



Wisconsin Food Security Project

Overview

The Wisconsin Food Security Project provides localized information on food access and the food security infrastructure in Wisconsin. The website provides a wide range of data, and a variety of ways to access, interact with, and display the data. It is designed as a resource for diverse users including community groups, policymakers and planners, the media, nonprofits, Extension educators, consumers, researchers, and students.

Data

Two types of data are available on the Wisconsin Food Security Project website:

1. **Local characteristics:** characteristics of a geographic area – such as a congressional district, county, municipality, school district, census tract, or zip code. Local characteristics are drawn from a wide range of sources, and are available in six categories:
 - Food security
 - Demographics
 - Economic Security
 - Federal food programs
 - Food environment
 - Health

2. **Local resources:** food outlets and other resources related to food security. Examples include:
 - Farmers markets that accept FoodShare
 - Summer meal programs
 - Public schools serving breakfast
 - Food retailers accepting FoodShare
 - Food pantries.

Detailed information about the data and sources can be found in the 'Variables' file on the 'Documentation' tab.

Accessing the data

The data can be accessed in 4 ways: interactive maps, custom profiles, data downloads, and charts. These each offer different ways to visualize and interact with the data. Not all the data are available with each method.

Mapping

Interactive mapping allows users to create custom maps showing local characteristics and/or local resources. For example, users can:

- Create a state map that color-codes counties based on the county poverty rate;
- Create a map of a county that color-codes school districts in the county based on the percent of children who are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, and that also shows the location of summer meal programs;
- Create a map of a region that color-codes zipcode areas based on the density of fast food restaurants

The maps are highly customizable, and can be saved as png files and used in other documents.

To use the mapping feature, start at the 'Mapping' tab. Use the panel at the left of the screen to experiment with customizing the map's appearance. Use the 'show map design options' link at the bottom left to add additional options for customizing your map.

Profiles

Profiles allow users to create customized lists of characteristics for a geographic area of interest – such as a particular congressional district, county, municipality, or school district. Each profile can include 1-4 different areas, including a state-level comparison. Definitions and sources of the selected variables can be included at the end of the profile.

To use the profiles feature, start at the 'Profile' tab. Use the dropdown menus to select the desired geographic area, and use the checkboxes that appear to choose which variables to include in the profile. Click on a variable name to see its definition and source. Note that not all variables are available for all geographies. For instance, some are only available at the county level, while others are also available for school districts or municipalities.

Profiles are generated as pdf files, and can be saved.

Data download

Data downloads allow users to download data for user-selected variables for all available geographies at the state, congressional district, county, municipality, and school district level.

The data download feature differs from the profile feature in that it downloads data for all areas (for instance, for all counties) into a spreadsheet, as compared to generating a formatted profile for one or several particular locations. This is useful for advanced users who are interested in exploring and manipulating the data on their own.

Data downloads provide the most comprehensive way to access the range of data on the website. For instance, some variables can be downloaded for multiple time periods, whereas users are only able to include variables for the most recent time period when creating maps and profiles.

Data downloads are saved as Excel files. Users can also download margins of error for selected variables.

Charts

Charts allow users to visualize the data. Two types of customizable charts are available: line charts and scatter plots.

Line charts allow users to see trends over time for selected variables, for up to four locations at a time. For instance, users can create a chart showing the percent of the population participating in FoodShare from 2000-2015 for the state and 3 individual counties.

Scatter plots allow users to see how 2 variables are related to each other, by plotting any two variables on a 2-dimensional chart. For instance, users can:

- create a chart showing how the local poverty rate is related to the obesity rate for all 72 counties;
- create a chart showing how the share of children eligible for free or reduced price meals in 2005 is related to the share who are eligible in 2015, for all school districts in the state.

Sources, instructions, and documentation

Detailed information about the variables and sources is included in the 'Variables' file on the Documentation tab. This documentation explains what the data are measuring or describing, where the data were obtained, for what period of time and what geographic areas the data are available, and some of the data limitations.

Additional documentation, including instructions as well as guidance on selecting variables, is under development, and will be posted when available.