

Food Hardship: A Closer Look at Hunger State Data through June 2010

Food Research and Action Center | December 2010

About This Report

This report is the third in the Food Research and Action Center's (FRAC) series of analyses of survey data on food hardship collected by Gallup as part of the Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index. This particular analysis looks at **food hardship rates by state in the first half of 2010**. The report thereby provides the most up-to-date examination yet at the state level of the struggle that very large numbers of American households are having affording enough food. This new analysis updates and builds on national and state data concerning food hardship in 2008-2009 that FRAC released in January 2010, and national data on food hardship in 2010 through September that FRAC released last month.

The ability to provide such data comes from Gallup's partnership with Healthways that is interviewing 1,000 households per day almost every day, year-round. As part of this partnership, respondents are asked a series of questions on a range of topics, including physical health, healthy behavior, work environment and access to basic services. One key question is: "Have there been times in the past twelve months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?" In this analysis by FRAC, we refer to a "yes" answer as "food hardship."

Food Hardship Reached Nearly One in Seven Respondents In Nearly Every State in the First Six Months of 2010

Table 1 provides the food hardship rate for all 50 states and the District of Columbia for the months of January through June 2010. Sixteen states had rates of 20 percent or higher – this means at least one in five persons contacted by Gallup in those states answered that there had been times in the past twelve months when they did not have enough money to buy food that they or their family needed. Thirty-eight states and the District of Columbia had rates of 16 percent or higher. Only three states – Wisconsin, Minnesota and North Dakota – had a rate below 14 percent.

In Table 2 we compare the rates for the twelve months from July 2008 through June 2009 to the twelve months from July 2009 through June 2010. Comparing those two periods, five states saw a statistically significant increase in their food hardship rates (Alaska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah). Five states saw a statistically significant decrease (Minnesota, Missouri, New York, Ohio, and Washington).

For earlier data and a discussion of the methodology, go to <http://frac.org/reports-and-resources/food-hardship-data/>.

State	Food Hardship Rate
Mississippi	25.64
South Carolina	24.32
West Virginia	22.97
Alabama	22.80
Texas	22.39
Georgia	22.21
North Carolina	22.12
Kentucky	21.71
Oklahoma	21.42
Louisiana	20.94
Florida	20.90
Tennessee	20.88
Idaho	20.46
Arkansas	20.25
California	20.24
Montana	20.10

Table 1: Food Hardship Rates: January – June 2010

State	January - June 2010	MOE (+/-)
Alabama	22.80	1.27
Alaska	18.96	2.52
Arizona	19.80	1.06
Arkansas	20.25	1.54
California	20.24	0.49
Colorado	17.36	1.06
Connecticut	14.57	1.31
Delaware	18.49	2.64
District of Columbia	18.29	3.40
Florida	20.90	0.68
Georgia	22.21	0.99
Hawaii	16.13	2.73
Idaho	20.46	1.93
Illinois	16.48	0.79
Indiana	19.15	1.02
Iowa	14.66	1.25
Kansas	17.69	1.47
Kentucky	21.71	1.25
Louisiana	20.94	1.35
Maine	19.39	1.92
Maryland	14.15	0.98
Massachusetts	14.97	0.97
Michigan	19.80	0.91
Minnesota	12.28	0.90
Mississippi	25.64	1.79
Missouri	18.82	1.04
Montana	20.10	2.06
Nebraska	14.40	1.69
Nevada	18.21	1.64
New Hampshire	14.90	1.84
New Jersey	14.70	0.87
New Mexico	19.95	1.80
New York	17.16	0.65
North Carolina	22.12	0.88
North Dakota	9.11	2.17
Ohio	18.27	0.78
Oklahoma	21.42	1.31
Oregon	19.25	1.18
Pennsylvania	16.37	0.64
Rhode Island	18.91	2.53
South Carolina	24.32	1.38
South Dakota	16.42	2.66
Tennessee	20.88	1.04
Texas	22.39	0.65
Utah	16.67	1.46
Vermont	15.75	2.41
Virginia	16.61	0.85
Washington	16.07	0.87
West Virginia	22.97	1.79
Wisconsin	13.86	0.90
Wyoming	15.69	2.71
National	17.73	0.15

Table 2: Food Hardship Rates: July 2008 – June 2009 Compared to July 2009 – June 2010

State	July 2008 – June 2009	MOE (+/-)	July 2009 – June 2010	MOE (+/-)
Alabama	23.38	1.09	23.62	0.93
Alaska*	13.86	1.84	17.56	1.73
Arizona	19.50	0.88	20.62	0.77
Arkansas	22.82	1.33	22.25	1.13
California	19.51	0.39	20.18	0.35
Colorado	17.66	0.91	17.12	0.76
Connecticut	15.34	0.99	14.49	0.89
Delaware	17.63	2.32	17.72	1.92
District of Columbia	20.99	3.00	19.01	2.55
Florida	20.18	0.57	21.28	0.50
Georgia	21.77	0.83	21.87	0.71
Hawaii	15.63	2.02	16.01	1.89
Idaho	16.57	1.51	18.27	1.33
Illinois	16.51	0.65	17.28	0.57
Indiana	21.04	0.86	19.91	0.74
Iowa	13.96	1.04	13.52	0.85
Kansas*	15.66	1.16	18.09	1.05
Kentucky	22.49	1.09	21.65	0.90
Louisiana	23.12	1.27	21.54	0.99
Maine	18.22	1.36	17.33	1.23
Maryland	15.22	0.88	14.86	0.73
Massachusetts	15.95	0.75	15.64	0.67
Michigan	19.51	0.73	19.33	0.63
Minnesota*	15.17	0.83	12.40	0.64
Mississippi	28.39	1.58	25.45	1.29
Missouri*	21.53	0.89	18.74	0.73
Montana	14.96	1.59	17.84	1.44
Nebraska	15.68	1.45	15.30	1.22
Nevada	21.37	1.48	20.06	1.22
New Hampshire	15.23	1.45	15.82	1.29
New Jersey	15.54	0.69	15.01	0.61
New Mexico	20.13	1.55	20.53	1.32
New York*	18.28	0.51	17.13	0.44
North Carolina	21.48	0.74	22.53	0.63
North Dakota	8.58	1.69	10.57	1.65
Ohio*	21.07	0.67	18.82	0.56
Oklahoma*	20.20	1.08	22.89	0.97
Oregon	19.07	0.97	19.46	0.84
Pennsylvania	16.78	0.49	16.11	0.43
Rhode Island	18.44	1.86	18.43	1.70
South Carolina	22.04	1.11	23.45	0.99
South Dakota	11.99	1.92	14.19	1.78
Tennessee	21.96	0.91	22.42	0.78
Texas*	20.70	0.55	21.88	0.47
Utah*	16.37	1.26	19.21	1.10
Vermont	15.78	1.77	16.28	1.69
Virginia	15.98	0.73	16.52	0.61
Washington*	17.82	0.74	16.39	0.62
West Virginia	21.22	1.52	21.89	1.27
Wisconsin	15.15	0.77	14.85	0.66
Wyoming	15.79	2.38	15.63	1.98
National	18.52	0.12	17.96	0.11

* Signifies a state that experienced a statistically significant change in its food hardship rate.