

# The State of Food Security in Minnesota

## Findings from the 2025 Statewide Hunger Study

Now in its second year, the goal of the Statewide Hunger Study is to gather critical information about the prevalence of hunger in Minnesota. To do this, Wilder Research and Second Harvest Heartland collaborated to design a survey that gathers nuanced data and metrics about food security. These data also serve to help determine progress toward Second Harvest Heartland's Make Hunger History goal of cutting hunger in half for all Minnesotans by 2030.



Note: Totals exceed 100% due to rounding

### One in five Minnesotans were classified as having some level of food insecurity



15% of Minnesotans depend on food aid, like food pantries or SNAP, to get enough to eat. Because this help isn't always guaranteed and can be affected by policy changes (state and federal), these households are at risk of food insecurity.

While there is little variance between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota regarding rates of food security, regional data shows that Northwest Minnesota has the highest rates of food insecurity overall, as well as the highest proportion of households who do not have enough food to eat (regardless of aid used).

BIPOC households have a much higher proportion of food insecurity, compared to White households. Similarly, households that primarily speak languages other than English see higher rates of food insecurity, compared to English-speaking households.

#### White households

81% food secure

#### BIPOC households

55% food secure

## Do Minnesotans have enough food to eat?

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The majority of Minnesotans (93%) say their household has enough food to eat. However, some households reported experiencing hunger at much higher rates than others. Notably, households with at least one person identifying as BIPOC were much more likely to report experiences of hunger within the past year as compared to the statewide average of seven percent. This is even more pronounced among households identifying as Black or African American; more than one-quarter said they did not have enough food to eat.

Unsurprisingly, households below 200% of the federal poverty line had the highest share of those indicating hunger (30%). Other groups with noticeable differences include households who primarily speak a language other than English, those with school-aged children, and residents of the Northwest region of the state. These same groups reported more difficulty getting enough food for the people in their household, and households under 200% of the federal poverty line were approximately five times more likely than the state average to say it was “very” hard to get enough food to eat.



**When asked how often they worried about not having enough to eat, 1 in 10 households said they worried at least a few months out of the past year.**

Northwest residents were approximately three times more likely than the statewide average to report concerns about having enough food to eat nearly every month (13% and 4%, respectively). Households identifying as BIPOC, those who primarily speak a language other than English, and those with school-aged children also reported more concern.

Regarding the future, about two-thirds of Minnesotans are “very” confident about having enough food to eat one year from now. Comparatively, fewer than half of BIPOC households had a high level of confidence, and nearly one-quarter of households below 200% of the federal poverty line said they were not confident they would have enough food to eat one year from now.

## Which resources are used most?

Statewide, **food pantries** are the most-used food resource, and more than one in ten households reported receiving food from a pantry in the past year. Similar to overall levels of security, there was little difference observed between the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota regarding use of pantries; however, households in the Northwest had the highest regional representation of food pantry use (19%, compared to 11% statewide).

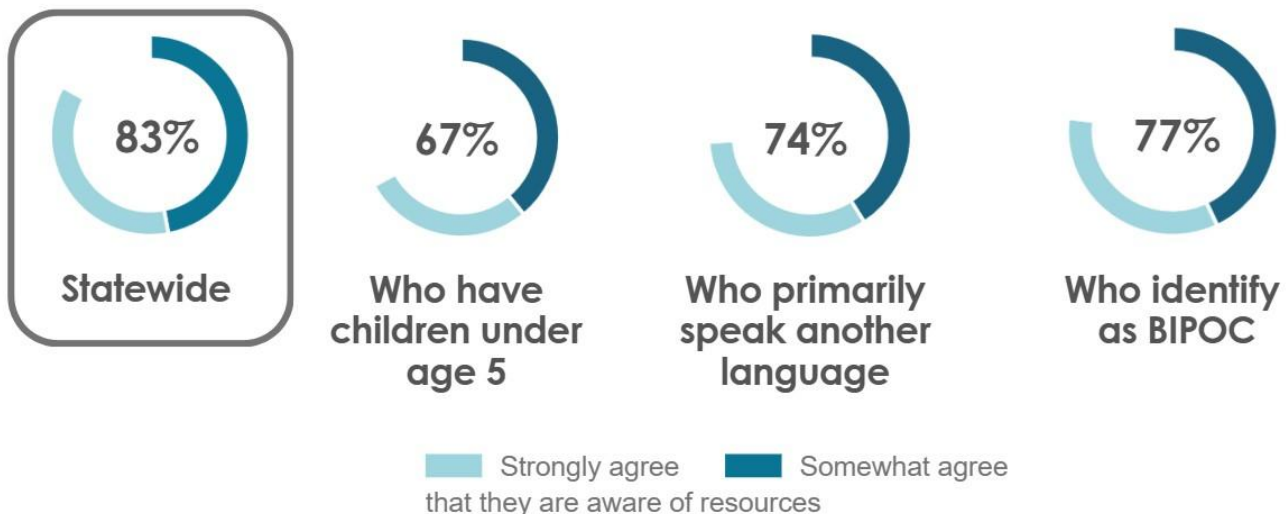
Households identifying as BIPOC and those who primarily speak a language other than English also reported more use. For households that said they accessed free food sometime in the past year, more than one third did so at least twice per month. Households with children who indicated use of free food accessed those resources at least weekly.

After food pantries, **SNAP** was used nearly as often, at 9% statewide. The groups with higher proportions reporting SNAP use include BIPOC households (especially those identifying as Black or African American), households who primarily speak a language other than English, and those with school-aged children. Northern Minnesota regions – Northland and Northwest – both had higher shares of SNAP usage. Among households with children under age 5, 19% indicated use of WIC.

### Awareness of resources

Nearly one-quarter of Minnesotans overall said they would not know how to access food aid if they needed it. Households with children under age 5 were one of the groups most likely to report this sentiment at 33%, as compared to the state average of 23%. Similarly, households who primarily speak a language other than English at home represented a larger share at 30%.

### Households with comparatively lower awareness of food resources in their community



## What barriers prevent households from having enough food?

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**Statewide, lack of reliable transportation, physical mobility issues, and taking time away from work were the most cited barriers to accessing food resources (all at 8%).**

Those in the Northland and West Central regions were more likely to cite a lack of reliable transportation, as were households that identified as BIPOC. Black or African American households and those under 200% of the federal poverty line represented a particularly large proportion of those noting transportation as a potential barrier (24% and 28%, respectively). In addition, a greater proportion of BIPOC households (21%), as well as households with children under age 5 (22%), identified “taking time off of work” as a barrier to accessing food resources.

When asked about making meals, nearly one in eight households said they had challenges with having enough time to make meals, regardless of food security status. Households identifying as BIPOC were more likely to say they did not have the emotional ability to make meals (16%, compared to the state average of 7%). Households below 200% of the federal poverty line had a higher share across the board for all challenges listed as response options, particularly physical and emotional ability to make meals. Time to make meals had the highest overall share of responses, and households with children of any age were much more likely to cite this barrier (29%) as compared to the statewide average of 12%.

## What do Minnesotans need for greater stability?

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**42%**

**of Minnesotans are concerned about their household's stability**

When asked what would have the biggest positive impact on their household's overall stability, “employment or better employment” and “reduced medical expenses” received the highest share of responses statewide at 14%. Employment was selected more often by those who primarily speak a language other than English (22%), BIPOC households (26%), and households with children (24%). Hennepin and Ramsey Counties also had slightly higher rates of people indicating a need for employment (19% and 16%, respectively), compared to other regions of the state.

Those who noted a desire for lower medical expenses were more likely to reside in Central (18%) or West Central (22%) Minnesota as compared to the statewide average of 13%. Households under 200% of the federal poverty line also had higher proportions of interest in getting help finding or paying for housing (13% as compared to the statewide average of 4%) and having access to reliable transportation (12% as compared to the statewide average of 3%).

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