

Food

The Southern Rural Development Center addresses...

ASSISTANCE

Challenges



Highlights of RIDGE-funded research in the Southern Region

Nine research studies examine the food assistance challenges impacting Hispanics and African-Americans in the rural South

Food assistance and food security issues remain of paramount importance in the Southern region of the United States. The reason is quite simple - the South heads the nation in terms of the number of low-income households experiencing very low food security. Given that food insecurity is closely linked to poverty, and that the South remains the most impoverished area of the country, it is clear that food assistance challenges will continue to confront our region. Since Hispanics and African-Americans are projected to be the major drivers of our region's population expansion over the next decade, and poverty rates remain highest among these racial and ethnic groups, it is critical for the SRDC to invest in research that helps expand our understanding of the food assistance needs of these important population groups.

Food Stamp Receipt by Families with Non-Citizen Household Heads in Rural Texas Counties

Steve White, Xiuhong You and Steve Murdock
Texas A&M University, and Tami Swenson
University of Minnesota

This report examined the food stamp caseload in Texas between 1995 and 2001 and showed that non-citizens have a greater hazard of exit from the program than do citizens. It also indicated that exit probabilities decline with age and larger household sizes, and that a variety of factors, such as female headship and lower education levels, decrease the exit hazard. In addition, the report showed that the Food Stamp Program represents a coping strategy for low-income households regardless of their nativity.

Contextual Determinants of Food Security in Southern Hispanic and African-American Neighborhoods

Margaret Bentley, Soyna Jones and Janice Dodds
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

The purpose of this research project was to gain a better understanding of how community factors affect household food security in Hispanic and African-American neighborhoods in the South. Participants in the study indicated dietary quality as their main concern, as well as

other factors such as access to fast food restaurants. The study confirmed that community factors are related to food insecurity and suggests community-level changes as a way to alleviate the burden of food insecurity.

Assessing the Prevalence of Childhood Obesity Among Limited Resource Latino and Non-Latino Families in Virginia

Elena Serrano and Ruby Cox
Virginia Tech

The goal of this study was to investigate the prevalence of obesity among Latino youth and non-Latino limited resource youth in Virginia, as well as to identify potential contributing factors to their obesity. The results showed that Latino and black children living in urban areas were significantly heavier than those living in rural areas. Part of the study will be used to help refine and produce body figure scales (such as body mass index) for further research studies.

Participation of Latino/Hispanic Population in the Food Stamp Program in the South

Safdar Muhammad and Fisseha Tegegne
Tennessee State University

This study indicated a number of factors that cause problems for the Latino/Hispanic population in the South

when applying for and participating in the Food Stamp Program. Long lines, language barriers and inadequate information were among the issues mentioned. The study

suggests hiring more staff with Spanish language skills, creating specially designed outreach programs, and increasing collaboration with local organizations to ensure that the growing Latino/Hispanic population is properly served by the Food Stamp Program.

Understanding the Role of Tiendas in the Nutritional Habits and Obesity Risk of Latino Families

Guadalupe Ayala, San Diego State University, and Barbara Laraia, India Ornelas and Deanna Kepka University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Obesity is a serious health problem among Latino men and women who have immigrated to the United States. This study examined the role of tiendas - small Latino grocery stores - in the prevalence of obesity among the Latino population. It took into account the foods that are available in the stores, where the stores are located and how often customers visit the stores. The study indicated that tiendas that have sprung up in response to a growing Latino immigrant community are an important factor in influencing the dietary behavior of Latinos.

Food Environment Quality and Food Choice in Clusters of Colonias in Hidalgo County of the Texas Rio Grande

Joseph Sharkey, Scott Horel, Monica Wendel and Li Zhu Texas A&M Health Science Center

Hispanic residents living in colonias face great disadvantages regarding community food resources. This study looked at various food stores and food service places in Hidalgo County, Texas, to better understand the food environment, accessibility and association between neighborhood deprivation and locational disadvantages. The study was the first step toward understanding the influence of the food environment on food choice and diet quality in Hispanic families living in high poverty areas.

A Comparison of Food Insecurity Levels and Weight Status Among Rural and Urban Residing Latino/Hispanics in North Carolina

Lauren Haldeman University of North Carolina at Greensboro

This research project, focused on Latinos and Hispanics in North Carolina, sought to assess contributors to food insecurity

and weight status, compare that status among rural and urban Latino populations, and identify the barriers and strategies used by Latino/Hispanic families to manage limited food resources. Among other things, the study revealed that rural Latinos are more vulnerable to food insecurity and weight problems than urban Latinos.

Food Insecurity in Poor, Female-Headed Families in Five of Alabama's Black Belt Counties

Andrew Zekeri Tuskegee University

This study revealed prevalent food insecurity among low-income single mothers in rural Alabama and provided evidence that food insecurity is associated with depression. As evidenced in other studies, this study showed that single mothers with less education who were unemployed at the time of the interview reported significantly higher levels of depression. The report suggests that taking preventative measures to combat food insecurity among this group of women may lower the risk of major depression.

Examining Relations Among Obesity, Food Insecurity, Stress and Emotional Eating Among Low-Income African-American Women

Carol Connell and Kristi Lofton University of Southern Mississippi

Stress and emotional eating are two factors that have been documented to impact eating behavior and weight. Stress-related food insecurity experiences may prompt individuals to develop such behaviors as emotional eating. The goal of this currently ongoing research project is to assess whether a relationship exists between food insecurity and overweight/obesity among low-income women in south Mississippi and to what extent this relationship is moderated by stress and/or emotional eating.

For More Information:

Contact the Southern Rural Development Center at 662-325-3207

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