

Engaging in Conversation and Assessing Food Insecurity

As you begin engaging in conversation and assessing a service member's current food security, recognize that food insecurity can occur whenever there is stress on resources in a household – time or money. The key is to start the conversation, perhaps at a morning stand-up, during a feedback session or anytime you may meet with your service members.

Sample script for conversation with service members:

“The issue of not having enough food or the type of food you need to do your mission is a real concern. There are two proven questions to help understand if you are dealing with food insecurity – I would like to ask them now. If the answer to either question is yes, I want to get you connected to resources that can help depending on your situation. Please know that food insecurity is just as common for single service members as for married service members.”

Ask if the following two statements are ‘often true,’ ‘sometimes true’ or ‘never true.’

- A. Within the past 12 months, we worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.
- B. Within the past 12 months, the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more.

A response to either question of ‘often true’ or ‘sometimes true’ can indicate potential food insecurity. It is important to understand why the potential exists in order to connect the service member with appropriate resources.

- “I have some resources I want to share with you that can help get you the support you need.”
- REVIEW RESOURCES at ACT BUTTON.
- After a service member seeks out additional assistance, continue to follow up on their progress and/or resolution to barriers affecting their financial well-being.

A response of ‘never true’:

- “Food may become an issue in the future, especially during a move or other transitions – please reach out or call Military OneSource if you need support.”

Note: the two questions above are the Hunger Vital Signs Measure© and can be included on your confidential survey of a unit if helpful to understand the local context. DoD will be including food security questions on large scale representative surveys of Active Duty, Reserve Component and spouse surveys.