



# Data Report: SNAP Benefits and Food Insecurity in the Baltimore Area

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**WEBSITE:** <https://21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey/>

**PROJECT TEAM:**  
Michael Bader

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## 1. Data

Data for this report come from the 2024 Baltimore Area Survey. The data come from a representative sample of adults 25 and older living in households in Baltimore City (N=934) and Baltimore County (N=558). Survey weights are applied to ensure that the data remain representative of the Baltimore area population. The overall margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 3.76\%$ , though the margins of error are larger for subgroups (which we report with error bars in figures below).

## 2. SNAP Recipients in the Baltimore Area

According to our data, about one in five Baltimore-area residents (18.6 percent) receives SNAP benefits. In Baltimore City, three in ten residents receives SNAP benefits compared to one in ten residents in Baltimore County.

### Food Security

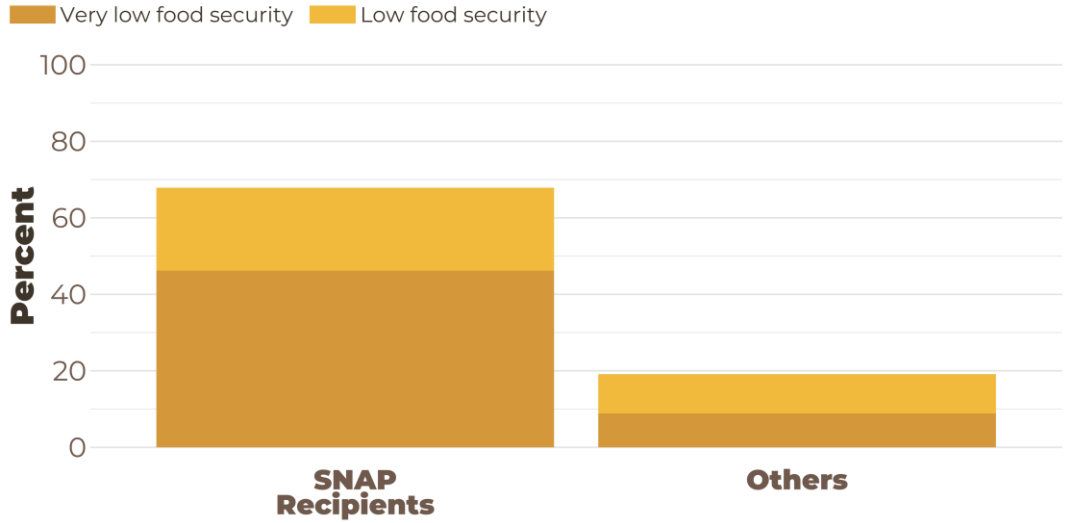
The food security index, or FSI, was created and is used by the USDA Economic Research Service to measure the risk of hunger. The FSI categorizes people into three groups based on a series of six questions about their ability to afford and plan meals over the course of a month. The first group are those that have “high food security” and are not at risk of hunger based on this measure. The second and third categories represent those who are food insecure and are categorized as “low food security,” meaning they are at risk of hunger, and “very low food security,” which means that they are at high risk of hunger. As we reported in the 2024 Portrait of Baltimore, we found that 28.4 percent of Baltimore-area residents experience food insecurity, 12.4 percent have low food security, and 16 percent have very low food security.

Among Baltimore-area residents receiving SNAP benefits, about two-thirds experience food insecurity. Almost half of residents receiving SNAP benefits—46.2 percent—experience very low food security. As we reported in our 2024 Portrait of Baltimore report, just under 30 percent of Baltimore-area residents are food insecure: 12.4 percent experience low food security and 16 percent experience very low food security.

**Figure 2.1: Share of Baltimore-area residents who are food insecure by SNAP receipt**

## Low food security among SNAP recipients

Percentage of people who experience low and very low food security, by SNAP receipt



Around one in four households with children in the Baltimore area receive SNAP benefits.

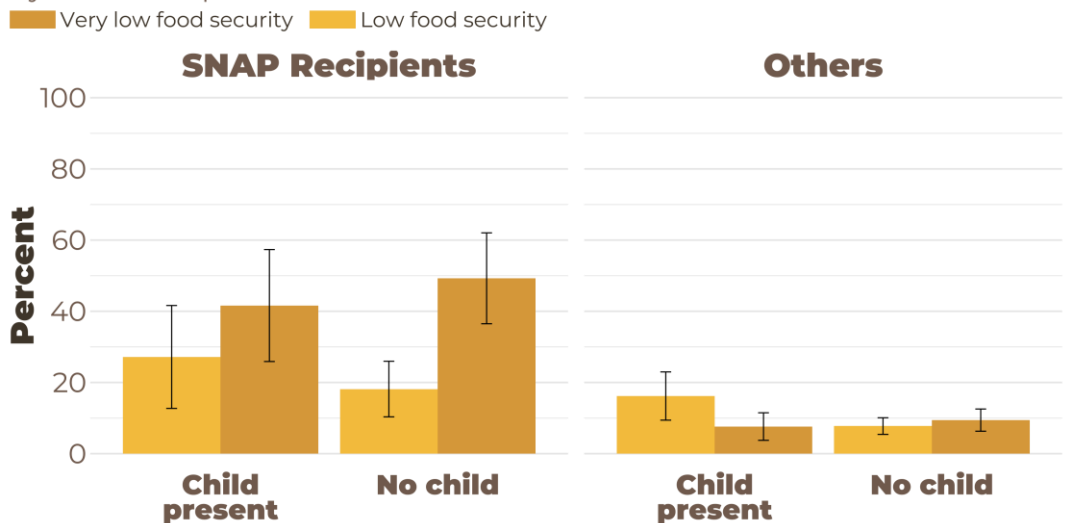
### Households with Children

Around one in four households with children in the Baltimore-area receive SNAP benefits. As a result, among the 18.6 percent of people that report receiving SNAP benefits in the Baltimore area, one in four have children living in their household. By comparison, among people who did not receive SNAP benefits, one in three have children living in their household. Among those households, about two-thirds (68.8 percent) are food insecure and 41.6 percent are very food insecure. The rates of food insecurity among SNAP recipients with children and those without children are comparable, as the differences could not be distinguished from the randomness of sampling.

**Figure 2.2: Share of Baltimore-area residents who are food insecure by SNAP receipt and presence of children in the household**

## Low food security for children

Percentage of people who experience low and very low food security, by SNAP receipt and those who have children in household



In Baltimore County, 11.1 percent of SNAP recipients have low food security while 61.3 percent have very low food security.

### SNAP Receipt and Food Security by Jurisdiction

The rates of food insecurity among residents in Baltimore City and Baltimore County vary substantially. Among Baltimore City residents who receive SNAP, 26.9 percent have low food security and 38.7 percent have very low food security. In Baltimore County, 11.1 percent of SNAP recipients have low food security while 61.3 percent have very low food security.

We are cautious interpreting the results as exact numbers since some of the categories are based on small numbers of respondents who fit all of the criteria. That said, the differences are sufficiently pronounced that we are reasonably confident that real differences exist even if the exact numbers might be different due to random sampling.

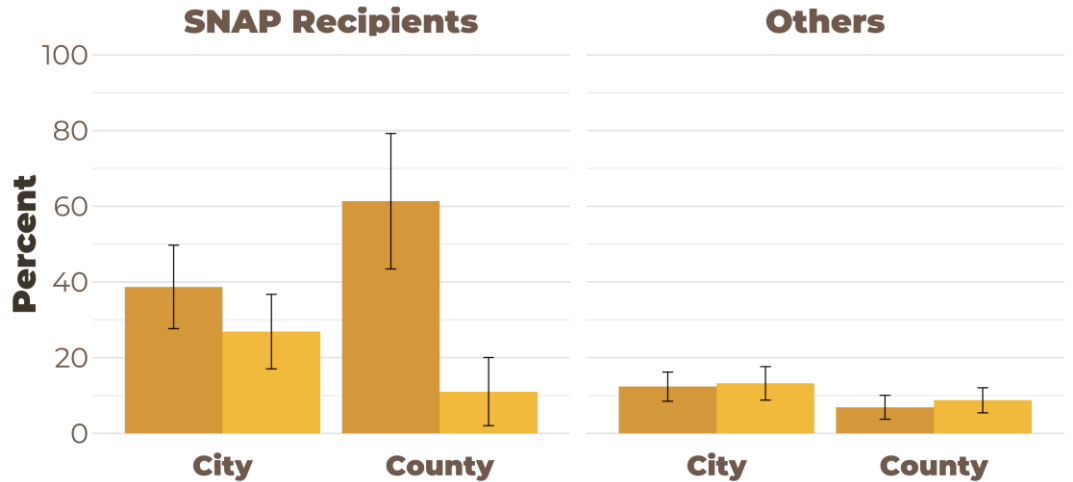


**Figure 2.3: Share of Baltimore-area residents who are food insecure by SNAP receipt and jurisdiction**

### Low Food Security by Jurisdiction

Percentage of people who experience low and very low food security, by SNAP receipt and jurisdiction

Very low food security (dark orange) Low food security (light orange)





## What is Baltimore Area Survey?

The Baltimore Area Survey (BAS) is a new, annual, representative survey of Baltimore City and County residents being run by Johns Hopkins 21st Century Cities Initiative (21CC). The BAS will help scholars, community members, and policymakers learn more about the Baltimore area's strengths and challenges from residents. 21CC affiliated researchers will partner with Baltimore community leaders and policy makers to identify pertinent topics to study and then field a survey with questions on those topics to a representative address-based sample of Baltimore City and Baltimore County residents every year. Having the survey in the field on an annual basis means that policy makers and community leaders are never more than a year away from asking important questions and having timely data. The survey will also allow for measuring change over time and looking at perceptions and opinions before and after significant events.

### Find out more:

**Website:** [21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey](http://21cc.jhu.edu/baltimore-area-survey)

**Email:** [21CC@jhu.edu](mailto:21CC@jhu.edu)