

Local Food Policy Councils and Longitudinal Household Food Insecurity During COVID-19 by Race, Ethnicity, and Income



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Summary



Food Policy Councils (FPCs) were a protective factor against not having enough food during the COVID-19 pandemic for low-income and minoritized households.

Methods



Modified Poisson regression

Longitudinal food insecurity measured using the U.S. Census Household Pulse Survey (HPS)

Adjusted for age and gender of survey respondents and percent of the state's population living in a rural area

Population



290 active local food councils across the U.S in 2021.

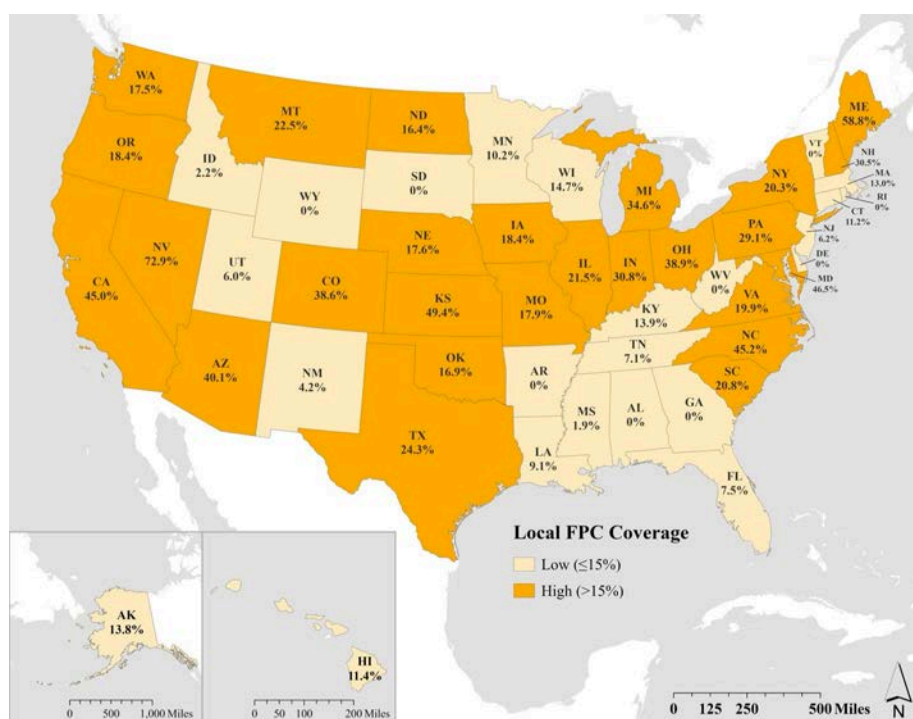
1,909,647 participants
Excluded participants with no food insecurity data, no record of income, and participants from D.C.

Outcomes



FPC coverage by state

Map of the United States a) showing the percent of a state's population that resides in an area where there is an active, local Food Policy Council (FPC) in 2021 and b) showing states categorized as having low (<15%) or high (>15%) FPC coverage.



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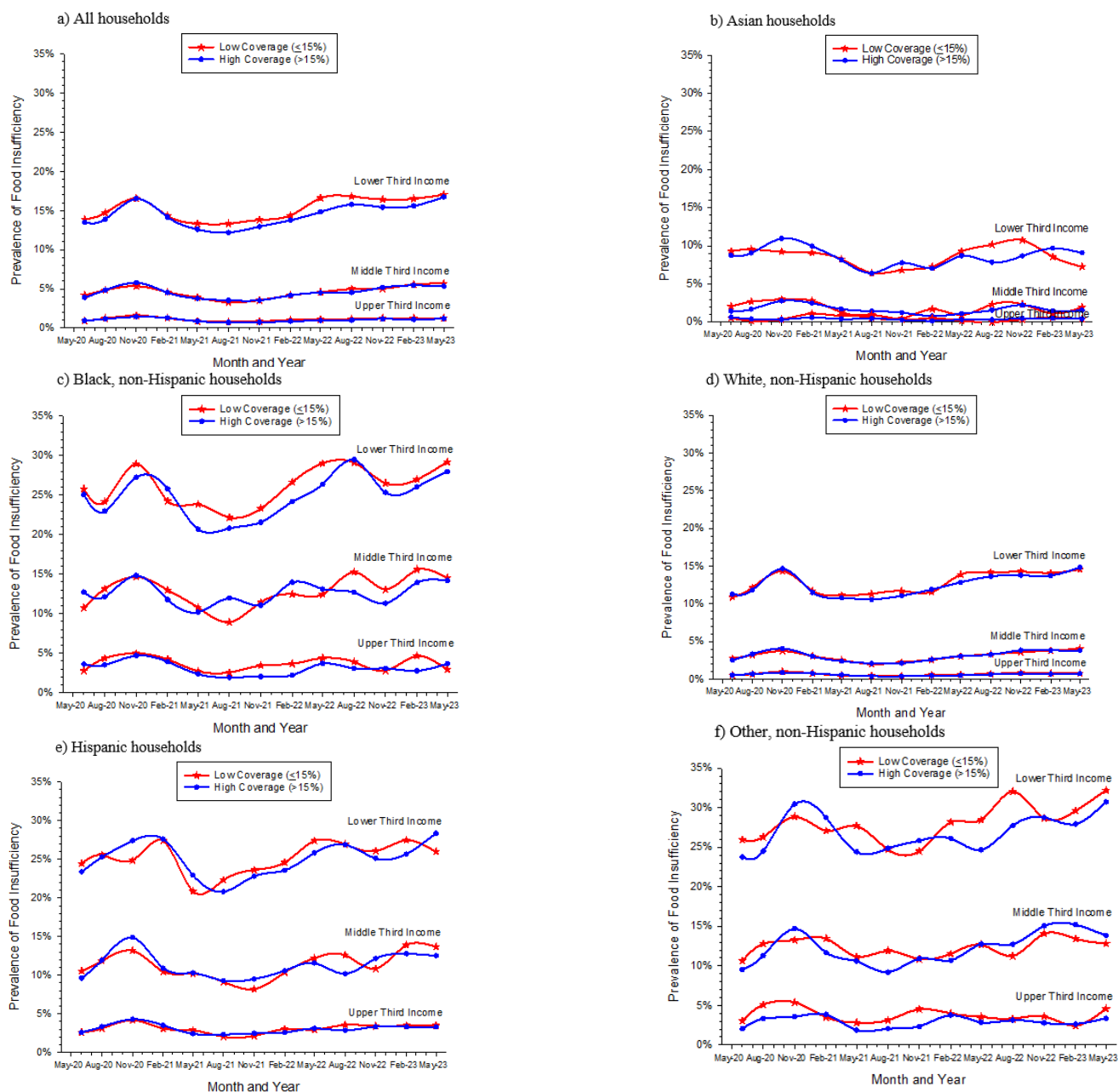
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0345654>



Outcomes



Households in states where more than 15% of their population lived in an area with an active FPC were less likely to report food insufficiency during the COVID-19 pandemic than households in states with lower FPC coverage



Quarterly prevalence of food insufficiency reported on the US Census Household Pulse Survey between May 2020 and May 2023 in states with low ($\leq 15\%$) and high ($> 15\%$) active local food policy council coverage by race and ethnic-specific household income tertiles (a) in all households, (b) Asian non-Hispanic households, (c) Black non-Hispanic households, (d) white non-Hispanic households, (e) Hispanic households, and (f) other non-Hispanic households.

Results and Takeaways



High FPC coverage was associated with significantly lower prevalence of food insufficiency during the pandemic among non-Hispanic Black and white households in the lower third income categories compared to similar households in states with low FPC coverage.

FPCs are well positioned to respond to food system-related shocks, and their actions could be especially impactful for vulnerable populations that have fewer resources and lower margins to manage a disruptive shock. Amidst calls for strategies that address social determinants of health, such as food access that promote health equity and community resilience, FPCs should be strongly considered for further investment and study.

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