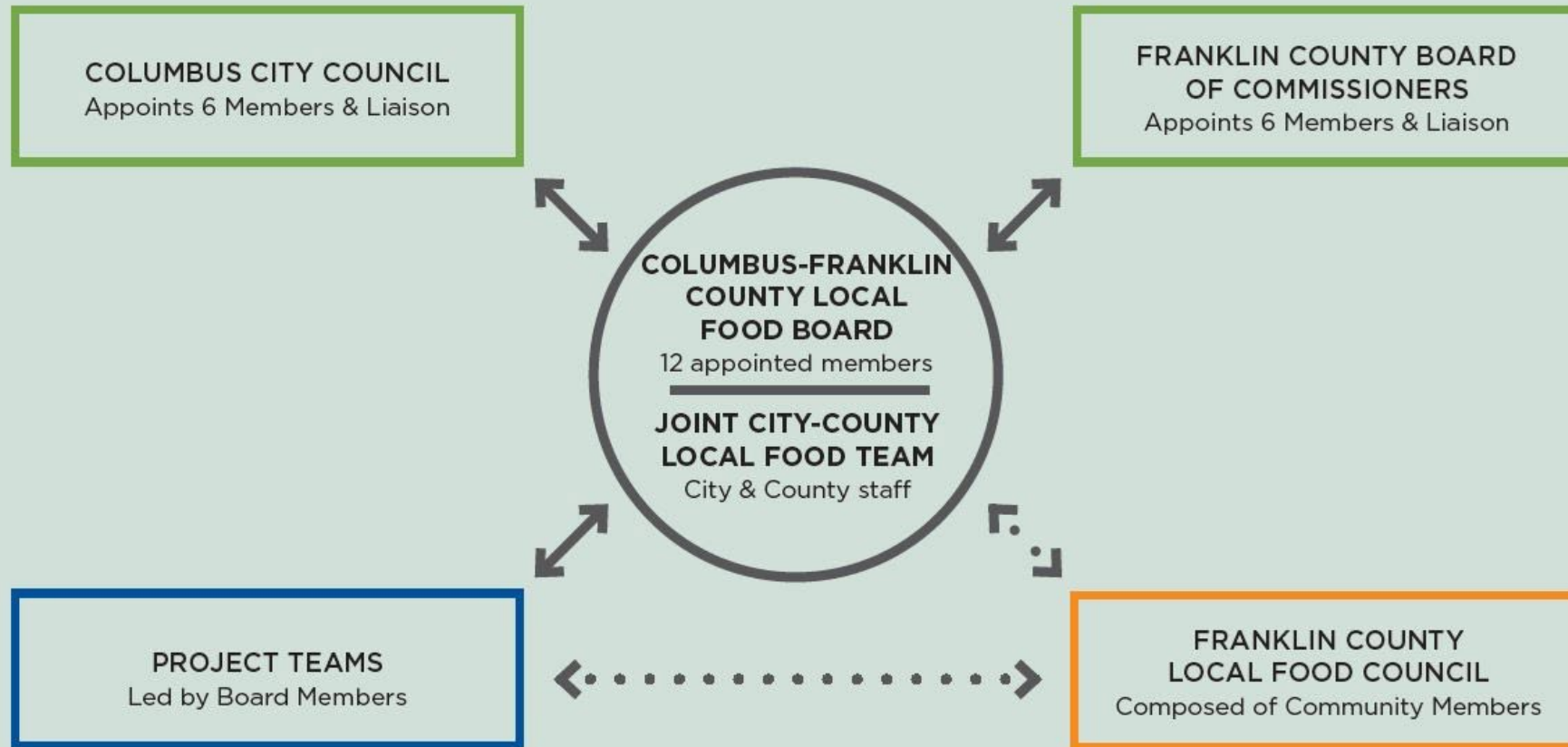
***“A fair and sustainable food system that benefits our economy, our environment, and all people.”***

## **4 Goal Areas:**

- A. Coordination and Communication
- B. Access and Education
- C. Economic Development
- D. Food Waste Prevention and Reduction

# IMPLEMENTING THE PLAN

———— SHARED RESPONSIBILITIES  
• • • • • SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS







# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

## What has been accomplished?

- Community collaborations
- Program development
- Local funding strategies
- Regulatory updates
- New public policy



LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN  
CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO



# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

What does the future hold?

- Implementation of Racial Equity Study
- Zoning code recommendations to support and facilitate urban agriculture
- Utilize ARPA funding to strengthen local food system and build a robust, resilient local food economy



# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

## CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

What makes the Local Food Action Plan effective?

Diverse Partnerships & Perspectives: City and County partnership, Public Health + Economic Development & Planning + Private/Philanthropic Partners

Connection to Grassroots: Franklin County Local Food Council, growing network of engaged/aligned businesses, nonprofits, philanthropic partners

Community Leadership: Appointed community members oversee, prioritize, and guide implementation activities related to the Plan

Local Government Investment: Dedicated city and county staff, ongoing support from elected officials, budgetary support as needed

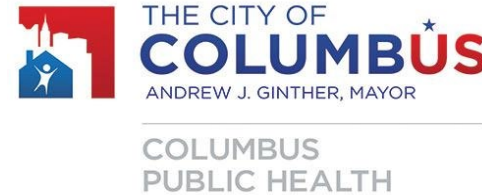


# LOCAL FOOD ACTION PLAN

## CITY OF COLUMBUS & FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO

### The Joint City-County Local Food Team:

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[www.columbus.gov/LFAP](http://www.columbus.gov/LFAP)



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

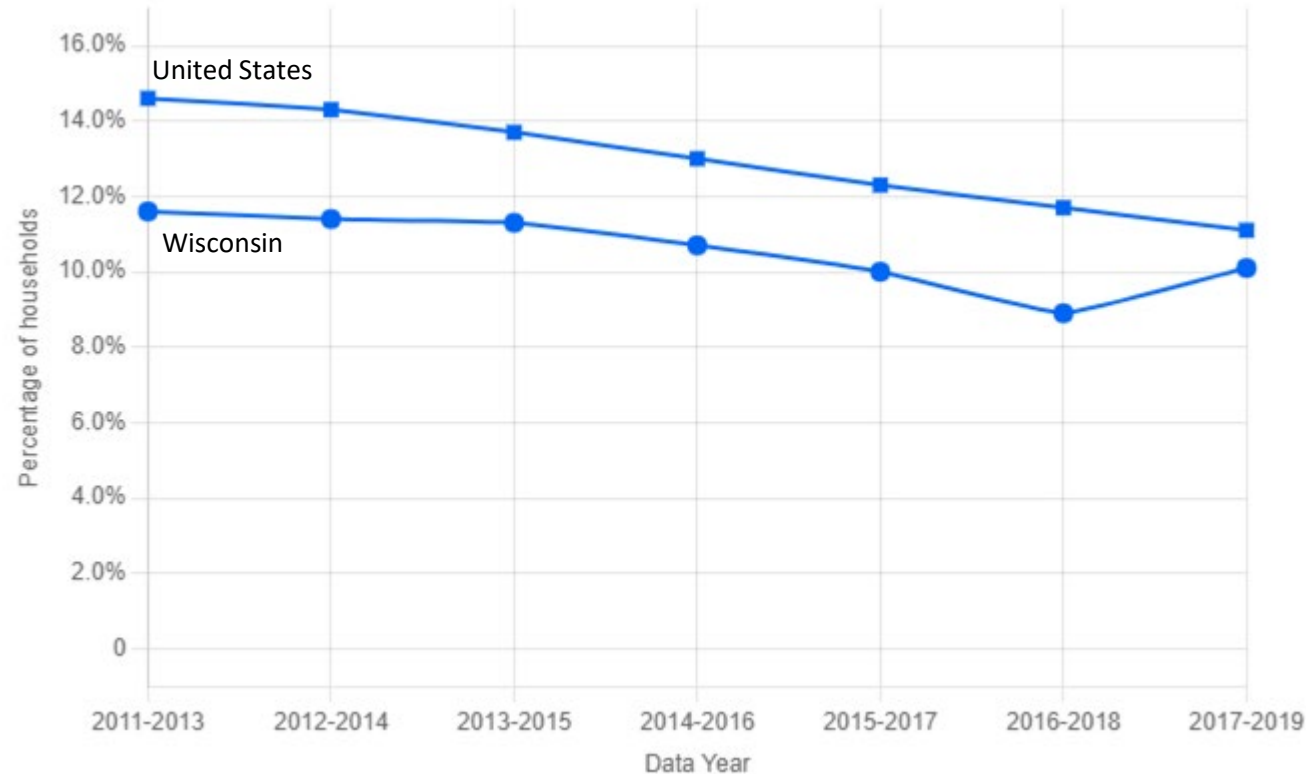
# Dane County and City of Madison: Challenges & Solutions, CARES/ARPA Funds, and Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration

Jess Guffey Calkins, Community Food Systems Educator  
University of Wisconsin-Madison Extension Dane County



# Food Insecurity in Wisconsin

Trend: Food Insecurity, Wisconsin, United States



## FOUR LEGS OF THE TABLE: A MODEL FOR FOOD SECURITY



# Solutions

## Applying CARES/ARPA funds to address increased need

Dane CARES Farm to Food Bank project:  
Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern WI

- \$26.75M (largely CARES/ARPA funds) has been committed towards May 2020-Dec 2022 project operations
- 8.45M lbs of food distributed through Feb 2022
- 72% food distributed = fresh produce, dairy, or meat/protein
- 37 local growers & food producers



# Solutions

## Applying CARES/ARPA funds to address increased need

### FairShare CSA Coalition: Partner Shares Program

- Provides financial assistance for CSA membership shares
- Dane County contributes \$15K annually
- Program need skyrocketed during the pandemic. Dane County contribution increased to \$60K/yr for 2020 & 2021, using CARES/ARPA funds

### 2021 Partner Shares Program:

- 278 CSA shares provided
- 590 individuals served
- Almost 3x compared to pre-pandemic





# Solutions

## Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration - Double Dollars



Dane County & City of Madison each contribute \$37.5K/yr to this program (addl. partners below)

Available for Dane County FoodShare (WI SNAP) participants

- For purchases of produce, meat, grains, dairy, legumes, and edible plants and seedlings
- Up to \$25 match per market day at participating farmers markets (June-Oct); administered by Community Action Coalition of South Central Wisconsin (CACSCW)
- Up to \$20 match at Willy Street Co-op locations during non-market months (Oct-May)



communityactioncoalition  
FOR SOUTH CENTRAL WISCONSIN



# Solutions

## Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration - Double Dollars



Double Dollars Seasons at Farmers Markets			
	2019	2020	2021
Double Dollars distributed	\$35,407	\$31,198	\$90,838
Double Dollars redeemed	\$34,698	\$30,574	\$78,769*
Double Dollars customers	1022	794	2075

\*this number is from 12/14/21

## Increased program funding in 2021 & 2022

- City of Madison & Dane County contributions increased
- Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) funding applied via CACSCW
- Increased donations via Willy Street Co-op customers

# Solutions

## Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration - Food Councils



### **Madison Food Policy Council**

- Strategize & plan collaboratively
- Joint work groups meet regularly
- Full councils meet jointly as needed

# Solutions

## Cross-Jurisdictional Collaboration - Food Councils

### Food Access & Equity grants

- For community-led efforts to:
  - expand access to healthy, local, culturally-relevant food
  - address racial equity & social justice in the food system.
- Dane County Partners in Equity (PIE) Food Project Grants - \$20K/yr
- City of Madison SEED Grants - \$50K/yr

### Working toward a Regional Food Plan

- Embedding Regional Food Plan objectives in Comprehensive Plans
- Funding committed to a Pandemic Food System Study to yield strategies for long-term solutions to food system gaps & inequities



Madison Food Policy Council



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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