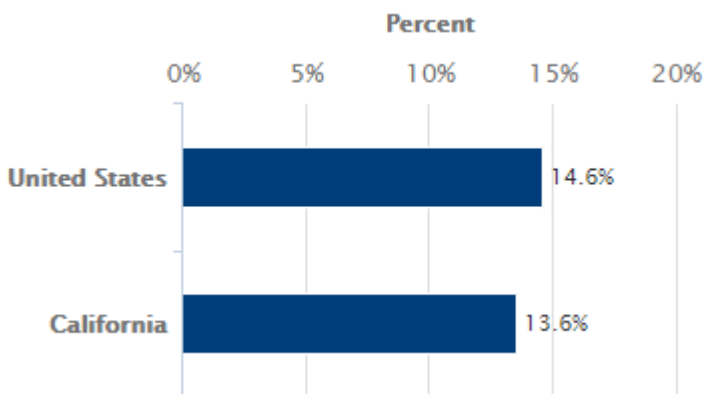


## Food Security in California

Percentage of Children Ages 0-17 Living in Food Insecure Households: 2019; Showing Counties  
 Percentage of Children Ages 0-17 Living in Food Insecure Households: 2019



**Definition:** Estimated percentage of children ages 0-17 living in households unable to provide adequate food for all household members for the entire year due to insufficient resources (e.g., in 2019, 13.6% of California children lived in food insecure households).

**Data Source:** Feeding America, [Map the Meal Gap](#) (Jul. 2021).

### What It Is

Kidsdata.org provides the following indicators related to food security:

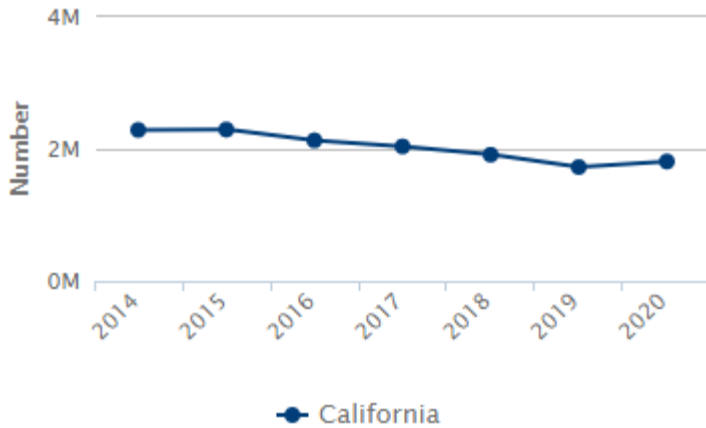
- The estimated number and percentage of children ages 0-17 living in food insecure households (i.e., households unable to provide adequate food for all household members for the entire year due to insufficient resources); these data also are shown for U.S. congressional districts
- The number of children ages 0-17 participating in CalFresh—California's implementation of the federal SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or Food Stamps Program—in the month of July; the number of total CalFresh participants (children and adults), and number and percentage of households participating in CalFresh, by race/ethnicity, also are available
- The number of families redeeming Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food vouchers for perinatal women and/or children ages 0-5 in the month of January, overall and by type of participant

### Why This Topic Is Important

In California and the U.S., around 1 in 7 children live in households without the resources for consistent, dependable access to enough food for all household members to enjoy active, healthy lives. Compared with food-secure children, children experiencing food insecurity are at higher risk for a host of health problems, including developmental, behavioral, and mental health issues, as well as acute and chronic medical conditions. Food insecurity in children also is linked to higher rates of school absenteeism and emergency department use, and lower access to health care. Among pregnant women, food insecurity is associated with negative physical and mental health outcomes, as well as pregnancy complications. Households with children (particularly young children under age 6), low-income and single-parent households, and households of color are disproportionately affected by food insecurity.

Food assistance programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or CalFresh in California) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) provide a safety net to help ensure that low-income

Number of Children Ages 0-17 Participating in CalFresh



**Definition:** Number of children ages 0-17 receiving CalFresh benefits in the month of July (e.g., in July 2020, 1,810,547 California children participated in CalFresh).  
**Data Source:** California Dept. of Social Services, [CalFresh Data Dashboard](#) (Aug. 2021).

**Number of Participants in Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program: 2020**

Locations	Number
California	513,479
Alameda County	13,597
Contra Costa County	8,520
Fresno County	28,913
Kern County	25,656
Los Angeles County	152,699
Orange County	31,570
Riverside County	37,431
Sacramento County	19,656
San Bernardino County	37,389
San Diego County	33,904
Santa Clara County	11,271

**Definition:** Number of families redeeming Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) food vouchers in the month of January (e.g., in January 2020, 513,479 California families redeemed WIC food vouchers).  
**Data Source:** California Dept. of Public Health, [California Women, Infants and Children Program Redemption by County](#) (May 2021).

children, expectant mothers, and families get adequate nutrition. These programs have been shown to alleviate poverty, reduce adverse birth outcomes, and improve children's health in general.

**How Children Are Faring**

According to 2019 estimates, 14% of California children ages 0-17 (more than 1.2 million) lived in households unable to provide adequate food for all household members. At the local level, the share of children living in food insecure households ranged from less than 7% to more than 24% across counties and congressional districts.

The CalFresh (Food Stamps) supplemental nutrition program served more than 4.6 million Californians, including more than 1.8 million California children, in July 2020. The number of children participating in CalFresh has declined overall since 2014, when more than 2.2 million children were served.

In January 2020, 513,479 California families redeemed Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program healthy food vouchers, down from 585,256 in 2019.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*  
<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/39/food-security/summary>



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