



# Implementing Policy Evaluation Measures Using the BRFSS:

The Example of Food Stamps, Food  
Insecurity and Federal Guideline Criteria

Presented by:

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- USDA
- Telephone number for Food Stamps in California is 1-888-328-3483



# CPNS, the *Network*

- Promote food stamps, fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity and the prevention of diet related chronic diseases.
- Restricted to target population of low income Californians ( $\leq 130\%$  FPL)
- BRFSS provides statewide estimates that are nationally comparable



# Desires

- Measure statewide prevalence of fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity, Food Insecurity and Food Stamp use in the 130% and 185% Federal poverty Level (FPL) adult population



# Challenges

- Questions not asked
- Questions periodically and systematically missing
- Small sample size for “rare” events
- No 130% and 185% FPL Indicator



# Federal Poverty Level Estimates

- Existing BRFSS variable only for 100%, 200% and 300% based on Federal Guideline Criteria
- Based on household income and household size
- Needed imputation to the 130% and 185% FPL criteria using the Federal Register's Federal Guidelines



# HHS Federal Guidelines

Persons in Family Unit	48 Contiguous States and District of Columbia	130% of Poverty for 48 Contiguous States and District of Columbia	185% of Poverty for 48 Contiguous States and District of Columbia	Alaska	185% of Poverty for Alaska	Hawaii	185% of Poverty for Hawaii
1	\$ 10,210.00	\$ 13,273.00	\$ 18,888.50	\$12,770.00	\$ 23,624.50	\$ 11,750.00	\$ 21,737.50
2	\$ 13,690.00	\$ 17,797.00	\$ 25,326.50	\$17,120.00	\$ 31,672.00	\$ 15,750.00	\$ 29,137.50
3	\$ 17,170.00	\$ 22,321.00	\$ 31,764.50	\$21,470.00	\$ 39,719.50	\$ 19,750.00	\$ 36,537.50
4	\$ 20,650.00	\$ 26,845.00	\$ 38,202.50	\$25,820.00	\$ 47,767.00	\$ 23,750.00	\$ 43,937.50
5	\$ 24,130.00	\$ 31,369.00	\$ 44,640.50	\$30,170.00	\$ 55,814.50	\$ 27,750.00	\$ 51,337.50
6	\$ 27,610.00	\$ 35,893.00	\$ 51,078.50	\$34,520.00	\$ 63,862.00	\$ 31,750.00	\$ 58,737.50
7	\$ 31,090.00	\$ 40,417.00	\$ 57,516.50	\$38,870.00	\$ 71,909.50	\$ 35,750.00	\$ 66,137.50
8	\$ 34,570.00	\$ 44,941.00	\$ 63,954.50	\$43,220.00	\$ 79,957.00	\$ 39,750.00	\$ 73,537.50
For each additional person, add	\$ 3,480.00	\$ 4,524.00	\$ 6,438.00	\$ 4,350.00	\$ 8,047.50	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 7,400.00

**SOURCE:** Federal Register, Vol. 72, No. 15, January 24, 2007, pp. 3147-3148

# BRFSS Income Categories

- Which of the following categories best describes your annual household income from all sources? Less than \$10,000; \$10,000 to less than \$15,000; \$15,000 to less than \$20,000; \$20,000 to less than \$25,000; \$25,000 to less than \$35,000; \$35,000 to less than \$50,000; \$50,000 to less than \$75,000; \$75,000 to \$100,000 or over \$100,000?
- 1. Less than \$10,000
- 2. \$10,000 to less than \$15,000
- 3. \$15,000 to less than \$20,000
- 4. \$20,000 to less than \$25,000
- 5. \$25,000 to less than \$35,000
- 6. \$35,000 to less than \$50,000
- 7. \$50,000 to less than \$75,000
- 8. \$75,000 to \$100,000
- 9. more than \$100,000
- 77. Don't know/Not sure
- 99. Refused





# Food Insecurity Questions

- The food that I bought just didn't last, and I didn't have money to get more. Was that **OFTEN**, **SOMETIMES**, or **NEVER** true for you in the last 12 months?
- I couldn't afford to eat balanced meals. Was that **OFTEN**, **SOMETIMES**, or **NEVER** true for you in the last 12 months?
- In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
- How often did this happen--almost every month, some months but not every month, or in only one or two months?
- In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn't enough money to buy food?
- In the last 12 months, were you ever hungry but didn't eat because you couldn't afford enough food?



# Food Security Scale

- 3 levels
- 0-1 = Food Secure
- 2-4 = Low Food Security
- 5-6 = Very Low Food Security
- <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsec/FILES/FSGuide.pdf>  
(general discussion)
- <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/FoodSecurity/surveytools/short2006.doc>

(Six Item Scale discussion, revised January 2008)

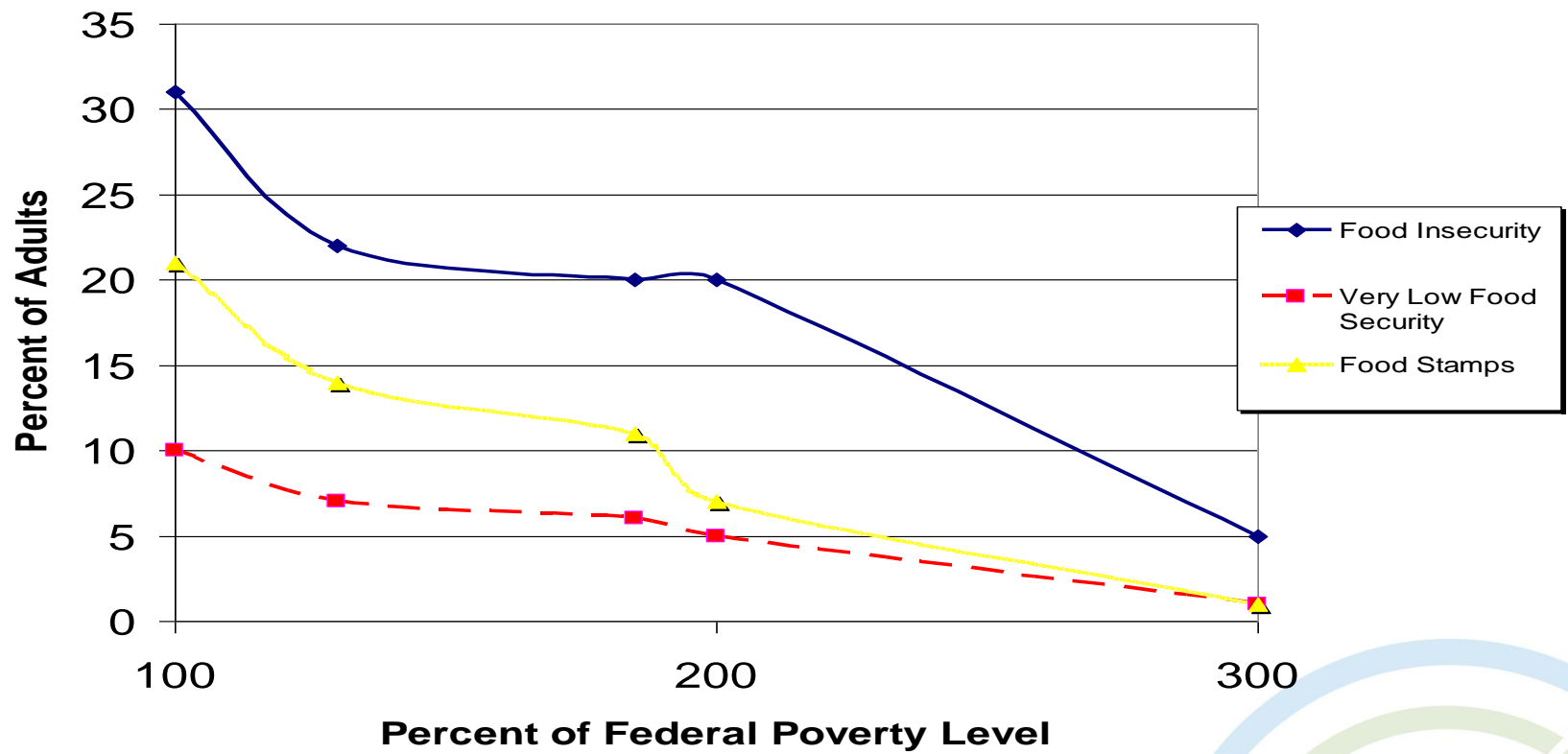


# Food Stamp Use Question

- In the last twelve months, have you or other adults in your household received Food Stamps or Food Stamp benefits through the EBT card?



# Estimated Prevalence of Food Stamp Use and Food Insecurity by Federal Poverty Levels



# Staying ahead

- Buying questions for inclusion and continuity
- Aggregating multiple years of data
- Constructing indicators from existing variables
- Institutionalizing 130% and 185% Federal Poverty Level Indicators
- Making available questions on food security
- Promoting the national use of 130% and 185% Federal Poverty Level indicators to specifically target USDA funded low-income populations.

