



**The MassINC Polling Group  
Shah Foundation  
Food Insecurity Survey**

Survey of 507 food insecure residents in Massachusetts  
Field dates: July 23 – August 3, 2021

Thinking about the past 12 months, do either of the following statements apply to you? **READ FIRST ITEM.**  
What about **READ NEXT ITEM?**

<b>ROTATE ORDER</b>	Yes	No	Prefer not to say
My household has worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more	29%	68%	3%
The food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more	26%	71%	3%

Food insecurity categories

Food insecure, total	35%
Worried about food running out, only	9%
Food we bought didn't last, only	5%
Both	21%
Not food insecure / neither	65%

**THE RESULTS BELOW ARE PRESENTED AMONG THOSE WHO ARE "FOOD INSECURE" (ANSWERED YES TO EITHER QUESTION ABOVE)**

In the past 12 months, have you used...**READ FIRST ITEM?** How about **READ NEXT ITEM?**

<b>RANDOMIZE ORDER</b>	Yes	No	Don't know / Refused
The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, sometimes called "SNAP" or food stamps	55%	42%	2%
The Nutrition, Women, and Infants Nutrition Program, sometimes called "WIC"	24%	73%	3%
The Pandemic EBT school nutrition program, sometimes called "P-EBT"	37%	58%	4%
State unemployment benefits	37%	59%	3%
Food pantries or other food donation programs	48%	49%	3%

Currently, how easy or difficult is it for you to get enough food for everyone in your household to eat?

Very easy	15%
Somewhat easy	40%
Somewhat difficult	36%
Very difficult	8%
Don't know / Refused	1%

**The next section will ask you about some other types of food resources you may have heard of or used.**

In some places there are trucks where people can walk up and select groceries for free. These are sometimes called mobile food pantries. Had you ever heard of these kinds of food trucks or mobile food pantries before this survey? **PROBE IF YES:** Have you ever gotten food from one of these trucks?

Yes, have gotten food	30%
Yes, have heard of but not gotten food	32%
No, have not heard of	36%
Don't know / Refused	1%

**IF GOTTEN FOOD FROM TRUCK**

You mentioned you have gotten food from a truck or mobile food pantry. How useful was this service to you?

Very useful	54%
Somewhat useful	35%
Not too useful	9%
Not useful at all	0%
Don't know / Refused	1%

**IF NOT GOTTEN FOOD FROM TRUCK**

You mentioned you have NOT gotten food from a truck or mobile food pantry. If this service were available to you, how interested would you be to use it?

Very interested	40%
Somewhat interested	40%
Not too interested	12%
Not interested at all	5%
Don't know / Refused	3%

**ASK ALL**

Some food donation programs deliver groceries to large, centrally located apartment buildings in certain neighborhoods where residents can take the food they need right from the lobby. Have you ever heard of an apartment building delivery program like this? **PROBE IF YES:** Have you ever gotten food from one of these building deliveries?

Yes, have gotten food	25%
Yes, have heard of but not gotten food	22%
No, have not heard of	50%
Don't know / Refused	4%

**IF GOTTEN FOOD FROM BUILDING**

You mentioned you have picked up groceries from the lobby of a nearby apartment building. How useful was this service to you?

Very useful	51%
Somewhat useful	33%
Not too useful	8%
Not useful at all	7%
Don't know / Refused	1%

**IF NOT GOTTEN FOOD FROM BUILDING**

You mentioned you have NOT picked up groceries from the lobby of a nearby apartment building. If this service were available to you, how interested would you be to use it? If there are not large, centrally located apartment nearby to you and this type of service would not apply, please say so.

Very interested	32%
Somewhat interested	35%
Not too interested	11%
Not interested at all	9%
Does not apply	12%
Don't know / Refused	2%

**ASK ALL**

Some neighborhood grocery stores sell produce like fruits or vegetables at a discount that would otherwise go to waste. These are sometimes called "\$2 bags" or "fair foods". Have you ever heard of these discounted produce bags? **PROBE IF YES:** Have you ever bought one of these produce bags?

Yes, have bought a bag	29%
Yes, have heard of but not bought a bag	24%
No, have not heard of	45%
Don't know / Refused	2%

**IF GOTTEN FOOD FROM BAGS**

You mentioned you have bought discounted bags of produce before. How useful was this service to you?

Very useful	56%
Somewhat useful	28%
Not too useful	13%
Not useful at all	3%
Don't know / Refused	0%

**IF NOT GOTTEN FOOD FROM BAGS**

You mentioned you have NOT bought discounted bags of produce before. If this service were available to you, how interested would you be to use it?

Very interested	38%
Somewhat interested	39%
Not too interested	12%
Not interested at all	6%
Don't know / Refused	4%

**ASK ALL**

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with each of the following? **READ FIRST ITEM?** And would you say you are very (satisfied/dissatisfied) or just somewhat? How about **READ NEXT ITEM?**

<b>RANDOMIZE ORDER</b>	Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know / Refused
<b>IF USE SNAP</b> The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, sometimes called "SNAP"	55%	34%	8%	3%	0%
<b>IF USE WIC</b> The Nutrition, Women, and Infants Nutrition Program, sometimes called "WIC"	55%	36%	4%	1%	4%
<b>IF USE P-EBT</b> The P-EBT school nutrition program	49%	36%	8%	3%	4%
<b>IF USE UNEMP</b> State unemployment benefits	35%	41%	13%	6%	5%
<b>IF USE FOOD BANKS</b> Food pantries or other food donation programs	47%	39%	10%	2%	3%

Beyond existing programs that help you get or buy food, if you were starting from scratch what would be most helpful to you in order to provide enough food for your household?

**OPEN ENDS, CODED INTO CATEGORIES.**

Affordable food programs (grocery programs, work programs, healthy foods, staple foods, etc.)	22%
More food funds (cash, gift cards, SNAP, EBT, etc.)	21%
Access to information (resources, local community food, etc.)	18%
Better jobs (livable wages, more work, etc.)	12%
None / N/A / not sure	12%
Already works well / good / great	10%
Personal responsibility (work harder, save money, etc.)	7%
Other	7%

**IF USE SNAP OR WIC**

Thinking about everything you may have to do in order to apply for and spend food benefits like SNAP or WIC, does the amount of money you receive make the effort worthwhile?

Yes, definitely worth it	51%
Yes, somewhat worth it	40%
No, not worth it	8%
Don't know / Refused	2%

**ASK ALL**

How much easier would each of the following make it for you to get or buy food? **READ FIRST ITEM?** Would you say it would make it much easier, somewhat easier, or would it make no difference? How about **READ NEXT ITEM?**

<b>RANDOMIZE ORDER</b>	Much easier	Somewhat easier	No difference	Don't know / Refused
Expanding the income levels that are eligible for programs like SNAP and WIC	54%	28%	13%	5%
Making it easier to apply for food benefits	53%	31%	12%	4%
Not requiring ID to get food benefits	36%	30%	28%	6%
Having a central source like a website or booklet where you can look up information on food programs and donations	50%	36%	9%	4%
Being able to select the food you want rather than pre-set boxes	52%	31%	14%	4%
Not having any limits on what foods qualify for SNAP or WIC at the store	43%	33%	18%	6%
Having a food distribution truck or site in my neighborhood	49%	33%	14%	4%

If the process to apply for and spend food benefits like SNAP or WIC were more flexible, would the amount of money you receive make the effort worthwhile, or would it still not be worth it?

Yes, would definitely make it worth it	48%
Yes, would probably make it worth it	35%
No, would still not be worth it	9%
Don't know / Refused	7%

Are you the parent or guardian to any children under the age of 18?

Yes	40%
No	56%
Prefer not to say	4%

Besides children, a spouse or a partner, is there anyone else that relies on you financially in your household?

Yes	32%
No	66%
Prefer not to say	2%

Employment status

Employed full-time	43%
Employed part-time	20%
Not employed	34%
Prefer not to say	3%

## DEMOGRAPHICS (AMONG THOSE WHO ARE FOOD INSECURE)

### Age

18 to 34 years old	16%
35 to 39 years old	19%
40 to 44 years old	24%
45 to 49 years old	22%
50+	19%
Prefer not to say	<1%

### Gender

Man	44%
Woman	55%
All other	<1%
Prefer not to say	<1%

### Race

White	62%
Black / African-American	11%
Hispanic / Latino	15%
Asian	6%
Mixed race / Other	3%
Prefer not to say	<1%

### Education

High school or less	47%
Some college, no degree	27%
College degree	19%
Advanced degree	6%
Prefer not to say	1%

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### About the Poll

These results are based on a survey of 507 food insecure residents in Massachusetts. Food insecure residents were identified from a statewide survey of 1,560 residents of Massachusetts. Online interviewing was conducted from July 23 – August 3, 2021. Results were weighted to age, gender, geography, and education level. The poll was sponsored by The Shah Foundation.