



## Wisconsin Food Security Project

### Overview

The Wisconsin Food Security Project is an interactive data and mapping portal that provides state and local data to shed light on food insecurity in Wisconsin. It provides extensive data on economic and demographic factors associated with food insecurity; the availability and use of food assistance programs; the availability of retail food outlets; and health outcomes that are correlated with food insecurity. It also provides estimates of how food insecurity varies around the state. The website is designed as a resource for a range of users including local food security coalitions, policymakers and planners, the media, nonprofits, Extension educators, 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, block group 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. Current examples include:
  - 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.

### *Mapping*

Interactive mapping allows users to create custom maps showing local characteristics and/or local resources.

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.

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

### **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.