

Food Insecurity in the U.S.: A Brief Overview

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Definitions

FOOD SECURITY

Access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life

FOOD INSECURITY

Uncertain or limited access to enough food for a healthy, active life due to lack of money or resources.



The big picture

Food security is measured annually by the Census Bureau

Households are food insecure if unable to consistently meet their food needs due to lack of money or resources

Food insecurity is a broad concept – spans low and high severities

Food insecurity is widespread but uneven

- 14 percent of households were food insecure in 2014... an estimated 17.4 million households including over 48 million people
- Over 20 percent of children lived in food insecure households... including 15.3 million kids
- Food insecurity is usually recurrent rather than a one-time event
- Food insecurity varies widely – by geography, by household type, by economic and policy climate

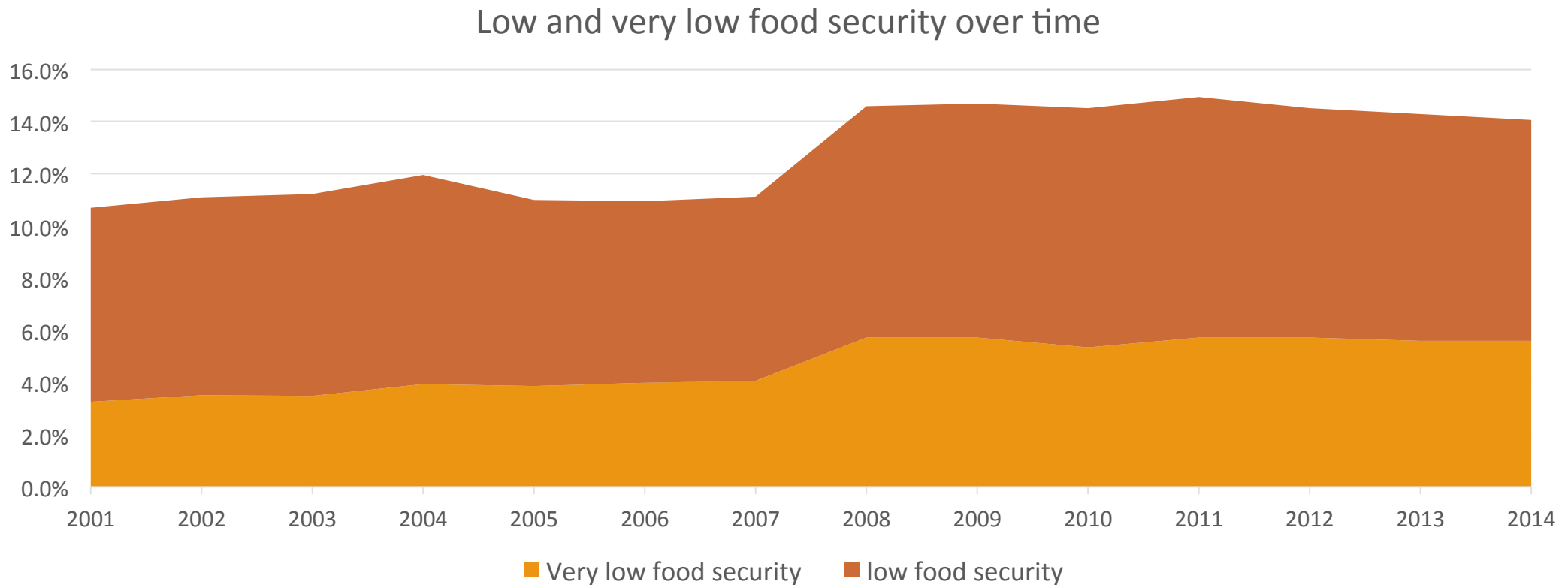
Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2014*

Food insecurity is much more common than it used to be



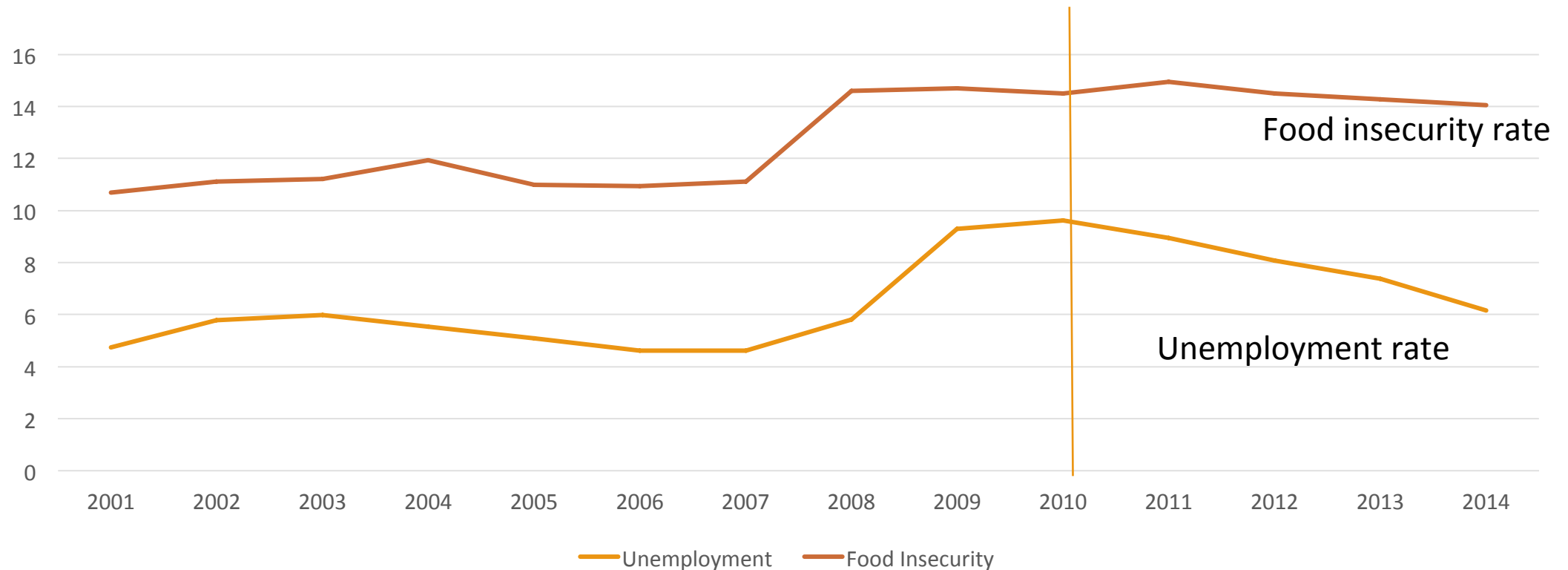
Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2001-2014*

Food insecurity is more severe than it used to be



Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2001-2014*

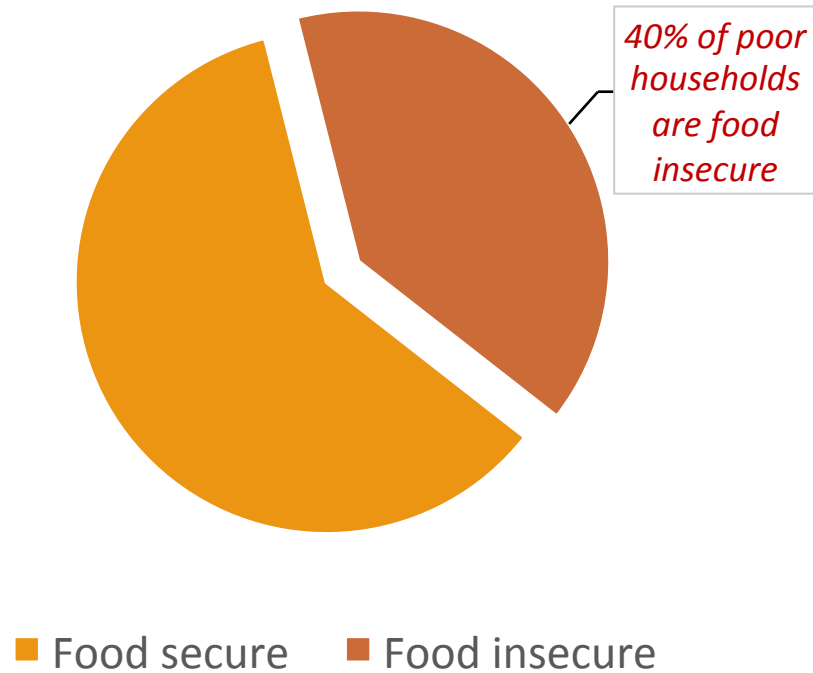
Food security has diverged from conventional economic benchmarks



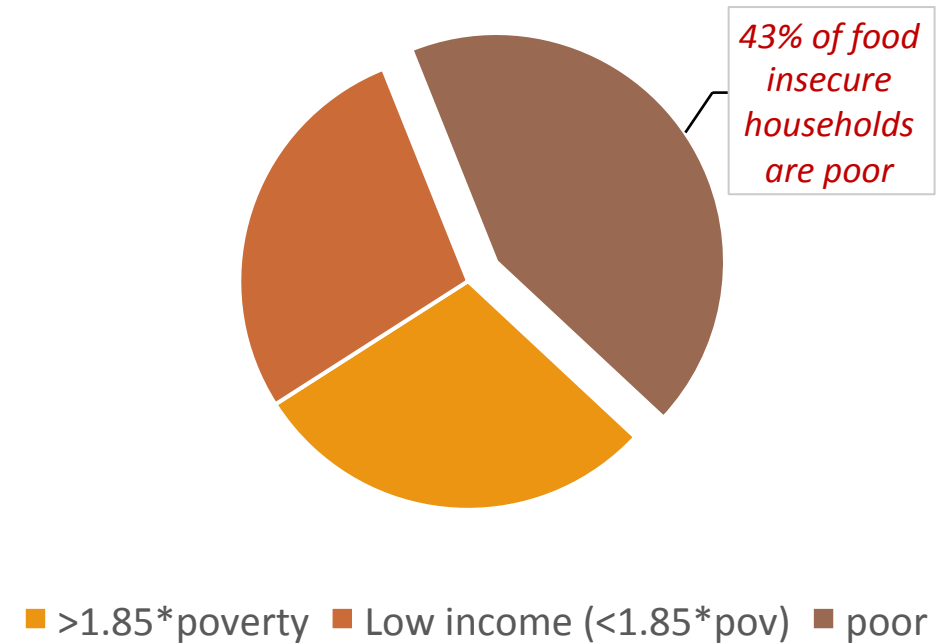
Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2001-2014*

Poverty is the biggest risk factor for food insecurity – but they aren't the same

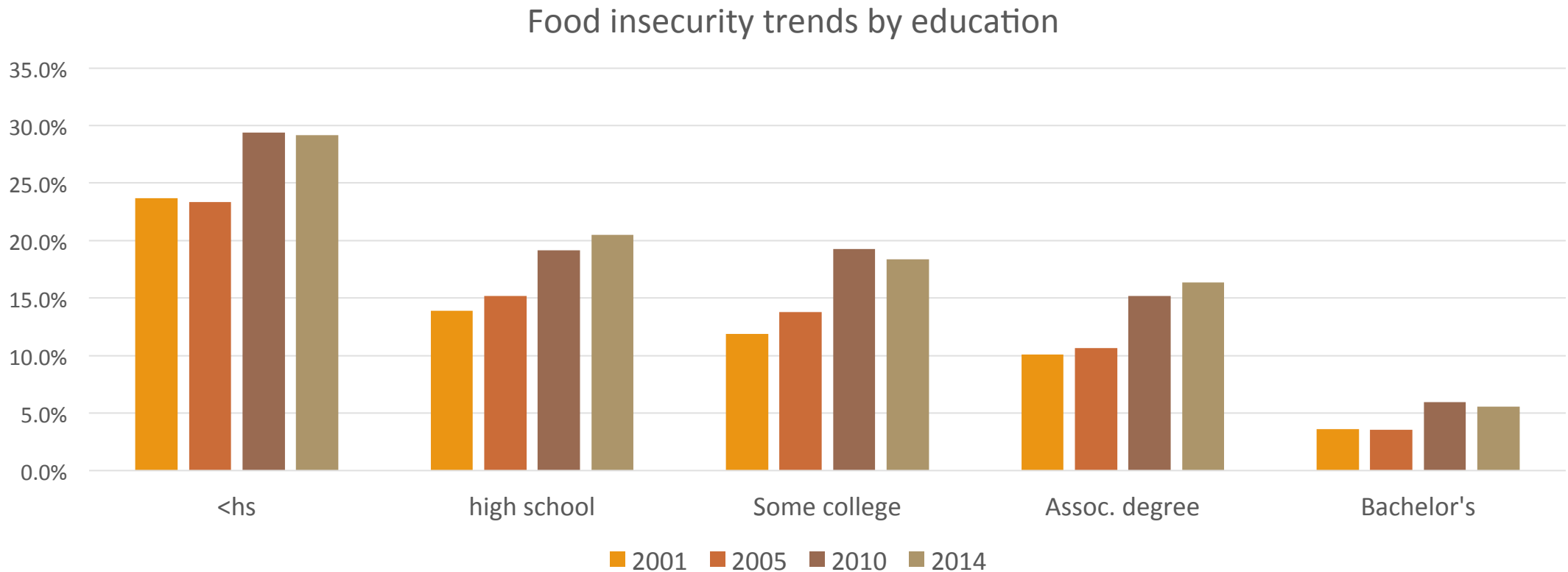
Food insecurity among poor households



Poverty among food insecure households

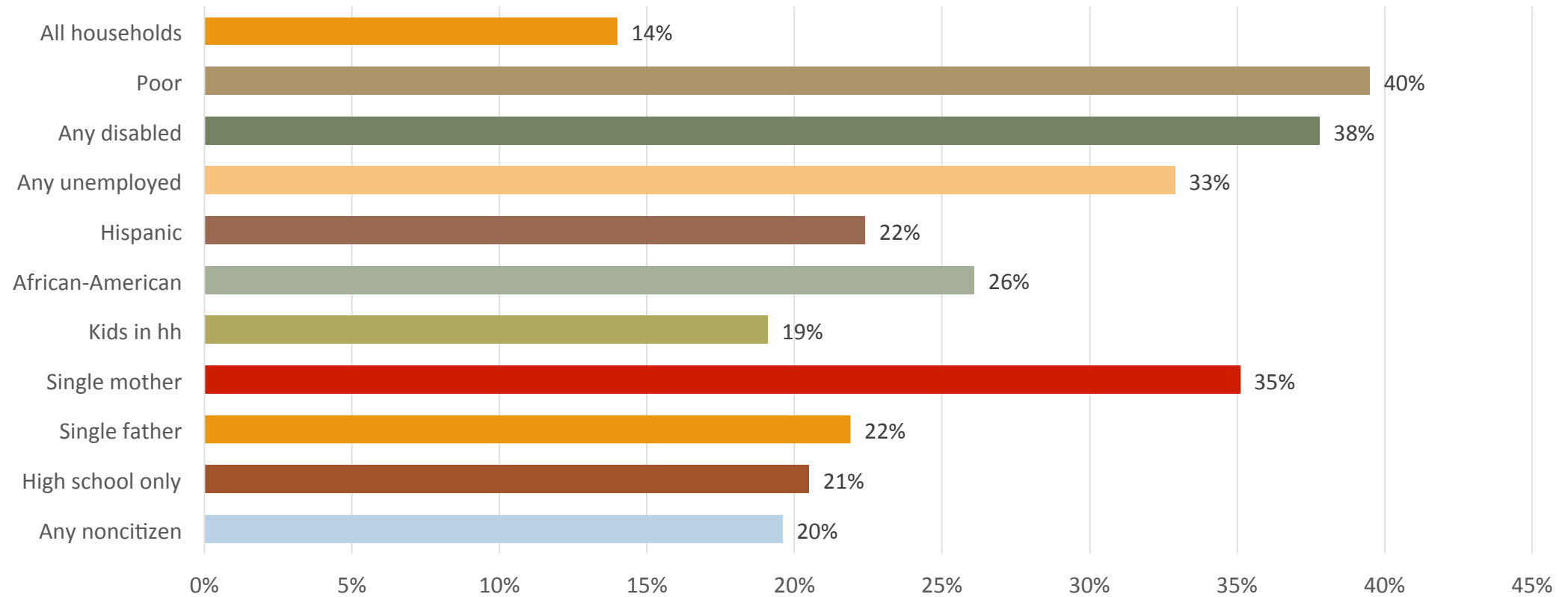


Education matters – but food insecurity has increased for all education levels



Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2001-2014*

The risk of food insecurity varies widely across groups



Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2014*

Context matters

Low unemployment and better-paying jobs matter

Cost-of-living matters

Food assistance safety net matters

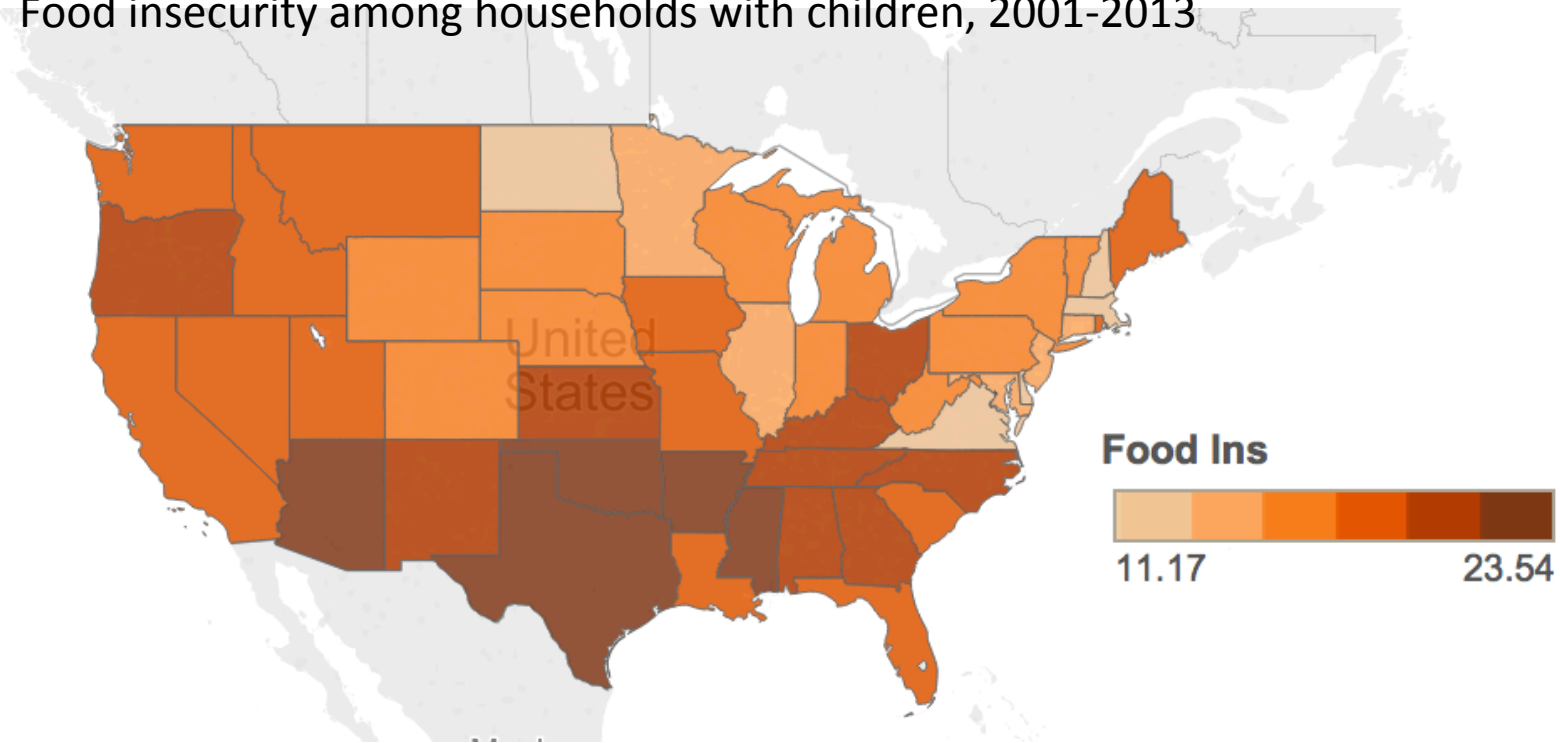
Non-food safety net matters

The emergency food system matters

The food environment matters

Food insecurity varies by place...

Food insecurity among households with children, 2001-2013



Source: *Current Population Survey – Food Security Supplement, 2001-2013*

Key takeaways:



- Food insecurity is widespread but uneven



- Food insecurity has grown considerably over the past decade, in both scope and severity



- Food insecurity is strongly influenced by individual/household characteristics, but also by the contexts in which people live