What is food insecurity?

**Low food security**
Reduced the quality, variety, and desirability of diets, but the quantity of food intake and normal eating patterns were not substantially disrupted.

**Very low food security**
At times during the year, eating patterns of one or more household members were disrupted and food intake reduced because the household lacked money and other resources for food. This is commonly referred to as “hunger.”

What are common characteristics of food insecurity?

- Limiting the amount of money spent on food - buying less
- Eating less food because of low money
- Inability to participate in a Food Assistance Program
- Using coping mechanisms when food is scarce: e.g., buying cheaper, lower nutritional quality food
- Two-thirds of food insecure households have an adult with a full-time job

Who measures food insecurity?

The USDA in the Current Population Survey conducted by the Census Bureau for Labor Statistics, through a 10-18 question survey. Households that report three or more conditions that indicate food insecurity are classified as “food insecure.”

A National Look

- 1 in 6 people are food insecure - 49 million people
- 1 in 5 children are food insecure - 16 million children
- Texas has above average food insecurity
- Unemployment and poverty rates affect food insecurity

Texas

- Texas ranks second in highest food insecure households at 17%
- 1 in 4 Texas children are food insecure
- 1.7 million households are food insecure
- In 13 Texas counties one-third or more children are food insecure

Harris County

- 4th highest county in the US for food insecure individuals
- 25% of children in Harris County are food insecure
- 18% of all individuals in Harris County are food insecure
- Child food insecurity increased by 19,630 in 2015 in Southeast Texas

Food Deserts

Geographic areas where it is difficult to buy affordable or good-quality fresh food. Often there may be an abundance of food in a food desert, however little of it is fresh, nutritious and commonly high is salt and sugar.