Food Security of Active Duty Spouses

Using the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) definition and six-item short form measure of food security, the Office of People Analytics (OPA) determined the prevalence of food insecurity within the military spouse population via a web-based survey. Data were sampled and weighted to be generalizable to the entire spouse population.

OF TOTAL ACTIVE DUTY SPOUSES...

75% ARE FOOD SECURE

FOOD SECURE
Access at all times to enough food for an active, healthful life for all household members.

LOW FOOD SECURITY
Reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.

VERY LOW FOOD SECURITY
Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Service Branch

PERCENTAGE OF FOOD INSECURE SPOUSES...

Army 27%* Navy 25% Marines 28%* Air Force 21%*

*The Army and Marine Corps spouses had significantly higher percentages report food insecurity while Air Force spouses had lower percentages report food insecurity.

Rank/Paygrade

31% of ENLISTED SPOUSES are food insecure

E1-E4 45%* E5-E6 30% E7-E9 16%*

*The percentage of junior enlisted spouses (E1-E4) who are food insecure is significantly higher than spouses of other enlisted pay grades. The percentage of senior enlisted spouses (E7-E9), who are food insecure is significantly lower than spouses of other enlisted pay grades.

Family and Employment Status

27%* with Children Under 6 years old
24% without Children Under 6 years old
41%† are Unemployed
22% are Employed

*The percentage of spouses with children under the age of six who are food insecure is significantly higher than spouses without children under the age of six. There is no difference overall between spouses with and without children. †The percentage of unemployed spouses who are food insecure is significantly higher than spouses who are employed.

Race/Ethnicity

21% of Non-Hispanic White spouses are food insecure
30%* of Minority spouses are food insecure

*The percentage Minority spouses who are food insecure is significantly higher than Non-Hispanic White spouses.

For information and resources, visit www.militaryonesource.mil/economic-security-info

Food Security scale was developed by the Food and Nutrition Service and the National Center for Health Statistics and is the same measure used by USDA to assess levels of food security in the national population.

The demographic makeup of the military family population is different than that of the U.S. population (e.g., age, gender, educational attainment, etc.). Caution should be taken when comparing OPA’s military community food insecurity index levels to USDA’s national average levels.