

# Food Insecurity in Florida

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## Presentation to the Senate Committee on Agriculture

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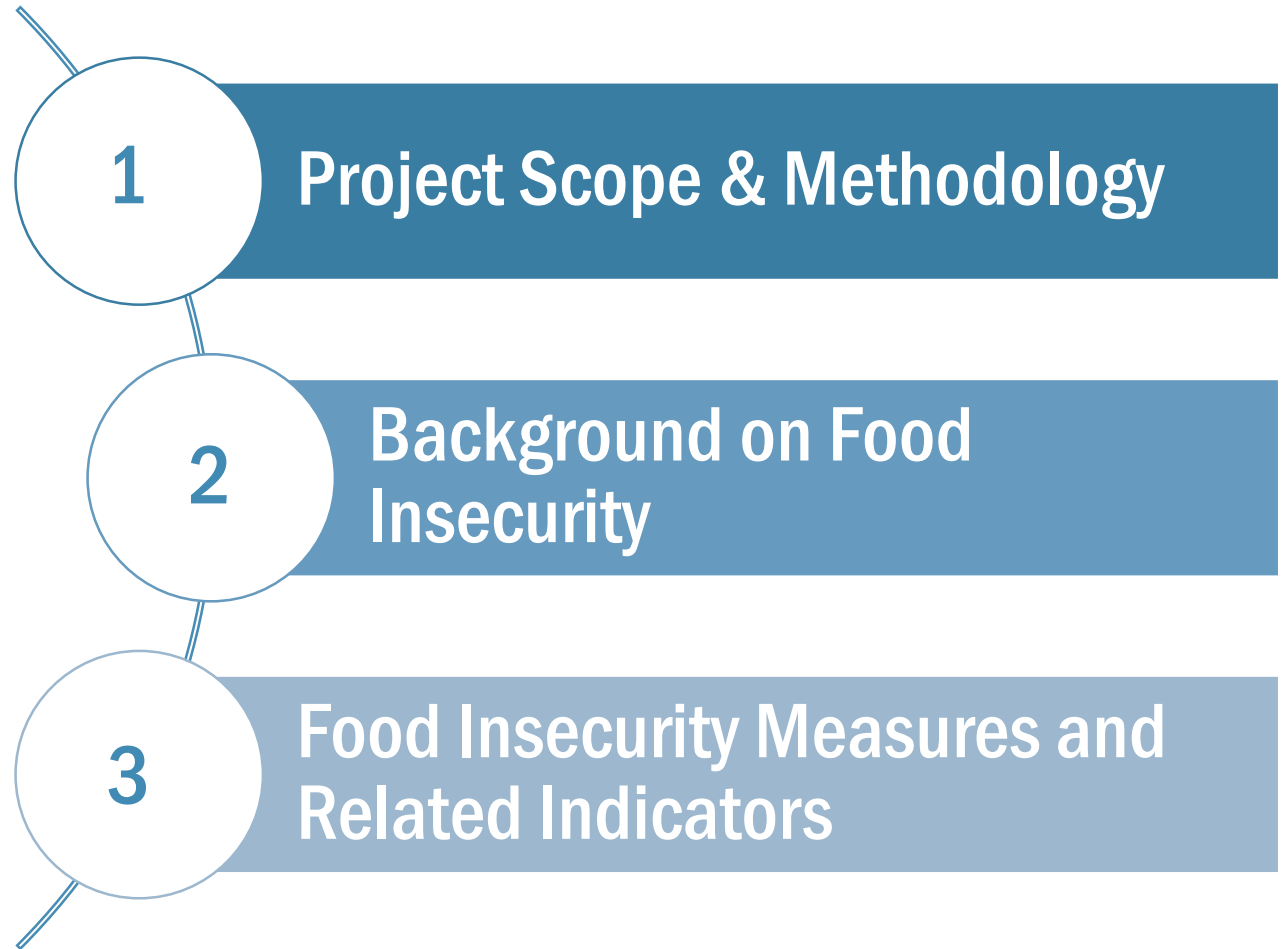
# OPPAGA

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability

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# Overview

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# Project Scope

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- **Identify definitions and measures of food insecurity**
  - Review academic literature and other studies
  - Identify and define commonly used measures and describe any limitations
  
- **Using existing data sources, compile county-level data in Florida for**
  - Measures of food insecurity
  - Other associated indicators

# Methodology

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## Literature Review

- Populations affected
- Health impacts
- Measures of and indicators related to food insecurity
- Limitations of food insecurity measures and indicators

## Food Assistance Program Review

- Background information and eligibility criteria for federal and state food assistance programs
- Available data sources related to program participation

## Data Collection, Analysis, and Presentation

- Compiled county-level information on food insecurity measures and other indicators in Florida
  - Food Insecurity Measures
  - Federal Food Assistance Participation Measures
  - Economic Indicators
  - Homeless Population

# Background

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# Food Insecurity Overview

Food Insecurity is a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food

**U.S. Food  
Insecurity**

14.9% (2011)



10.5% (2019)

**Florida Food  
Insecurity**

16.2% (2014)



13.0% (2018)

# Populations Affected by Food Insecurity

## What populations are more likely to be food insecure?

- Females
- Younger adults
- Those from a racial/ethnic minority group
- Those who have lower socioeconomic status
- Households with children
- Those who live in poverty
- Those who are unemployed

## What are the health impacts of food insecurity?

- For adults: poor nutrition, mental health problems, diabetes, hypertension, and trouble sleeping
- For Children: anemia, poor nutrition, cognitive problems, higher risk of hospitalization, poor health generally, asthma, behavioral problems, depression, and poor oral health

# Food Assistance Programs

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## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

- The largest federal nutrition assistance program that helps low-income people buy nutritious food

## National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

- A federally assisted meal program that provides nutritionally balanced meals each day to students in both public and private schools

## Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)

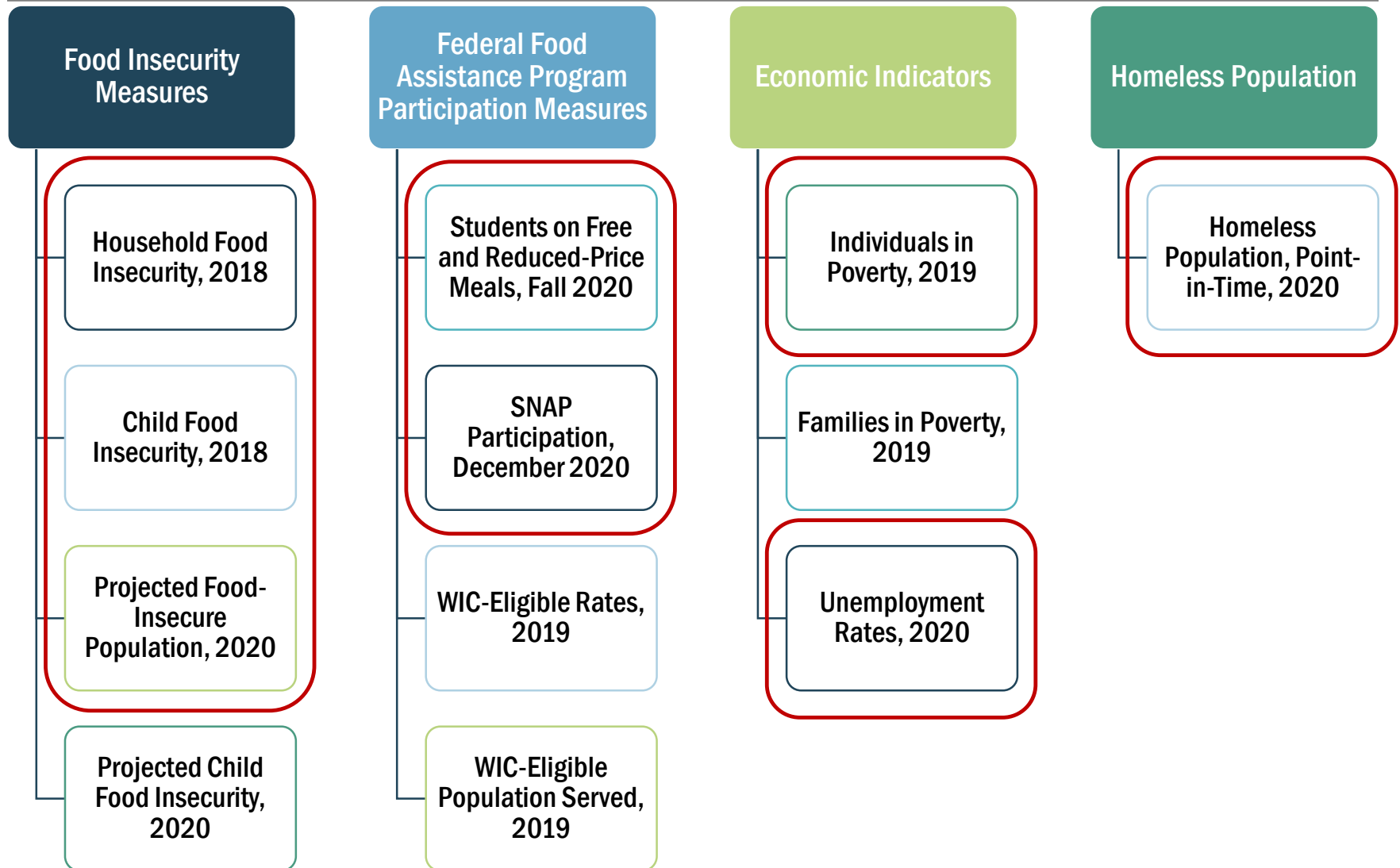
- Federal program that provides nutritious foods intended to supplement participants' diets, as well as health-based resources such as health screenings and nutrition counseling for eligible women and children



# Food Insecurity Measures and Related Indicators

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# Food Insecurity Measures and Related Indicators

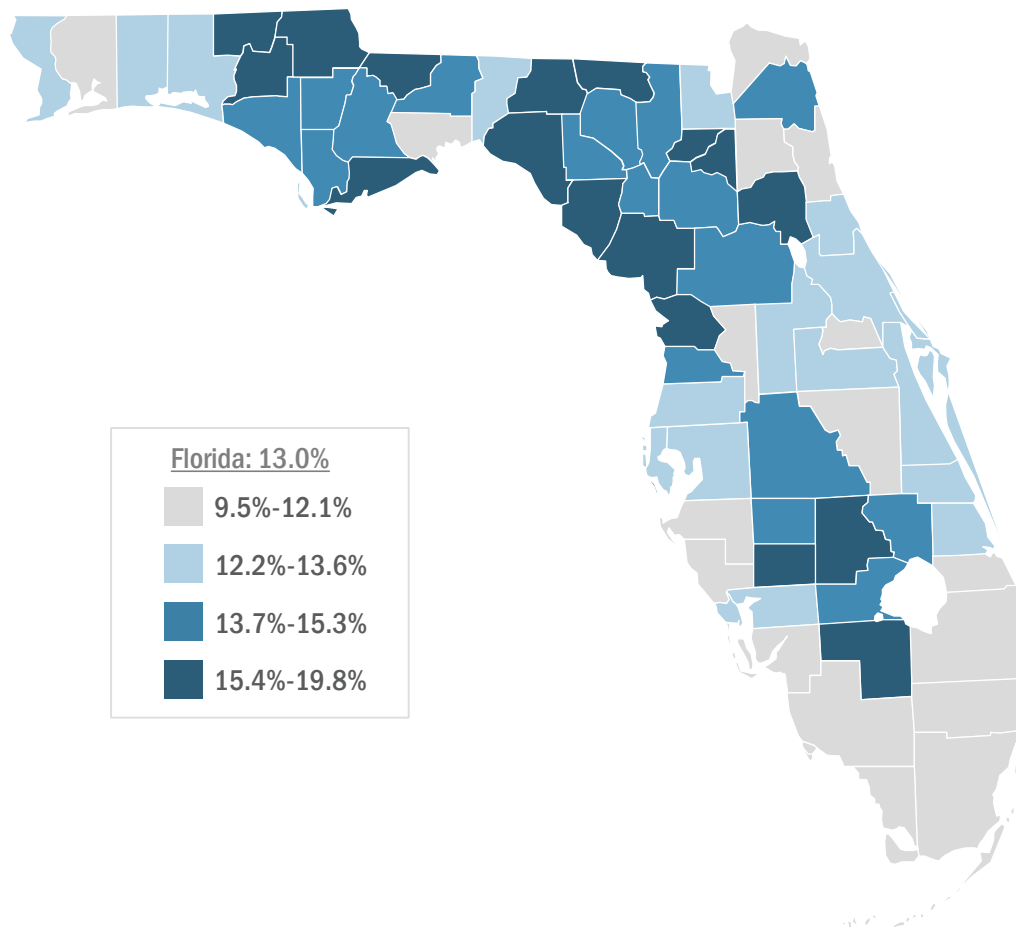


# Food Insecurity Measures

- **Standard measure is based on questions from the U.S. Census Current Population Survey Food Security Supplement (CPS-FSS)**
  - Includes household survey questions about difficulty meeting food needs at any time during in the past 12 months
  - Available at the state level but unavailable at the county level
- **County level food insecurity data are generated by Feeding America, the largest national domestic hunger-relief organization**
  - County-level estimates based on statistical models using results from the CPS-FSS, combined with information from American Community Surveys
  - Measures presented include county-level household food insecurity rates, child food insecurity rates, and projected 2020 food insecurity estimates

# Household Food Insecurity, 2018

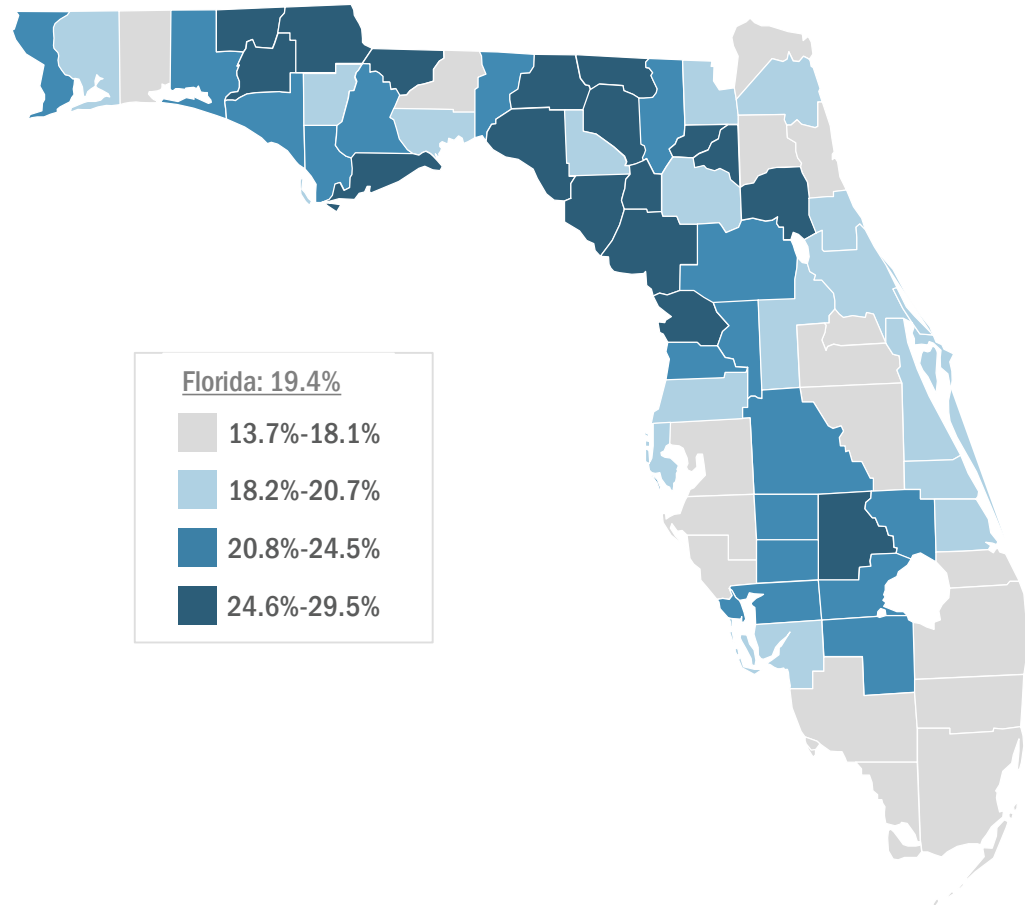
In 2018, county-level household estimated food insecurity in Florida ranged from 9.5% in St. Johns County to 19.8% in Hamilton County



Source: Florida Department of Health FLHealthCHARTS Data Viewer. <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndRateOnlyDataViewer.aspx?cid=9910>

# Child Food Insecurity, 2018

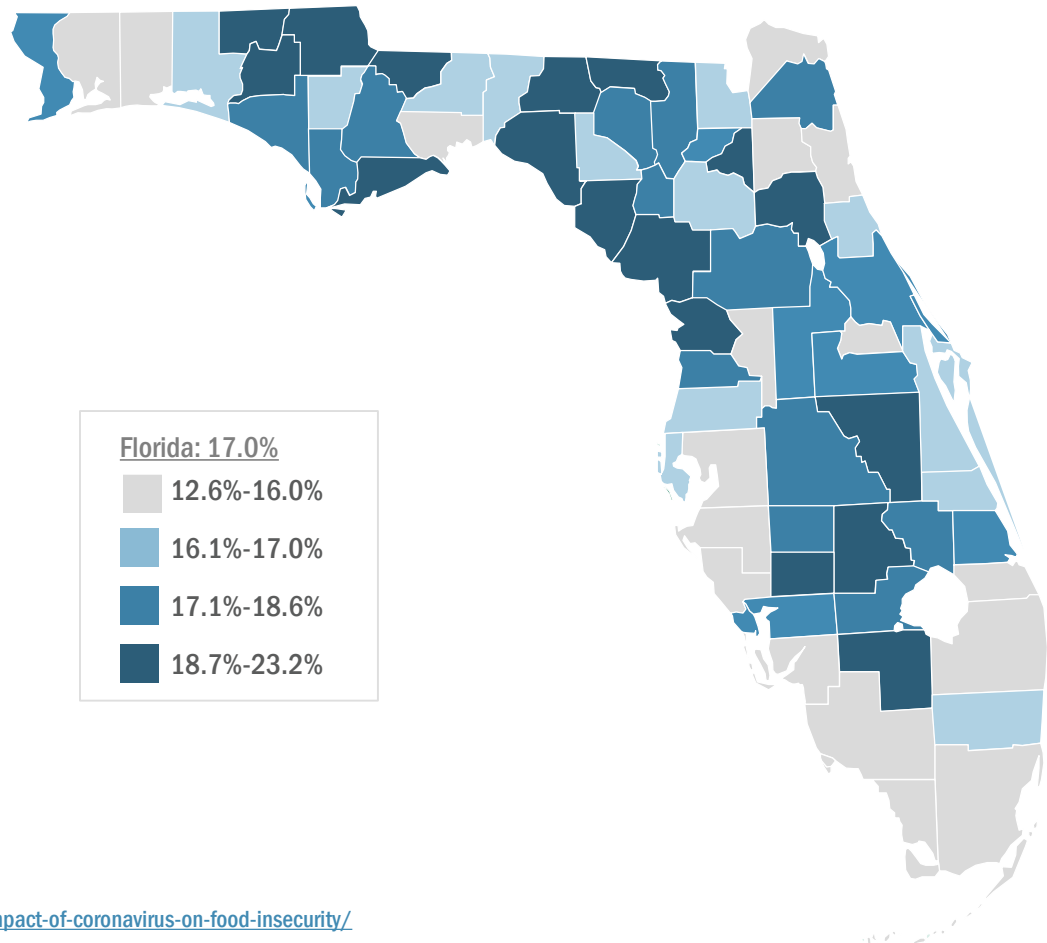
Child food insecurity in Florida in 2018 ranged from 13.7% in St. Johns County to 29.5% in Madison County



Source: Florida Department of Health FLHealthCHARTS Data Viewer. <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndRateOnlyDataViewer.aspx?cid=9911>

# Projected Food Insecure Population, 2020

Food insecurity rates for 2020 are projected to increase in Florida and nationally, largely resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic



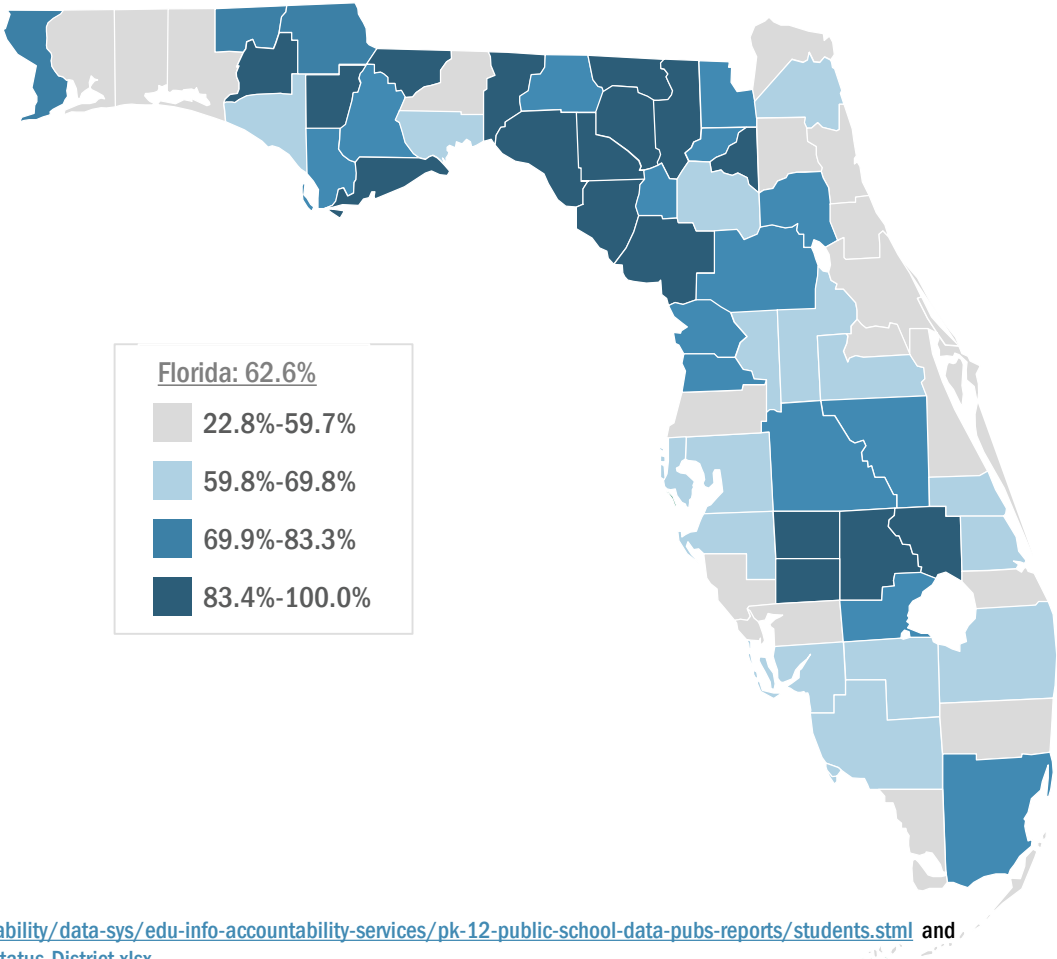
Source: Feeding America. <https://www.feedingamericaaction.org/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-food-insecurity/>

# Federal Food Assistance Program Participation Measures

- Participation in food assistance programs helps alleviate food insecurity, but participation rates are not good measures of food insecurity; rather, they are indicative of underlying conditions that contribute to food insecurity
- Populations on food assistance programs could be more vulnerable to food insecurity without these programs
- In our research, we present information on recent statewide trends in SNAP participation and county-level participation in SNAP, students on Free and Reduced-Price Meals, and WIC-eligible population and WIC population served

# Students on Free and Reduced-Price Meals, Fall 2020\*

Students on Free and Reduced-Price Meals in Fall 2020 ranged from a low of 22.8% in St. Johns County to a high of 100% in Gadsden and Jefferson Counties



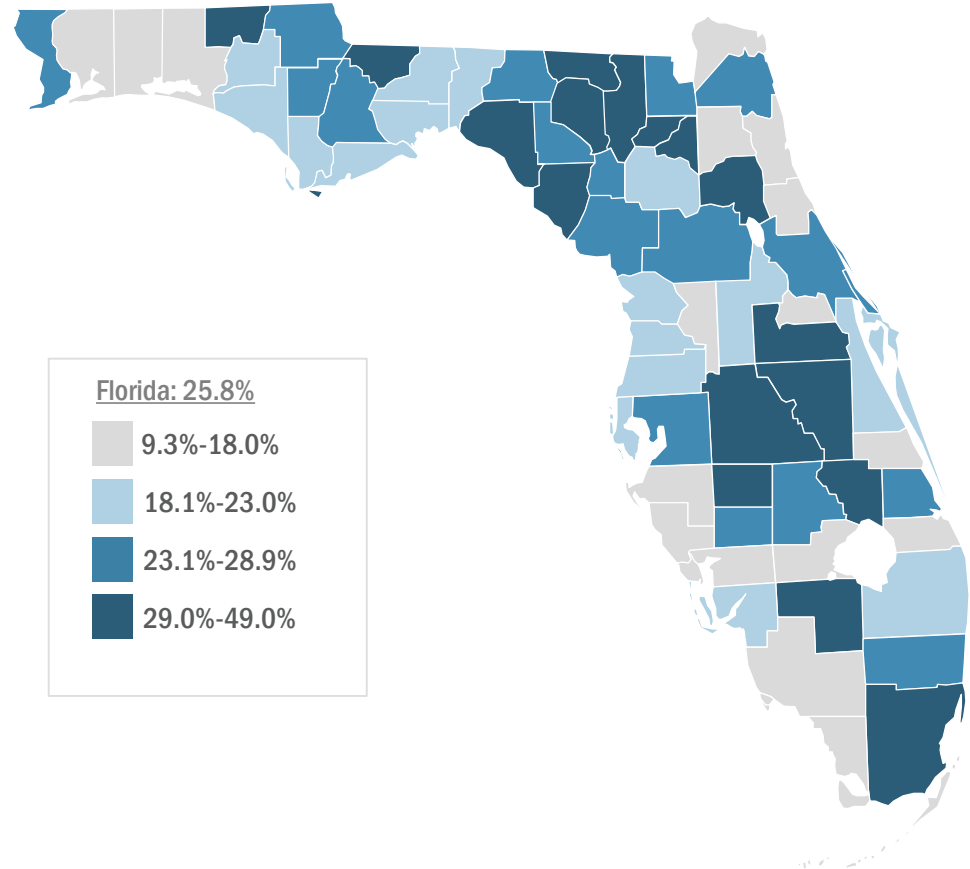
\* With funding multiplier applied.

Source: Florida Department of Education. <http://www.fldoe.org/accountability/data-sys/edu-info-accountability-services/pk-12-public-school-data-pubs-reports/students.stml> and <http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7584/urll/2021FS2-Lunch-Status-District.xlsx>



# SNAP Participation, December 2020

Household SNAP participation rate in Florida ranged from 9.3% in Sumter County to 49.0% in Miami-Dade County in December 2020



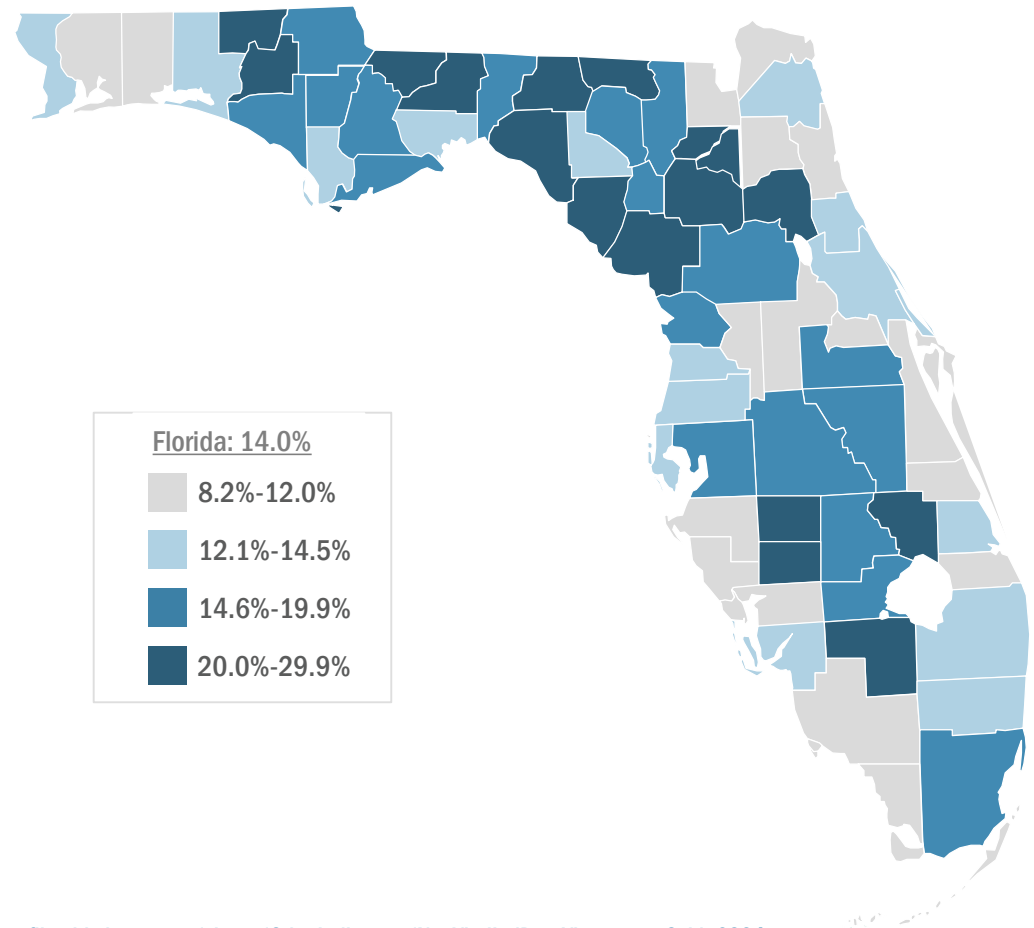
Source: Florida Department of Children and Families. <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access/StandardDataReports.asp>

# Economic Indicators

- **Individuals and families who are in poverty and those who are unemployed are more likely to be food insecure**
- **Individuals who have incomes above the federal poverty level may also be food insecure**
  - A study that examined trends in food insecurity from 2011 to 2017 found that 58% of all food-insecure households reported incomes above the federal poverty level
- **In our research, we present county-level data on individuals and families in poverty and unemployment rates**

# Estimated Number of Individuals in Poverty, 2019

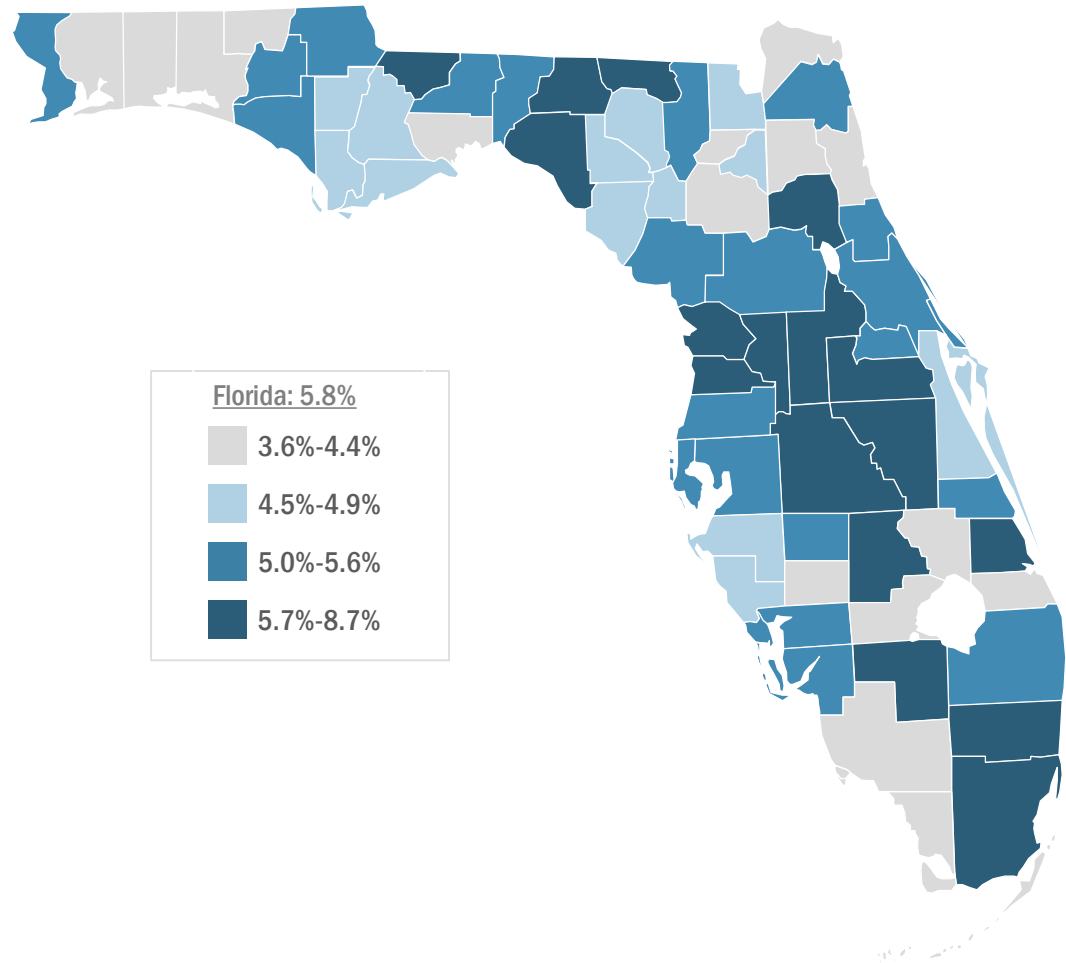
The percentage of individuals in poverty in Florida in 2019 ranged from 8.2% in St. Johns and Sumter Counties to 29.9% in Hamilton County



Source: Florida Department of Health FLHealthCHARTS Data Viewer. <http://www.flhealthcharts.com/charts/OtherIndicators/NonVitalIndDataViewer.aspx?cid=0294>

# Unemployment Rates, 2020\*

Unemployment rates in December 2020 ranged from 3.6% in St. Johns and Wakulla Counties to 8.7% in Osceola County



\*Not Seasonally Adjusted

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

# Homeless Population, Point-in-Time, 2020

- The homeless population is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity but may be underrepresented in other measures of food insecurity and related indicators
- Continuum of Care geographic areas count the number of people experiencing homelessness in their geographic area on a given day
- In our research, we present homeless population point-in-time counts, which ranged from 2 in Washington County to 3,472 in Miami-Dade County in 2020

# Summary of Food Insecurity Measures and Related Indicators

## Food Insecurity Measures

- U.S. Census CPS Household survey questions collect data on food insecurity; these are unavailable at the county level.
- Feeding America generates county-level food insecurity estimates.

## Federal Food Assistance Participation Measures

- Participation in food assistance programs helps alleviate food insecurity, but participation rates are not good measures of food insecurity. They are indicative of underlying conditions that contribute to food insecurity.
- Populations on food assistance programs could be more vulnerable to food insecurity without these programs.

## Economic Indicators

- These are predictors of food insecurity but are not direct measures of food insecurity.
- These indicators provide information on populations that may be vulnerable to food insecurity.

## Homeless Population

- The homeless population is particularly vulnerable to food insecurity but is not captured in other measures of food insecurity and related indicators.

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# Questions?

# Contact Information

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